



Harmony Valley Farm

Certified Organic Fruit Share Newsletter

June 15 - 17, 2017

Featured Producer: Meet the Masumoto Family!

by Andrea Yoder

Welcome to the 2017 Harmony Valley Farm Fruit CSA Share! Please take the time to read the newsletter that will accompany each delivery. This is where we will share important information about the fruit selections in your box including important handling and storage information and where each selection came from! In keeping with the spirit and purpose of CSA, we want you to know where your fruit comes from! This week, I'm pleased to introduce you to the Masumoto family from California who grew the peaches in this week's box.

David Mas Masumoto (known as Mas) and his family have a long and interesting history as farmers in the United States. The Masumoto Family Farm is located in the Central Valley of California. Mas's grandparents emigrated from Japan to the Central Valley of California as farmworkers. They rented land in the valley until their family was relocated and imprisoned in an internment camp during World War II because of their Japanese ancestry. Mas's father bought the farm in 1948 and this is where Mas grew up. Like many good farm kids, Mas left the farm to explore the world and attend college. However, Mas's travels brought him back to the farm where he started farming alongside his father.

Mas and his wife Marcy, along with their children Nikiko and Korio, farm on about 80 acres. Their main crops are peaches, nectarines and raisins. But on their farm they also grow stories. Mas has authored nine books which tell the stories of his life, his family's history and the memories that have been formed on his farm. Recently Mas and his daughter, Nikiko, co-authored a book entitled *Changing Season*. Nikiko is the next generation of the Masumoto family to farm on this land and calls herself an "agrarian artist." She, like her father, tells stories through writing but also through performance art. Like her father, she left the farm to attend college and explore the world only to find her way back to the farm. She is currently working alongside her father as he is transferring the farm to her. Last May, PBS did a documentary entitled *Changing Season: On the Masumoto Family Farm*. This film chronicles their day to day lives as they work, learn and teach each other the art of farming. It also demonstrates the challenge and opportunity many of the original "pioneers" of organic farming face as they try to figure out how to pass on their passion and life's work to the next generation. This documentary is very well done and I'd encourage each of you to take the time to watch it so you can form your own connection with this very special family.

This past February I had the opportunity to watch this documentary with Mas at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Mas was invited to attend the conference as a keynote speaker. He gave one of the best keynote presentations I have ever attended. He combined artistry, story-telling, history, and the emotions of both a farmer, a son, and a father as he told his story and shared his life lessons with the audience. You can watch Mas's presentation on YouTube, and I'd encourage you to do so. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kChOgyLYd78>)

I had the opportunity to have dinner with Mas and our fruit buyer, Rick Christianson. I must tell you that Mas is one of the most gentle, kind-hearted, funny, sincere people I've ever met. He has a warm, engaging spirit and made everyone at the table feel welcome. I liked the Masumoto Family before and appreciated the fruit they sent us, but I have to admit their fruit will be a bit more special to me this year as I've taken the time to get to know these special people. They are hard-working, sincere individuals who farm and live with passion....and love peaches.

Ready to Eat:

Flame Red Grapes

May Need Ripening:

June Crest Peaches

Leah-Cot Apriums

Polar Light White Nectarines

Kiwi Fruit

Hass Avocados

■ Flame Red Grapes/ Drake Larson Ranch / California

Description: This week's grapes were grown by Drake and Pam Larson, in Thermal, California. Drake is one of the "early organic pioneers" and grows over 100 acres of red, green and black grapes.

Storage / Preparation: Open the bag immediately and go through the grapes. Remove any soft fruit and rinse them. Store in the refrigerator in an open bowl or ventilated plastic bag and eat within a few days.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: If you're looking for something a little different, consider making Grilled Artisan Bread with Grapes and Ricotta Spread. Find this recipe and others using red grapes at www.sun-world.com.

■ June Crest Peaches / Masumoto Family Farm / California

Description: This is an early season, yellow flesh, freestone peach. When ripe, freestone peaches may be sliced in half and gently turned to separate the peach into two halves and easily extract the pit. This is a versatile peach variety with a nice balance of sweetness and acidity.

Storage / Preparation: Handle unripe peaches with care, as bruises can show up later. Ripen peaches at a moderate to cool room temperature just until they start to soften a bit, don't let them go too long as the quality may decline quickly once they are ripe. It's best to store them on their shoulders and not touching one another while you are ripening them. Check them daily, and when they are ready either use them or store them in the refrigerator.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: Check out two recipes in this week's newsletter which were borrowed from *The Perfect Peach*, a cookbook written by the Masumoto family!

■ Leah-Cot Apriums/ Blossom Hill / California

Description: Apriums are a cross between an apricot and a plum, however they favor the apricot part of their parentage. This week's selection was grown by Blossom Hill Apricots in Patterson, California, an area considered to be amongst the best apricot growing areas in the world!

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Leah-Cot Apriums/ Blossom Hill / California - Continued from page 1

Storage / Preparation: Ripen apriums at room temperature. Once they give off a slightly aromatic fragrance and give slightly to gentle pressure, they are ready to eat.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: Apriums are delicious when cut in half, drizzled with a little olive oil and grilled briefly. Add grilled apricots to a lettuce salad along with toasted almonds and a lemon-honey vinaigrette.

■ Polar Light White Nectarine/ Valliwide/ California

Description: White nectarines have less acidity than yellow varieties, so their flavor is less tangy. You'll find the flesh to be juicy, sweet and aromatic.

Storage/Preparation: Ripen nectarines at a moderate to cool room temperature just until they start to soften a bit, don't let them go too long as the quality may decline quickly once they are ripe. Watch them carefully as they ripen and if you see any spots forming, cut them away and eat the nectarine immediately.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: Spread a little goat cheese on a pizza crust along with a drizzle of olive oil and bake the crust. While it's still hot top the pizza with prosciutto, arugula, Parmesan and slices of white nectarine.

■ Kiwi Fruit/ Wild River/ California

Description: Kiwi fruit are a small, oblong fruit with a brown fuzzy skin. The skin is edible, but many choose to peel it off and just eat the green, juicy flesh inside.

Storage/ Preparation: Ripen kiwi fruit at room temperature. They will give to slight pressure when ripe. Once ripe, either eat them or put them in the refrigerator.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: Kelly, the farm bookkeeper, is looking forward to making Chocolate Covered Kiwi Pops. You can find a recipe at foodnetwork.com.

■ Hass Avocados / Las Palmanitas / California

Description: Hass Avocados are known by their bumpy, dark exterior. They are one of the more common avocado varieties and have a smooth, creamy flesh.

Storage / Preparation: Ripen avocados at room temperature and eat as soon as they are ripe. As they ripen, the skin will turn from green to more of a dark green to black appearance. The fruit will give to slight pressure when ripe.

Suggestions for Serving and Use: Chunks of avocado are a nice addition to a simple lettuce salad. You can also spread avocado on a sandwich or add avocado to scrambled eggs.

Butter Lettuce Cups with Peaches and Blue Cheese

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Dressing:

Juice of 1 lemon

3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 small head Boston or Bibb lettuce

1 peach with give, halved, pitted, and sliced

½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped

1 ½ to 2 ounces blue cheese, crumbled

1. To make the dressing, stir together the lemon juice and oil, then stir in salt and pepper to taste.
2. Separate the lettuce leaves, selecting 4 to 6 leaves that form a nice cup shape, then rinse and pat dry. If the leaves are not very crisp, plunge them into ice water for a few minutes, drain, and pat dry.
3. Place the lettuce leaves in a large bowl, drizzle with the dressing, and toss gently to coat evenly.
4. Place each cup in the center of a salad plate. Fan an equal number of the peach slices on one side of each cup. Dividing them evenly, sprinkle the walnuts and blue cheese inside the cups. Serve immediately.

Recipe borrowed from *The Perfect Peach*, by Marcy, Nikiko & David Mas Masumoto.

Peach Liqueur

Yield: About 3 ½ cups

1 cup peeled and sliced or diced very ripe soft or gushy peaches, including juices

½ cup sugar

3 cups of your favorite brandy, vodka, or gin

1. In a small bowl, combine peaches and sugar. Mix and allow the sugar granules to dissolve before putting the sugary peaches into a sterilized 1-quart jar.
2. Pour in the brandy, filling the jar to within about ½ inch of the rim. Screw on the clean lid and place the jar in the back of the refrigerator. Shake the jar every few days to mix up the fruit and expose it to the alcohol.
3. After 2 weeks, taste the liquid to see if it has as much peach flavor as you like. If not, return it to the refrigerator for another week or two. About 4 weeks should be ample time for the transfer of flavor. When you think the liqueur has the level of peachiness you want, pour the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve or a coffee-filter-lined funnel to remove the little peach bits, then transfer the liquid to other sterilized jars.
4. Cover and store in the refrigerator or a dark cabinet until needed. It will keep indefinitely, but I recommend drinking it by the time peaches are available the next year.

Recipe borrowed from *The Perfect Peach*, by Marcy, Nikiko & David Mas Masumoto.