

JUNE 9-10, 2021

BAYFIELD FOODS CSA

Community Supported Agriculture



Springtime & Improvements

BRIAN CLEMENTS - NORTHCROFT FARM

Most of the time I like some excitement in my life, but spring can bring a little too much. The weather can be all over the place – 85 degrees one day and 35 and snowing the next. In the early days of the farm, I would stay up all night checking the temperature and if it got too cold, I would rush to bring in my starts from the greenhouse. But there comes a point when getting up at 4:00 AM to carry 150 flats of baby plants inside and covering the living room, office, and kitchen floor is just not as fun as it once was.

Over the last couple years I have invested in a few improvements to make for an easier nights sleep and to push the start of the season earlier in the year. I first purchased a larger hoop house with a double layer of plastic and an inflation fan. The greater thermal mass of the large hoop house and the extra insulation from the inflated plastic makes it possible for crops inside the hoop house to stay above freezing down to 25-27 degrees outside temperature.

Inside the hoop house I also built low tunnels with wire and some lighter weight fabric row cover. The row cover comes off during the day and gets put back on each evening. By keeping a warmer temperature close to the plants, the plants grow faster. Each layer of row cover over the plants adds a couple degrees of protection. One night it was 9 degrees and with 5 additional layers of row cover, I was able to prevent anything from getting frost damaged.

This past year I also built a new greenhouse for starting my plants in. It is inflated with a double layer of plastic and I divided the building into two sections. By doing this, I am able to heat one half of the building with a propane heater during the night or during cold spring days. With the heater, I can keep the temperature above freezing down to about 20 degrees overnight.

In addition to protecting from late season frosts, these extra measures of protection have allowed me to start things earlier in the season than I have in the past. This year my salad mix is 3 weeks ahead of schedule and I was able to grow arugula and bok choy. Both of these veggies usually succumb to flea beetles before they ever get going, yet with the heated greenhouse, I am able to get them up and out of the ground before flea beetle season begins.

Coming up this year I am using the warmer hoop house environment to experiment with three varieties of eggplant and am also going to attempt a late planting of cauliflower so I can have fresh cauliflower into November.

Thank you all for joining us this year and I hope you enjoy some of the new things we have to offer.

Brian



A view inside the Northcroft hoop house.



Farmer Brian showing off his famous South Shore Salad Mix!

Radish and Herbed Ricotta Omelet

For roasted radishes:

- 1 c. thinly sliced radishes
- 2 t. olive oil
- 1/4 t. sea salt

For eggs:

- 4 large eggs
- 2 T. milk
- 1/2 t. sea salt
- 1/4 t. black pepper

For ricotta:

- 1/4 c. plus 2 T. whole milk ricotta
- 2 t. minced fresh chives
- 1 t. minced fresh thyme
- 1 t. minced fresh parsley

1. To make the radishes, preheat the oven to 400°F. Toss the radishes with the olive oil and salt. Spread in a thin layer in a roasting dish and bake until soft and tender, 10 to 12 minutes.
2. In a small bowl, combine the ricotta with minced herbs.
3. To make the omelet, whisk together the eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Heat 1/2 tablespoon of butter in an 8-inch non-stick skillet over medium-low heat. Pour in half the egg mixture and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, allowing the bottom to set slightly. Run a spatula under the edges, lifting up and tilting the pan to allow uncooked eggs to run under the cooked part. Continue to do this until the majority of the egg is set. Carefully flip the omelet and remove from heat.
4. Spread half the ricotta mixture over half of the omelet and sprinkle with half of the radishes. Fold the omelet over over the filling and sprinkle with a few more roasted radish slices and minced parsley.
5. Repeat to make the second omelet. Serve both omelets immediately.