

Whooh whooh whooh knew?

The US uses 1/5 of the 5 billion pounds of pesticides used each year in the world. These chemicals are applied to agricultural lands as well as homes, backyards & businesses. In addition to targeting insects & rodents, many of these pesticides pose a severe risk to birds, killing them outright, or causing decreased breeding success, physical malformations, and impaired ability to migrate or avoid predators. Species of owls, meadowlarks & sparrows are on the long list of American farm-dwelling birds that are disappearing in part because of pesticides. They are either being affected by the pesticides directly or because they are eating the insects and rodents that have already ingested the poison. A sick & dying mouse that has ingested chemicals is an easy prey for an owl, who in turn will ingest the poison. These poisons cause the birds to bleed to death from stomach hemorrhages in an agonizing & days-long decline. Source: NBC News & abcbird.org

Garden to Doorstep

Organics LLC

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Potato & Carrot Soup

*2 Tbsp. olive oil *2 onions, chopped *1 clove garlic, minced *5 cups vegetable broth *3 cups diced carrots *2 cups diced potatoes *1 tsp. Italian seasoning *1 bay leaf
Sauté onions & garlic in oil until tender. Add vegetable broth, carrots, potatoes, Italian seasoning & bay leaf. Simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Discard bay leaf & puree soup. Season with salt & pepper.

Mushroom, Carrot & Potato Gratin

*1 large potato, thinly sliced *1 large carrot, thinly sliced *1/2 cup mushrooms, thinly sliced *1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil *2 Tbsp. flour *1 cup low-fat milk *3/4 cup cheddar cheese *salt & pepper to taste
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a greased casserole dish, arrange the sliced potatoes, carrots, & mushrooms overlapping. Season the vegetables with salt & pepper. In a small sauce pot over a medium low heat, heat the oil. Add the flour & a pinch of salt. Stir constantly for 1 minute. Add the milk & continue to stir occasionally until it begins to thicken. Once milk mixture has thickened, remove from the heat, mix in the cheese & allow to melt. Pour the cheese sauce over the potatoes, carrots & mushrooms. Cover the dish with a sheet of aluminum foil & place in oven. Bake until the gratin until the vegetables are tender & sauce is bubbling, about 40-60 minutes. Yum!

Spinach, Grape Tomato & Olive Pasta

*8 ozs. uncooked penne *2 tsp. olive oil *1/4 tsp. crushed pepper *1 clove garlic, thinly sliced *1 pint grape tomatoes, halved *1/2 cup vegetable broth *1/4 tsp. salt *1/4 tsp. pepper *10 olives, coarsely chopped *3-4 cups baby spinach *1 Tbsp. dried basil *1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add pasta; cook 8 minutes or until al dente. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving 1/2 cup cooking liquid. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add red pepper & garlic; sauté 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, broth, salt, black pepper & olives; cook 6 minutes or until tomatoes begin to break down, stirring occasionally. Add pasta & 1/2 cup reserved cooking liquid to pan; simmer 2 minutes. Stir in spinach & basil; cook 2 minutes or until greens wilt. Divide pasta mixture evenly among 4 bowls; top with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

Easy Guacamole

*1 clove garlic, minced *8-10 grape tomatoes, chopped *1 lime, juiced *salt & pepper to taste *hot sauce to taste *2 avocados, cut in half & pits removed
Peel & mash avocados in a medium serving bowl. Stir in onion, garlic, tomato, lime juice, salt & pepper. Season with remaining lime juice & salt & pepper to taste. Chill for half an hour to blend flavors.

Spinach, Mushroom & Mashed Potatoes

For Potatoes: *2 pounds potatoes, peeled & cut lengthwise into quarters *1/2 cup milk (or soy or almond milk) *1/4 cup margarine *1 tsp. salt *1/2 tsp. pepper *1 tsp. garlic powder
For Mushrooms & Spinach: *1 Tbsp. olive oil *1 medium onion *mushrooms, chopped *3 garlic cloves, minced *1 tsp. cumin * 1 tsp. salt *1/2 tsp. pepper *4 handful spinach
In a large pot, add potatoes then cover with water & salt. Cover with lid & bring to a boil. Cook until soft. While the potatoes are cooking, in a large skillet add oil. Then sauté onion for about 7-8 minutes on medium heat until translucent. Next, add in mushrooms & cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mix in garlic, cumin, salt & pepper.
Stir in garlic & continue cooking for about a minute. Then add in spinach, stirring frequently until wilted. Turn off heat & place skillet to the side. Once the potatoes are done, drain the water & place back into the pot. Next, add in milk, margarine, salt, pepper & garlic powder. With a potato masher, mash the potatoes until you get your desired consistency (try not to over mash because it will make the potatoes have a gluey texture). Adjust seasoning for the potatoes & mushroom mixture, if necessary.

Crunchy & Hot Avocado Fries

*3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs *2 Tbsp. ground flax *1 tsp. mild chili powder *1 egg *2 avocados *vegetable oil cooking spray *salt *hot sauce
Heat oven to 400°. In a bowl, combine 3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs, 2 Tbsp. ground flax and 1 tsp. mild chili powder. In another bowl, whisk 1 egg. Cut 2 peeled avocados into 16 wedges, dip wedges in egg, press into breadcrumb mixture & transfer to a baking sheet. Coat with vegetable oil cooking spray. Bake until outside is crispy, 10 to 12 minutes. Season with salt & drizzle with hot sauce.

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Storage Tips

Apples - Place them in the crisper drawer in a plastic bag with holes in it or cover the apples with a damp paper towel.

Avocados - You can tell if an avocado is ripe by giving it a gentle squeeze — if it yields to that light pressure, it's ready to use. If your avocados are ripe, place them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. If they are not ripe, place them in a brown bag at room temperature until ripe, then store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Tomatoes - Do NOT refrigerate. Keep them at room temperature on the counter away from direct sunlight.

Carrots- remove any of the tops (the green part). Make sure the roots are dry & unwashed. Place them in a separate zip lock bags & store in the fridge (do not store with any part of greens attached as they will pull moisture from the root). Carrot greens are edible & good for you. They can be chopped up and added to soups, stews or casseroles.

Potatoes - Store in a well-ventilated area so they stay fresh longer. Do not refrigerate. Place them in a metal basket or rack, a wooden crate or a cardboard box with holes. Keep out of sunlight & in a cool, dark & slightly humid place, like a basement, unheated closet or cupboard.

Mushrooms - Prepackaged mushrooms should stay in the package, but loose mushrooms or those in an open package should be stored in a paper bag or in a damp cloth bag in the refrigerator. Do not place in plastic bag.

Spinach: Store spinach wrapped in paper towels – damp or dry – in a resealable plastic bag. Keep in the crisper drawer or on a shelf in the refrigerator.