



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

May 11-12, 2012

## Celebrating 20 years of CSA Collaboration in WI by Andrea Yoder

*"We envision a future where Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is the backbone of a strong local food system; where all families have access to locally produced, organic food and have strong connections to their farms, food and community."—FairShare CSA Coalition*

*Pi-o-neer, (noun): a person or group that originates or helps open up a new line of thought or activity or a new method or technical development*

In October 1992, a group of individuals made up of would-be farmers, sustainable agriculture activists, and community organizers—all passionate about food and farming, initiated a quest to bring the CSA concept to Madison, Wisconsin. As their vision evolved over the winter months and into the early months of 1993, these original visionaries would go on to found an organization that is still going strong today to promote and support CSA farms in our region. This organization has been known by various names over its 20 year history, starting out as "MERF," Madison Eaters Revolutionary Front. Over time the name changed to MACSAC (The Madison Area CSA Coalition), and most recently has changed its name to the FairShare CSA Coalition. From the beginning, there was recognition that growers needed to be united toward a common cause—promoting and advancing local, community-based food systems—rather than pitted against each other in competition for would-be CSA shareholders. Meetings, events and projects (like creating a cookbook) where growers share information, ideas, and outreach have helped build camaraderie within the group as well as creating a forum for CSA eaters to learn and connect to their farms.

This past Sunday, FairShare hosted a CSA Pioneers Benefit Dinner at Graze Pub in Madison, Wisconsin. As one of the original CSA pioneers of this region, Richard was invited to attend the dinner and offer his perspective on the past 20 years of growing for CSA. Our guests for the evening were 20 year CSA members and past site host coordinators, John and Leslie Taylor.

After a welcome greeting from FairShare executive director Kiera Mulvey, John Hendrickson shared his remembrances of the early

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**PARSNIPS:** See veg feature

**SUNCHOKES:** Cut into bite sized pieces, toss with oil, salt, pepper and chili powder. Roast until golden brown and tender. Give them a squeeze of lime juice and enjoy!

**SALAD MIX:** This is a beautiful mix of baby lettuces and greens. Simply toss with your favorite vinaigrette and enjoy the flavors of the mix

**SPINACH:** Use fresh on its own for a salad, mix with Salad Mix, or wilt in butter with cumin, green garlic and red chili flakes. Finish with a squeeze of lemon, thinly sliced onion and toasted coconut!

**NETTLES:** Pick up an information sheet at your site for more recipes and ways to use nettles

**GREEN GARLIC:** Make a green garlic pesto to spread on bread, pizza crust or stir into scrambled eggs

**CHIVES:** If you receive some blossoms in your bunch of chives, pluck them off and pull the little petals apart—mix into your salad mix as a beautiful and tasty garnish

**POTATO OR EGYPTIAN WALKING ONIONS:** Excellent when grilled!

**FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISHES:** Eat the whole thing—radishes and their greens. Slice thinly and layer on a piece of toast with butter for a quick sandwich

**ASPARAGUS:** Our young asparagus fields are really starting to produce, but aren't quite up to full production. Our friend Elmer Beechy will be supplementing our asparagus again this year with asparagus from his certified organic fields while we wait for our fields to become more established.

**CHOICE: WILLOW** We've sent enough for "brown" week shares or those who did not pick up last week. Sorry, there is not enough for Weekly shares or sharing households to each have a bunch.

days of FairShare. One of the first organized activities in 1993 was holding a spring CSA fair in Madison. Harmony Valley Farm was one of only eight farms present at that first fair. In that first year, there were 900 CSA shares sold in the Madison area. Today there are over 9,000 CSA shares sold in Madison!

We started the evening with a *Rhubarb Cocktail* garnished with our red radishes sprinkled with salt. The seasonal menu for the evening was very well executed and represented products from over 13 different regional producers!

***Rhubarb Soup with bacon lardons, grilled spring onions, pine nuts, sunflower oil and aged balsamic***

***Asparagus Bibimbap, crispy sushi rice, sunny side-up egg on top of kimchee, radish salad and gochujang chili sauce***

***Bourbon-Brined Pork Tenderloin, smoked sweet onion, pureed potatoes, green garlic, ramps, Chinese broccoli, wild foraged morel jus***

***Parsnip and Apple Upside-Down Cake with plum balsamic buttermilk sorbet***

After the first course, Richard took the stand along with John and Leslie Taylor. As the Harmony Valley Farm CSA evolved, Richard remembers hearing some common phrases from CSA members. "**Learning to Eat Out of the Box,**" and "**Making the Transition To Seasonal Eating**" are just a few that Richard quickly became familiar with. CSA members described the lifestyle change they experienced when they became CSA members as a change from shopping for ingredients from a shopping list versus receiving the ingredients and then figuring out how they would prepare these foods. It really is a 180-degree turn around and requires a transition time to adjust to this new way of thinking about how to "Eat out of the box." Longtime members advise that it takes a good three years of CSA experience to make a successful "transition to seasonal eating." But once you've transitioned, Leslie Taylor says "Why would you want to eat any other way? Everything tastes so much better in season from your farm!" John Taylor expressed "When we sit down to eat, we eat with Harmony Valley Farm."

As the evening progressed, we enjoyed hearing the memories and experiences shared by Barb Perkins from Vermont Valley Commu-

nity Farm and Kristen Kordet, FairShare Board member. Barb and her husband Dave have been doing CSA since 1995. Barb expressed that CSA is not just a fad that will come and go, it's stood the test of time over the past 20 years and eating good healthy food will continue to be important in our communities. Kristen stated that CSA is really a two way street of Community Supporting Agriculture (CSA) which in turn creates an Agriculture Supported Community. As we look forward to a future of mindful eating, FairShare will continue to focus its efforts on promoting CSAs and working on innovative ways to connect more families with CSA shares. Through their Partner Shares program, they provide financial support for low-income households to participate in a CSA. They will also continue to promote the HMO rebate program which rewards families and individuals for making proactive health decisions. This program is the first of its kind in the country and continues to bring in new CSA members each year.

It's an exciting year as we stop and reflect on the past 20 years and the growth we've seen with our CSA program and the growth of CSA in this region. We wouldn't be where we are today without the visions and hard work of our pioneer farmers and activists.

*If you are interested in learning more about FairShare, the programs they have to offer, or ways you can support the organization, visit their website [www.csacoalition.org](http://www.csacoalition.org)*

## Vegetable Feature: Overwintered Parsnips

Parsnips fill an important place in our seasonal Wisconsin diets because of their ability to survive outside in even the coldest of winters, making them available early in the spring. Parsnips have a long growing season and are planted early in the spring. The seeds take at least 2 weeks to germinate and push through the soil. Once the seedling has emerged, it's a race against time to control the weeds. At harvest time, we bring in bins and bins of parsnips... but we don't harvest them all. We intentionally leave some in the ground to hold them there until spring. Parsnips dug in the spring are by far the best tasting and sweetest parsnips of the year! Over the winter, natural sugars in the plant increase as a means of survival. When you eat these parsnips, you'll notice a dramatic difference in natural flavors and sweetness in comparison to parsnips harvested in the fall.

A basic way to prepare parsnips is to simply roast them until they are golden brown. Parsnips are also a nice addition to spring soups incorporated with sorrel, mushrooms and nettles. For those of you still learning to like parsnips, you might want to take advantage of their natural sweetness and use them in a dessert or baked good. Try substituting parsnips for carrots in your favorite carrot cake recipe, or try the recipe in this newsletter for parsnip muffins. You can also substitute parsnips for apples in an apple upside down cake recipe. Store parsnips in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. They are going to want to start sprouting, so plan to eat them within a few weeks. If they start to grow little root hairs, simply remove with a vegetable scrub brush or peel them off with a vegetable peeler.

Upcoming Events in the Madison area, celebrating the **Year of CSA:**

**Plough & Barrel Dinners** at Cooper's Tavern: June 4, August 6, October 1 (features HVF & Lake Louie Beer!)

**CSA Barn Party** at Sh\*tty Barn in Spring Green:

August 18 - Bands, Ian's Slice of CSA Pizza & Beer!

### Parsnip Muffins

1 cup whole wheat pastry flour  
 ¼ cup all-purpose flour  
 ¼ cup honey  
 1½ tsp cinnamon  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 ½ tsp baking soda  
 Pinch of salt

Yield: 1 Dozen

2 large eggs  
 ⅓ cup vegetable oil  
 2 tsp vanilla  
 4 medium parsnips, grated (2 cups)  
 ½ cup unsweetened applesauce  
 ¼- ½ cup toasted wheat germ



-Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twelve muffin cups with paper liners.

-In a medium bowl, mix together flours, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

-In a separate bowl, beat eggs. Whisk in oil and vanilla. Fold wet mixture into the dry ingredients just until combined. Stir in applesauce, honey and parsnips until all ingredients are incorporated.

-Fill muffin cups about three-fourths full. Sprinkle each muffin with toasted wheat germ. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean—20-30 minutes. Remove muffins from the pan and cool on a wire rack.

### Be kind to your site coordinator!

**-Check your name (and only your name) off the checklist when you pick up your share. Do not take a box if your name is not on the list.** Contact your site coordinator & Terri at the farm if you think your name should be on the list, or if you have any other difficulties at your delivery site.

**-Call or email your site coordinator ahead of time if you will be late or unable to pick up your box!** If you do not arrange with your site host ahead of time, they will give your box to a food pantry or neighbor. Site coordinators usually make courtesy reminder calls in the beginning of the season, but are under no obligation to do so. Their main responsibility is to find a good home for unclaimed boxes. **It is your responsibility to remember to pick up your shares during the hours specified at your site.**

**-Make sure anyone who picks up your share for you knows what to expect and where to go!**

**-Keep your site clean.** Flatten your box and put in the container labeled "Put flattened boxes here." Clean up any papers, trash, or random veggies at your site.