



*Olive & Thistle*

## An Unexpected Autumn Treat

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My husband and I spend a lot of time in Vermont. We love the mountains, the dirt roads, the occasional bear and winters full of snowmobiling. But one of my favorite things about going is exploring the farms and country stores for new foods to experiment with when I can leisurely cook our dinner for just us two, instead of our normal family of six on busy weeknights.

A couple weekends ago while in the Green Mountain state, we sat on the deck having breakfast when the next-door neighbors drove by and waved out the truck window, they slowed to a stop and yelled out that they were headed to the Wardsboro Turnip Festival, and we should check it out. "How Vermonty!" we thought, "we're in". We got dressed, headed out and arrived at the Turnip Festival just as our neighbors were

leaving. "Try the turnip soup!" our neighbor told us, "You wouldn't think it, but it's delicious".

Now, I'll tell you honestly that I hate turnips. My parents always made mashed turnips (they still do) and I have always hated them; the bitter flavor, the bland texture, they're just not my thing! But curiosity got the better of me and I gave it a shot, we bought a bowl of soup to share. I made that face, the one where you know you're about to eat something you dislike, preparing myself.

It. Was. Delicious. I couldn't believe I was eating anything turnip, it was creamy and flavorful and simple, letting the vegetable flavor do the work. I had to know more, did my parents just not know how to prepare turnips all these years or was I missing something?

Consulting a turnip expert at the festival, I learned about the Gilfeather Turnip, a Vermont treasure. This turnip is an interspecies cross between a rutabaga and a true turnip. Sweeter than a traditional turnip, it matures later (Autumn after the first frost) and was the fiercely guarded secret of John Gilfeather, who sold them by the cartload starting in the late 1800's. Thankfully, the seeds made it to a couple who continued the legacy after Johns passing in 1944, and in 2016 the Gilfeather Turnip was proclaimed the Vermont state vegetable.

At the festival, I purchased my several pounds of turnips and set about making a soup to share with you all, using our Olive & Thistle EVOO. I encourage you to head online if you are a gardener and grab yourself some Gilfeather Turnip seeds, you won't be sorry. And if you can't wait to grow them yourself, hop online and search Gilfeather Turnip to order from some New England farms who offer them. My soup recipe (adapted from the one I sampled that day) will be on the website, and just an fyi, I made the soup for my parents and have given them the recipe, just for future reference. Happy Autumn, it's soup season and I couldn't be happier about it! 🍂