



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

June 15-16, 2012

Turn Here Sweet Corn – Organic Farming Works by Atina Diffley Book Report by Terri

I just finished this amazing book & I highly recommend it to just about anybody – not just farmers, not just supporters of organic growing, and not just for foodies. This memoir has everything: love, money, intrigue, passion, compassion, and history. Through her relationships with people and the land that she loves, Ms. Diffley relates a compelling story of community building, soil building, and building a successful business – and life. Her struggles were specific to her farm (Gardens of Eagan) and her fight for the land, but she speaks in universal truths that we can all understand and relate to.

The book hooked me right from the start, as she remembers a devastating hail storm; “A hailstone is just hard, cold water. I love water. I need water. I imagine water flowing and plants drinking. More than half of my body is water. What happens when I am cold and hard? I think about winter and snow and trees sleeping. But this is June and everything is growing. I don’t know what purpose hail has.” The devastation she sees in her fields after the storm is horrible – and all too familiar, having lived through some devastating weather events here at Harmony Valley. But this story is really about triumph over adversity: “Lots of bad things have happened in my life, and I’ve always recovered, always come back even stronger. My roots are deep in fertile soil. It won’t be the first time they’ll pull me through. Somehow I just have to remember this.”

She doesn’t pussyfoot around her opinions of corporations (the evil Koch Industries) and the losses of urban development. While some of her musings on the world are a little mystical for my taste, overall she is quite grounded, plain speaking and definitely an expert farmer/grower. Her love of the land and for growing good, healthy, organic food for families is evident. Despite the back breaking work, lack of sleep, physical & mental exhaustion, failed crops and political battles she remains optimistic about her role and her efforts. Don’t get me wrong - it’s not all strife and gloom & doom – I smiled

**Strawberry Sunday at the farm!
Sunday June 17, Noon - 6pm
U-pick strawberries (3-6 pm), farm tour (1:15),
and a potluck (12 noon).**

THIS WEEK’S BOX

Fresh Italian Garlic: Fresh garlic is milder, juicier and sweeter than dried garlic. Separate the stalk from the bulb. Add the stalk to soups or broths to add flavor. Slice and sauté the cloves after you peel them - the papery skin is starting to form around them. Store at room temperature.

Scallions: Not just a garnish anymore - use in egg dishes, stir-fries and soups.

Kohlrabi: See veggie feature on the back of the newsletter

Yukina Savoy: Use like you would use spinach in a salad, or add to a soup or stir-fry.

Strawberries: Visit the fields where these grew on Strawberry Day, Sunday June 17.

Sugar Snap Peas: Stir fry with chili or curry paste & onion until crisp tender; add a squeeze of lime, salt & top with chopped mint.

Salad Mix: Wrap in a tortilla with shredded cheese and your favorite sandwich meat or beans/lentils.

Amaranth Greens: Hearty yet tender texture, these beautiful “greens” can add color to a raw salad. They’ll mellow and soften as they cook down and you can treat them like any other cooking green (but red). Simple works: sauté with chopped green or fresh garlic, salt & pepper, and a squeeze of lemon or vinegar.

Radish Seed Pods: Edible pods to be used as a crunchy, spicy addition to salads or sauté lightly in a stir fry. Or pickle them & serve as a side dish: 2 cups of pods, 1 tsp. sea salt, 2 TBS. rice wine vinegar, Ground black pepper, Sesame seed oil. Put pods in a mixing bowl and sprinkle with salt. Cover and chill for 30 minutes. Drain accumulated liquid and rinse to remove the salt. Pat dry with paper towels and return to bowl. Add rice wine vinegar, a dash or two of ground black pepper and a couple drops of sesame seed oil. Refrigerate at least 8 hours.

Iceberg or Mini Romaine or Boston Lettuce: One of those hardy lettuces that holds up well and grows in summer heat. Top a sandwich or make a wedge salad with peas, hard-boiled egg, shredded cheese and a thick, creamy dressing.

and laughed a lot while reading this book! And honestly, I found it hard to put down. I really wanted to find out what happened and how it all worked out!

First, the town of Eagan, MN declares eminent domain over her husband’s 5th generation farm land, and they have to go in search of new land. Land is always at a premium but the Diffley’s are also certified organic growers on the edges of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. They find land

but it will take three years to transition to organic. In the meantime, they have to pay a new mortgage on land that isn’t producing. But through the support of the local community and the co-ops they’ve built great relationships with along the way, they make a go of it. Then, Koch Industries want to put a crude oil pipeline right down the middle of this new land! Atina takes up this fight with vigor – taking on the Public Utilities Commission, the Minnesota Pipe

Upcoming Events in the Madison area, celebrating the **Year of CSA:**
Plough & Barrel Dinners at Cooper’s Tavern: August 6,
October 1 (features HVF & Lake Louie Beer!) For more info: csacoalition.org

Line Company (run by Koch) and eventually making precedent to protect other organic farms from this devastating action.

One of the things I really admire about this farm family is the effort taken to live a healthy, balanced and emotionally rich life. Each winter, Atina and her husband Martin take one full week off of farming. They catch up on life – no planning and no seed catalogs, just family time. Then they really take the time to assess what they are doing and write a quality of life statement and make sure they are living according to their values: “Balance doesn’t mean that we will never work too hard or be too tired. We’re doing exactly what we need to be doing. It’s fine if we choose to work until we’re exhausted as long as recovery is possible in the relative present.

That’s what present time is, the balancing point between the past and the future.

It is when we steal from our future or burn up the past that balance is out of control. That future and past include our health and the well-being of our crew and children and land and nature.

Balance requires not taking more than can be returned or recovered...Balance is all about relationship, which is all about respect.”

Read this book and be inspired!

Vegetable Feature: Kohlrabi

The name for this vegetable is derived from “khol” meaning stem or cabbage and “rabi” meaning turnip. While it is in the cabbage family and resembles a turnip, it grows differently than both. I always assumed kohlrabi was a root vegetable, so I was surprised to see the bulb above the ground in the field. It actually is an enlarged stem that is anchored into the ground by a thinner root. Its stems and leaves shoot up from the bulbous part to give it a rather galactic appearance.

We grow both green and purple kohlrabi, which are no different from each other once they are peeled. The bulb and the leaves are both edible. The fibrous peel should be removed from the bulb prior to eating. The flesh is crisp yet tender and sweet with a hint of a mild cabbage flavor. It can be prepared in many different ways both raw and cooked. The simplest way to eat it is to simply peel it and munch on slices plain or with a veggie dip. It can also be shredded and used in slaws with a variety of dressings or sliced and added to sandwiches or salads. Every year when we start harvesting kohlrabi Richard is known to say “Can we have creamy kohlrabi slaw?”

It also has a very pleasant flavor in its cooked form and can be prepared in a myriad of ways including sautéed, braised, steamed, or stir-fried. In Eastern Europe, it is often hollowed out and stuffed with a rice, meat, bread or veggie filling. The leaves are prepared similarly to collard greens and require a bit of liquid and a longer cooking time (15-20 minutes) than more tender greens such as spinach or Arugula. Kohlrabi is more prevalent in Eastern European, Chinese, and Indian cuisine, so look to cookbooks on those cultures for more recipe ideas.

To store kohlrabi, cut the stems and leaves off. Store both leaves and the bulbs in perforated plastic in the refrigerator. The leaves will keep for about 1 week, and the bulbs will last up to several weeks if stored properly.

Kohlrabi Hash Browns

Serves 3-4

3-4 medium kohlrabi bulbs, peeled

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1/3 cup chopped onion

2 Tbsp dried bread crumbs

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/4 tsp dried red pepper flakes

Freshly ground black pepper

2 Tbsp olive oil

2 Tbsp butter

Plain yogurt or sour cream



1. Grate the kohlrabi and wrap it in a dish towel. Squeeze out excess moisture.
2. Combine eggs, onion, bread crumbs, salt, ginger, red pepper in a large mixing bowl. Add black pepper to taste. Stir until well blended.
3. Heat the oil and butter in a large, heavy skillet. Add the kohlrabi and press down firmly with a sturdy spatula. Do not stir. Let the kohlrabi cook until brown, 5-7 minutes. (If the kohlrabi is in a layer thicker than 1/4 inch, you may want to stir it up after the last 5-7 minutes to let the inner part cook and brown.) Serve with yogurt or sour cream.

Recipe borrowed from *Farmer John's Cookbook, The Real Dirt on Vegetables* by Farmer John Peterson and Angelic Organics

Please re-use or recycle your strawberry
containers at home.

We are unable to clean and re-use them at the farm. Thanks!