

In Season

The weekly summer newsletter from Growers of Organic Food Yukon

This week we've got a special dispatch from Lake Laberge - if you've eaten goat cheese in the Yukon you likely have Brian Lendrum to thank. He and his partner Susan grow certified organic vegetables in addition to their goat operation and always have a long line-up at the Fireweed Market.



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Dispatch from Lendrum Ross Farm

One of the best things about farming on a small scale is the chance to meet the wild creatures who avoid noisy machines. While I am pulling weeds and planting out seedlings, a frog croaks in the dug-out and – my big discovery for 2015 – a warbling vireo sings his tuneful but incredibly repetitive song in the poplars near the gardens. He has been there every year for as long as I can remember, but I have only just put a name to his song. Meanwhile, Mr. Flicker is renovating the inside of a hollow aspen tree, preparing a home for the nestlings that will arrive very soon; I can hear his patient tap-tapping when the breeze is down.

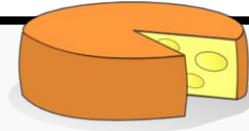
Our gardens are surrounded by two fences: one tall and strong for the goats and one short and fine for the ground squirrels. Some wildlife encounters demand a little more active involvement. We recently wondered why all three dogs were involved in earth-moving endeavours under the milking shed. Susan lay on the ground and peered under the floor and saw a disgruntled muskrat looking back at her. We took the dogs for a long walk and, to our satisfaction, when we came back, the muskrat had taken the opportunity to make his escape. Twice this week we were awakened by the frantic barking that signals the presence of a porcupine. It is the dogs' one and only job to protect the goats by barking and they do it well. The porcupine is the only animal unimpressed by the noise, and his lack of concern drives the dogs to a frenzy of frustration. It would be comical, if the results of an encounter – a face full of quills for the dogs – were not so expensive and time-consuming for us. This week we managed to pen the dogs and the porcupine eventually wandered away, so a prickly situation was averted.

We live in a mostly peaceful co-existence with the wild things. Farming and wildlife have to be compatible if both are going to survive.

-Brian Lendrum



Getting to know your cheese - Halloumi



Halloumi is a mild, semi-hard cheese traditionally made from sheep milk originating in the eastern Mediterranean. Though sheep has a higher butterfat than cow or goat at Lendrum Ross Farm we make it from goat milk and the result seems quite satisfactory.

Two things make Halloumi different from most other cheeses:

- 1) No bacterial culture is added to the milk during cheese-making process, only rennet
- 2) After the cheese has formed and is removed from the whey, the whey is heated nearly to boiling point. The cheese is then immersed in the hot whey for 30 to 60 minutes. This gives halloumi its characteristic rubbery texture and makes it suitable for frying.

To discourage moulds and add flavour halloumi is quite heavily salted, but should still be kept in a cool place. You can soak it in water just before serving to remove some of the salt, but if you make saganaki - see below - the salt is a real asset.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Saganaki

This delicious appetizer is the classic way to enjoy halloumi. It can also be flambéd with alcohol instead of lemon juice if you have a flair for the dramatic.

Ingredients

- 1 block halloumi
- olive oil for frying
- juice of one lemon (organic of course!)
- flatbread such as pita, warm from the oven

Directions

Slice 1/4 inch thick. Fry in olive oil, medium heat, browning on both sides. In same pan pour on juice of a lemon. Serve warm with flat bread or cracker.



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