

Pretty versus Plentiful with Ducks and Chickens

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Chickens and ducks making short work out of my cold frame at Mezzacello.

The poultry need to be isolated with new plant growth. Full stop. Formal gardens are off limits while my potager gardens and fruit trees look like the surface of the moon. It's time to sequester the chickens and ducks.

Chicken Scratch

Chickens scratch, but ducks devour. I've talked about the enclosed ecosystems of Mezzacello frequently. As I type this, I am sitting in front of the aquatic ecosystem listening to the biofilter pumps wreck havoc on the balance of algae, water, nitrates, nitrites, ammonia, and fish.

Garden Felons

The ducks are peeking their bills through the picket fence in the poultry yard like the **garden felons** they are. In the pretty gardens (AKA formal gardens at Mezzacello) the tender shoots are just coming up. This is irresistible to ducks.

Just a few weeks, felons, I mean fellas, and I'll let you forage in the yards for bugs again.



It might seem hypocritical of me to be enjoying a quiche made from duck eggs, pancetta, gruyere, Parmesan, and pan seared hosta shoots. Yes, we eat the hosta shoots – but in my defense, we eat them discriminately.

The ducks eat ALL of them. And to add insult to injury, they eat all the water lettuce and water hyacinth in the pond as well – and their oils pollute the pond. The nerve! LOL!

Enclosed Ecosystems

No, the animals need sequestered while the humans manage the patient dance from winter to spring with the more delicate plants in the pretty ecosystems. Meanwhile the ducks and chickens get extra servings of mealworms, peas and crickets, the rabbits get fresh clover and kale, and the fish get frozen peas and rabbit droppings.

I am not a monster; I give when I take. That is the cycle of life on an urban farm.