



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Gardeners have to embrace the future

Lately with mandatory solitary confinement (excuse me, “social distancing”), it is easy to look around and wonder who needs a reality check. Don’t worry, it’s not you or me. Things are truly a bit off from normal. I never thought I’d be accessorizing with a mask. Another item to have to match shoes, hat, purse, gloves, and MASK. (My usual dress is work clothes. No-where to go as everything’s canceled for the pandemic.)

Human beings are very adaptable. It’s amazing how quickly it has become “normal” to include a mask.

This week I received a nursery catalog from a Missouri seed company. When I ordered the catalog I wondered why it cost \$12.95. But, I had been to one of the festivals at Baker Creek Seeds when I lived nearby and I’m a fan of their quality and way of doing business. They’re not far from the Laura Ingalls Wilder house.

The catalog is 500 pages and loaded with nice, colored pictures artfully taken. It’s beautiful. They have traveled the world in search of heirloom flowers and vegetables and have things no one else has. To reach them easily go to rareseeds.com.

This is the time of year when seed catalogs start appearing in mailboxes. It will soon be a brand new year. 2020 will be gone. Since it has been a strange year, few will mourn its passing.

Gardening is an optimistic hobby. To enjoy gardening, you embrace the future and plan next year’s garden. The onslaught of garden catalogs is a brightness in the dead of winter. Leafing through catalogs with pictures of sunshine and flowers is a delight. No reality check needed.

Many people are affected by the shorter days and find this time of year depressing. It helps to gradually change all light bulbs and fixtures into full spectrum lighting. You will have light balanced to be like sunlight. This will improve your mood and general outlook on life. Even fluorescent lights are available in full spectrum.

It is amazing that you can buy sunshine at a store and own a bit of it for yourself. It’s true and can work wonders for elevating your mood.

If you have garden questions or comments please write to greengarden column@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Salmon marinated in a spicy-sweet mix of brown sugar, soy sauce, ginger and chili is roasted along with potatoes for a quick and healthy dinner.

SALMON: FISH FULL OF FLAVOR AND NUTRITION

Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Everyone knows fish is good for you, especially a “fatty” fish like salmon. Full of omega-3 fatty acids, which play an essential role in brain and heart health, salmon also is high in B vitamins and is a relatively inexpensive source of lean protein.

But perhaps its best attribute is that it can be prepared in so many different ways, with different spices, sauces and toppings.

You also can feel relatively good about eating it. Seafood Watch lists nine types of farmed or wild salmon as a “best” choice and another 46 as a “good alternative,” meaning it is caught or farmed with minimal environmental and social impacts.

This recipe should please even the non-fish eaters in your family, thanks to a spicy-sweet marinade made with soy sauce, brown sugar and plenty of minced ginger and garlic. There’s also a little zing from finely chopped hot chili pepper.

You’ll know the fish is done when it flakes easily with a fork and looks translucent. A quick run under the broiler will add some

crisp to the edges but the fish will still be moist inside.

It’s served with roasted potatoes dusted with warm Indian spices and covered by lemon slices. There will be no leftovers.

- 1 tablespoon grated lime zest
- Juice of 1 lime
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1-inch knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped hot red chili
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 5 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 4 tablespoons water
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless salmon fillet
- 1 pound Yukon gold potatoes, cut into chunks
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 lemon, sliced thin

Place all the marinade ingredients, except the salmon, in a large bowl and whisk together. Place salmon fillets in the bowl and let them soak up the juice for 20 minutes. While salmon is marinating, make potatoes.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Toss the potatoes, olive oil, cumin, garam masala and salt together in large bowl. Spread over a baking pan, place lemon slices on top and bake until tender and crispy, 25-30 minutes.

About 10 minutes before potatoes are done, remove salmon fillets from marinade and place on a baking sheet.

Place salmon in oven and roast for 15 minutes, or until salmon flakes easily and is opaque throughout. Remove potatoes to a platter, and turn oven to broil. Broil salmon for 2-3 minutes, or until edges are slightly charred.

Serve hot, with roasted potatoes and a green salad.

Makes 4 servings.

— Adapted from “The Curry Guy” by Dan Toombs

Zooming: sharing recipes in the era of COVID-19

Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PITTSBURGH — Like so many during the pandemic, Galadriel Strauser has kept contact with people outside her socially distanced COVID “bubble” to a minimum.

The mother of seven owns both a commercial cleaning business and a facility management facility, “and I’m charged with keeping everyone safe,” says Mrs. Stauser of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

She knew her family would not be together during the holidays, which presented a problem: Her daughters, one recently married and another a recent college grad, were counting on learning how to make her famed stuffing.

“They’ve been asking for recipes as they are kind of growing up,” says Strauser, who grew up cooking with her maternal grandmother, DeVona Stewart, in Harmony, Pennsylvania.



Matt Freed/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

A lobster bisque is ready to serve as Emily Larson teaches a remote class on winter soups for Phipps Conservatory at her home.

Enter Zoom.

The videoconferencing service launched in 2013 with an eye toward enterprise and

business customers. When COVID-19 hit, virtual hangouts suddenly became a thing for just about anyone with a com-

puter, tablet or smartphone who wanted to connect with family and friends from the safety of home.

Strauser decided to give the platform a try, figuring it was the best way for her to “be a mom” from far away.

“They are navigating these things without their mom there to wag her finger and tell them what to do,” she says. “I wanted them to have traditions they could start in their own homes.”

She’s been mailing her kids care packages throughout the pandemic, so sending one more with the three types of bread and spices she uses plus a grocery list for perishables like butter and eggs was no big deal. She had already mastered Facetime and didn’t have problems with Zoom. Five of her kids participated in the 9 a.m. session on Thanksgiving morning.

“We did it like a cooking show,” she says, with her demonstrating and them following along.

“It was a good time, and we

all laughed and laughed,” she says.

Being able to see and chat with one another on the family holiday made everyone feel a little less alone. They’ll most definitely do it again, they said.

If you’re going to be separated from loved ones over Christmas or Hanukkah and are fretting over not being able to roll out dough for cut-outs or teach them how to properly grate potatoes for latkes, Zoom might be an answer for you, too.

Online cooking classes are fun and provide valuable life skills at a time when more people are cooking at home.

Emily Larsen, a freelance culinary instructor, private chef and caterer who operates spillingthesoup.com, is among the many local chefs who successfully pivoted to virtual instruction when COVID-19 hit.