



# Harmony Valley Farm

## Certified Organic Fruit Share Newsletter

November 1 - 3, 2018

### Featured Producer: Organic Breezy Hill

By Gwen Anderson

This is the first time we've had SnowSweet apples, so naturally we needed to learn as much as we could about them and the farm they are coming from! SnowSweet apples are a newer variety of apple introduced to the market in 2006 after being developed by the University of Minnesota. This red apple is a cross between a Sharon and a Connell Red, with its name coming from its snow-white flesh that is extremely slow to oxidize. You can cut this apple in the morning and pack it into a lunch box, where it will be the same appetizing color it was when you cut it when you go to eat it at noon, no lemon juice needed! Organic Breezy Hill, the farm we are getting the SnowSweet apples from this week, started growing them about 8 years ago. Wendy Lynch from Organic Breezy Hill says that the SnowSweet is a great apple to grow in the Minnesota climate, especially for a certified organic grower. Aside from easy to grow, the apple itself is delicious: for a sweeter apple, balanced with tart and rich, buttery overtones. SnowSweets are good to eat out of hand, as well as cooking since "they hold their shape well," according to Wendy.

Organic Breezy Hill started out as a nameless dairy farm in the early 1900's. It is located near Maple Lake, MN. Patrick Lynch, Wendy's husband, took over the farm in 2000 when his parents retired and finally gave it a name. At that time, the farm was an organically grown commercial alfalfa farm, but it had two small orchards with a total of 300 trees. Since then, Wendy and Patrick have planted an additional 1200 trees and moved away from growing alfalfa altogether. Besides apples, Organic Breezy Hill also grows pears, plums, tart cherries, the occasional apricot, as well as rhubarb, raspberries, grapes, asparagus and squash.

Patrick, who has a degree in Environmental Science, saw the potential the farm had to be an "organic research Eden." In 2002, Organic Breezy Hill gained its organic certification for the first time (from MOSA, the same place we have our certification from). Patrick spent considerable time with mentors gaining experience and learning their methods, and now works with a Minnesota land grant university to test new fruit varieties and organic growing methods. Organic Breezy Hill takes their stewardship of the land seriously, farming with sustainable practices that rely on "patience, determination, and ingenuity" and addressing the root cause of any difficulty they may encounter in a manner that will benefit the land in the long-term. When he isn't farming, Patrick also shares his Minnesota specific farming knowledge as a consultant for everything from the certification process to anything orchard related.

Before Wendy got called back to work, I asked her what she would like me to pass along to our CSA members. "Enjoy the apples!" She said enthusiastically. "And if they would like to come out to the farm or talk to us, feel free." With the invitation, I had to look into the event page on their website. Sadly, we've missed their U pick fall raspberries and farm tour, but there is always next year! If you are interested in learning more about Organic Breezy Hill or finding out about their farm events, check out their website: [organicbreezyhill.com](http://organicbreezyhill.com) or their facebook page: Organic Breezy Hill LLC.

#### Ready to Eat:

Kiwi Berries  
Pomegranates  
Ambrosia Apples  
SnowSweet Apples

#### May Need Ripening:

Red Cascade Pears

### ■ Biodynamic Red Cascade Pears/Mt Hood Organics/Oregon

**Description:** The cascade pear is a Comice variety with a red blush to its skin. What really sets them apart from other pears, though, is their distinguished shape—round, stubby, and blunt. Compliment or not, this pear is extra juicy and smooth, and is said to be the sweetest and most flavorful of all pears!

**Storage/Preparation:** Let these pears ripen at room temperature and then eat within a day or two. Refrigerate ripe fruit for only a few days, since chilling them dulls their juicy flavor.

**Serving suggestions:** Cascade pears are often used as a dessert pear, so consider using them to make a pear sauce, pear crisp, or just serve slices of ripe Cascade pears with cheese for a simple ending to a meal.

### ■ SnowSweet Apples/Organic Breezy Hill/ Minnesota

**Description:** The SnowSweet apple is a newer variety, first introduced to markets in 2006 after being developed by the University of Minnesota. Its skin is mostly covered by a red blush over a green-yellow base. Its flesh is snow-white, and extremely slow to turn brown after being cut into! This apple is crisp and extremely juicy, with a sweet taste balanced with slight tartness and rich, buttery overtones.

**Storage/Preparation:** Apples are ready to eat when they are picked. It is best to store apples in the refrigerator until you're ready to eat them.

**Serving suggestions:** Because they don't brown quickly, this is a good apple to use in fresh, raw salads. Check out this week's featured recipes in the newsletter.

## ■ Pomegranates/Homegrown Organic Farms/California

**Description:** Pomegranates have a thick, leathery, ruby-colored skin that is inedible. The seeds are enclosed in a translucent pulp, allowing you to see the bright red juice inside each seed. It is not uncommon to see a little mold on the exterior of the blossom end. This is discarded when you peel it, so it does not affect the interior quality. Typically, pomegranates are used either for their seeds or their juice.

**Storage/Preparation:** To extract the whole seeds, cut the fruit into quarters and carefully fold back the outer skin to open up the pouches of seed collections. Carefully remove the seeds. You can eat the seeds whole or extract the juice from them by putting the seeds in a blender and then straining them. The other method is to roll the pomegranate on the counter with light pressure before cutting into it. Cut the fruit in half and extract the juice using a citrus reamer. Be warned that the juice will stain your clothing, so handle carefully. Pomegranates will store well at room temperature for one to two weeks.

**Serving suggestions:** Use pomegranate seeds as a garnish on fresh vegetable salads or mix into fruit salads. They are also tasty added to vanilla yogurt or you could coat the seeds in dark chocolate!

## ■ Ambrosia Apples/Covilli/Arizona

**Description:** Ambrosia apples have a creamy yellow flesh with yellow and pink blushed skin. This variety is lower in acid and you'll find these apples to be fragrant with crisp, juicy, sweet flesh.

**Storage/Preparation:** As usual, these apples are ready to eat immediately. For storage, keep them in a bag in your crisper drawer.

**Serving suggestions:** This week's apples are smaller in size, making them a great choice to send in lunches for the kids! You could also use this apple in this week's featured apple salad recipes.

## ■ Kiwi Berries/Organically Grown Co./Oregon

**Description:** Kiwi berries are a fun and unique treat. They have a smooth and edible skin that makes them perfect for a quick snack. As a bonus, these berries pack a serious nutritional punch, with one berry providing 5 times the amount of vitamin C found in an orange! They have a flavor that is kind of a cross between a strawberry and a kiwifruit.

**Storage/Preparation:** Your berries are ready to eat once they begin to wrinkle and appear slightly soft. They should be stored in the refrigerator until ready to eat. If you have some that are a little firm, you can ripen them for a day or so at room temperature.

**Serving suggestions:** Perfect to just pop in your mouth, or add them to a mixed fruit salad or fruit skewers.

### Beet, Carrot & Apple Salad

Yield: 6 servings

1 pound beets, peeled and roughly chopped (raw)	1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
8 oz carrots (approx. 2 large)	¾ tsp sea salt
2 apples, quartered & cored	½ tsp black pepper
2 lemons, zest & juice (approx. ¼ cup juice)	½ Tbsp honey, optional

1. Shred the beets, carrots, and apples, either with a food processor fitted with a shredding blade or you can also use a box grater. Place the shredded beets, carrots, and apples into a very large bowl.
2. Zest the lemons, and add zest to the bowl. Cut the lemons open and squeeze out the juice into the bowl. Be sure you don't put any seeds into the salad.
3. Add the olive oil, salt, pepper, and honey (optional).
4. Toss the salad well until everything is evenly combined.
5. Keeps in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Recipe borrowed from [stupidideasypaleo.com](http://stupidideasypaleo.com).

### Apple and Bacon Salad with Maple-Balsamic Vinaigrette

Yield: 6 servings

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil	2 cups fresh baby spinach or other salad greens	1 cup chopped toasted walnuts
2 tsp balsamic vinegar	8 slices cooked bacon, crumbled	1 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 tsp Dijon mustard	3-4 medium apples, cut into bite-sized pieces	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 Tbsp maple syrup		

1. Combine extra-virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar, mustard and maple syrup in a mixing bowl. Whisk until well-combined and thoroughly incorporated. Season with salt and black pepper and set aside.
2. Combine all remaining salad ingredients in a large salad bowl. Drizzle with some of the maple-balsamic vinaigrette and gently toss to combine. You want just enough dressing to lightly coat the salad components.
3. Serve immediately after adding the vinaigrette.

Recipe adapted from [diethood.com](http://diethood.com)