



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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## Planning Around Your CSA Box

by: Megan Muehlenbruch

Whether this is your first year as part of a CSA or you are a veteran CSA member, many will ask, "How do I plan for and use the contents of my CSA box?". If you've asked yourself this question, no worries - you are not alone. Learning to effectively use the contents of your CSA box takes a little practice, patience and willingness to try something new. Planning for and around your CSA box is certainly easier when you have an idea of what to expect in it. We try to help our members by posting our "Best Guess" of the box contents for the week on Monday on the homepage of our website. While weather and other factors can certainly affect the final box contents, the list usually stays pretty accurate. For those that plan their meals, this can certainly help you plan your grocery shopping for the upcoming week.

As the season is settling in, being able to predict the upcoming items (even without the "Best Guess" list) can be a little easier as well. Often times new items in your box don't show up one week and disappear the next. Instead, they often appear in your boxes for a couple weeks at least. Keeping this in mind, you can think and look ahead for recipes, ideas and inspirations for the items in your box. For example, a few weeks back I had asparagus in my CSA box that I picked up. I cooked it up and enjoyed it in a pasta dish and not too long after, I found an asparagus recipe that I was dying to try. I held onto the recipe hoping to find asparagus in my next box. As hoped for, I received asparagus in my CSA box again last week. Better yet, I already had a delicious recipe on hand with all the ingredients stocked in my kitchen! Keep your eye out for recipes that utilize items in this week's box and if you can't make the recipe this week, you can likely hold onto it for next! That gives you a little extra time to get those extra groceries too! Save these recipes that you find. Store them in a recipe book or binder, organized by the seasons. Next season you will have a book/binder of great seasonal recipes that you enjoy, organized in the order that the vegetables will appear in your box!

We certainly don't expect that all of our CSA members plan a week ahead of time when it comes to their meals, though many do! If you aren't one of those people who enjoys planning out Saturday evening's meal on Monday morning, there are still ways to ensure that you get the most from your CSA box. One tactic is to think along the lines of substitution. "What does this vegetable remind me of?". You can ask this question in

## This Week's Box

**SPINACH:** Did you wait too long to use your spinach? A great idea for a colorful addition to an egg and bacon quiche is to add spinach. I like to sauté the spinach with green garlic and a little olive oil and throw it in my prepared quiche.

**SALAD MIX:** The crisp leafy greens are great mixed with a Mediterranean salad. Mix together green garlic vinaigrette, feta cheese, grilled asparagus, Kalamata olives, and breakfast radishes, for a fresh summer flavor.

**ASPARGUS:** Mix your favorite homemade hummus recipe with some roasted asparagus and green garlic, and mix together with a food processor. Serve with toasted pita bread or chips and you have a crowd pleaser.

**RHUBARB:** A great savory way to use your rhubarb is to create a chili and honey sauce with it. Mix with sautéed spinach and top over soba noodles for a tasty light meal. Also see this week's vegetable feature!

**GREEN GARLIC:** Green garlic is a great addition to a pizza. Top a baked whole wheat pizza crust with tomato sauce, sautéed spinach and asparagus. Finish with a fresh mozzarella and warm it up.

**PEA VINE:** A pretty salad for the summer; mix pea vine, dried cranberries, goat cheese, and red radishes, with champagne vinaigrette.

**FRENCH BREAKFAST OR RED RADISHES:** Traditionally miso soup is served with daikon radish, instead use the delicate French breakfast radish for a beautiful garnish and taste.

**POTATO ONIONS:** Thinly slice these flavorful onions and use them to top crisp flat bread with sautéed asparagus, spinach, mushrooms, and an olive oil balsamic vinegar drizzle.

### Rhubarb Syrup

Recipes borrowed from John Ivanko and Lisa Kivistik's book, *Farmstead Chef*

Yields 2 cups

4 cups rhubarb (approximately 1-1.25 pounds)  
1 cup water  
1 cup sugar or ½ cup maple syrup or honey

1. Combine ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook for 30-40 minutes or until the rhubarb has melted into the sauce and is very soft.
2. Remove from heat and carefully strain the mixture to separate the liquid syrup portion from the pulp. Discard the pulp. Cool the syrup and store in the refrigerator until ready for use. Alternatively, freeze the syrup in ice cube trays and store it in the freezer for use at a later time. Check out the recipes below for ways to use the syrup.

### Rhubarb Strawberry Daiquiri

Yields 4 servings

2 cups strawberries, fresh or frozen  
¼ cup rum  
¼ cup Triple Sec (or any orange liquor)  
1 Tbsp lime juice  
¼ cup powdered sugar  
½ cup rhubarb syrup

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender. If using fresh strawberries, throw in some ice cubes if you're after that slushy, frozen feel. Blend for about 30 seconds or until slushy.
2. For an informal summer evening, serve in pint-sized canning jars around a campfire.

### Rhubarb Fizz

3-4 servings

2 cups rhubarb syrup  
24 oz unflavored sparkling water

1. To make one serving, pour 4-6 ounces of rhubarb syrup into a drinking glass.
2. Add 4-6 ounces of sparkling water and enjoy!

terms of texture and/or taste. A great example of this would be with parsnips. Parsnips are similar to carrots in shape, texture and preparation methods. Often times these two items can be substituted for one another for

a twist on a recipe. Look at the items in your box and seek out similarities to other vegetables that you are more familiar with. "What other vegetable does this feel like? What does the taste remind me of?"

Try preparing and using the new vegetables in similar ways as you would the familiar ones. You just might find a new twist to some of your favorite meals!

There are some meals that seem to have been created for the purpose of using as many vegetables as you can. We like these meals! Pam, a long-time, dedicated member and site host says "almost anything can be made into quesadilla fillings-especially greens." Pam also enjoys making stir-frys and salads, which allow for a wide range of creativity in the kitchen. These are great staple meal items that allow you to mix in a large variety of vegetables. Soups are another great way to utilize the contents of your box - not only do they allow you to use many vegetables at once, but they can also be frozen and enjoyed months down the road. Another vegetable loving meal - breakfast! Eggs love vegetables! Omelets, scrambles, quiches, and frittatas are all enhanced by a few items from your CSA box and also make for a great start to a day!

Keely, another loyal CSA member, and her family have a few different approaches to eating out of the CSA box. When it comes to finding uses for vegetables she and her family are less familiar with, they dig around for a new recipe online or in cookbooks. She is "not afraid to try and fail", which is a great attitude for CSA members new and old alike. Keely and her family will often do batch cooking on Sundays when they have a little extra time to play around in the kitchen. Like Pam, she tries to use up many items during this time in soups, stews, sauces and stir-frys.

Just before Keely's next box arrives, the family works to prepare any of the remaining vegetables from the previous week into something that can either be frozen (chopped up, diced, etc.) or shared with neighbors. Her other option - juicing! If it's not frozen or shared, anything that is left at the end of the week is often juiced for a healthy drink option - mostly utilizing roots and greens. As a final option, the family will compost anything that they don't get time to use so that they feel nothing is being wasted.

Each household will have different tricks for using up the contents of their box. Each week we always provide a newsletter with ideas for all of the items in your box to help inspire you to try the different items in a variety of ways. Cookbooks based on seasonal eating are always a great resource option. The recipes often use many vegetables that are in your CSA box in a given week, allowing you to use more vegetables at one time and waste less.

Some members see the items in the box and instantly have a meal come to mind while others will run to their favorite blog, cookbook, or recipe database to find the perfect recipe for them. Every member has their own ways of mak-

ing the most of their CSA box. The more you experiment with different uses for a variety of vegetables, the more natural the uses and ideas will come to you. Soon you will see a tomatillo and have 5 or 6 great preparation ideas come to mind! In a couple weeks we will be sharing some of our favorite cookbooks, blogs and websites for great vegetable recipes. You might find a few that catch your eye and can become part of your 'go to' list for recipes throughout the season. Like you, even those of us who work with these vegetables each day still turn to a variety of resources for inspiration and ideas for enjoying them! It's always fun to try something new!

## Vegetable Feature: Rhubarb

By: Andrea Yoder

Rhubarb is an interesting vegetable...that's right it's a vegetable! In early American kitchens it was often referred to as "The Pie Plant," which is probably the most common use for it in this country. Rhubarb is a perennial plant which means it survives from year to year without having to be planted again. It grows from a root crown and can produce for years. Last year we planted a new field of rhubarb. As tempting as it is to harvest the beautiful rhubarb from those young plants, we know that the young plants are still building their crowns and harvesting from the plant will prevent full development.

The edible part of the plant is the stalk which can range in color from bright red to green or a combination of the two colors. The leaves of the rhubarb plant are not edible and should never be eaten raw or cooked. While you can eat the rhubarb raw, it is highly recommended that you cook it. Rhubarb is very tart in flavor, which is the unique characteristic of this vegetable that makes it stand out. As mentioned previously, rhubarb is most often associated with pie and other desserts including cakes, muffins, tarts, crisps, cobblers and custard. Because of its tartness, it is often paired with sweet fruits such as apples, strawberries, blueberries or raspberries. Aside from desserts, rhubarb can be used to make chutney or compotes to enjoy with ham, cured meats, hard cheeses, etc. It is also tasty when added to a stir-fry near the end of cooking. Rhubarb is related to sorrel and will melt into hot liquid when cooked, just as sorrel does. This makes it a great candidate for making sauces.

If you've had your fill of rhubarb for the spring, don't let it go to waste—preserve it for use in the winter! The easiest way is to simply dice it raw, put it in a freezer bag and toss it into the freezer. During the winter you can pull it out and use it to make fruit crisps or other tasty baked goods as well as a tangy sauce for pork shoulder. Serve it with a hearty root mash and you will have a very delicious meal on your table! Rhubarb is also often used to make chutneys as well as jams and jellies such as rhubarb strawberry jam. Get creative with rhubarb this year and try some new uses for this beautiful vegetable!

## Braised Pork Shoulder with Rhubarb-Red Wine Sauce

Recipe by Chef Andrea Yoder

Yields 6 servings

1 Tbsp salt  
1 tsp black pepper, ground  
½ tsp white pepper, ground  
1 Tbsp fennel seeds  
2 tsp coriander, ground  
1 tsp thyme, dried  
1 ½ Tbsp vegetable oil  
1 pork shoulder roast (2.5-3 pounds)  
3 cups pork or chicken stock  
1 ½ cups red wine  
4 cups rhubarb, diced (approximately 1-1.25 pounds)  
½ cup maple syrup  
3 bay leaves  
½ cup green garlic or onions, minced  
Salt & Black Pepper, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a small bowl, mix the first six ingredients to make a dry spice blend.
3. Place pork shoulder on a platter lined with paper towels and blot the meat to dry off the surface. Rub the dry spice blend all over the surface of the pork. Set aside.
4. In a 12-inch sautoir (wide pan similar to a sauté pan, except with straight sides) or 10-inch pot, heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat. When the pan is hot and the oil is shimmering, put the pork shoulder in the pan. Sear the meat until golden brown on the bottom. Turn the roast over and brown the other side of the meat as well. Once both sides have been browned, carefully add the stock and red wine. Next, add the rhubarb, maple syrup and bay leaves. Stir to combine and return the pan to a simmer.
5. Once the liquid is simmering, cover and place the pan in the oven. Braise the meat for about 60 minutes, then remove the lid and turn the meat over so both sides will be cooked in the liquid. Add the green garlic or onions, replace the cover, and continue to cook the meat for another 1-1 ½ hours or until it is fork tender. This means you can easily insert and remove a fork in the center of the piece of meat.
6. When the meat is done, remove the pan from the oven. Take the pork shoulder out of the pan and set it aside on a platter. Carefully transfer the sauce to a blender or use an immersion blender to blend it in the pan. Blend to a smooth consistency, then return the sauce to the pan.
7. Bring the sauce to a simmer over medium heat and allow it to simmer for 15-20 minutes or until it has a gravy-like consistency. Season with salt and pepper.
8. Cut the pork shoulder into slices and serve hot with the rhubarb sauce.