



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

September 6-7, 2013

## Pepper Mania!

by: Andrea Yoder

Beautiful fields of vegetable plants are a sight to behold. Each plant has its own unique characteristics which define its beauty—sometimes it's the leaf shape, sometimes it's the blossoms, and sometimes it's the fruit it bears. In the case of peppers, it can be all three! One of the things that intrigues me the most about peppers is the wide variety of different kinds you can find in just one class of plant. We cut back this year and only grew 17 different kinds of peppers.

Peppers are classified as either sweet or hot and can vary in size from just a small pepper that resembles a large bean seed to a big, blocky bell pepper. While it is common to eat green peppers, you'll find that the flavor of a green pepper is more mild and straightforward without a lot of sweetness in it. This is because green peppers are technically not ripe. How do you get a colored pepper? You have to have patience. All colored peppers start out as a green pepper. As the fruit ripens on the plant, it makes a transition from a green fruit to a colored pepper. As this change occurs, natural sugars develop in the fruit making it not only sweet but also flavorful. An added bonus is that as the pepper ripens and changes color, the nutrient value of the pepper increases. Colored peppers can contain as much as 60% greater levels of antioxidants and other nutrients including Vitamins C, A, E, K, B6, and folate. It is also low in calories and high in fiber.

For the next several weeks you'll continue to receive a variety of peppers in your box. Always check the newsletter for descriptions so you can identify the peppers and determine if they are hot or sweet. The heat of a hot pepper is mostly contained in the white pith and seed cavity within the pepper. If you don't have a tolerance for the heat, you can remove this portion of the pepper and significantly reduce the heat of the pepper. Two more words of caution when handling and cooking with hot peppers. First, adjust the amount of hot peppers in the dish you are making to your liking. Remember, you can always add a little more but you can't take the heat away. Second, when handling hot peppers it is advisable to wear plastic

## This Week's Box

**ZUCCHINI OR SCALLOPINI SQUASH:** Julienne zucchini with carrot, red bell peppers, onion, and bok choy, mix with creamy poppy seed dressing for a colorful slaw.

**CUCUMBERS:** For a crisp texture, add cucumbers to your next guacamole dip.

**SWEET SPANISH ONIONS:** Mix a small dice of Spanish sweet onion and pancetta and add to an omelet for a savory treat.

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Add some minced garlic to a tomato kale cream sauce over warm penne pasta and top with grilled chicken breast.

**ORANGE UKRAINE PEPPER:** Use these sweet red or orange, pointy ended peppers by slicing and mixing in a soba noodle soup with edamame beans, green beans, broccoli, onion, and garlic.

**JALAPEÑO:** Use these dark green pointy ended peppers for a spicy fun twist on breakfast, cornmeal pancakes with chopped bacon and jalapenos are sure to be a hit. Drizzle with maple syrup and you have a savory-sweet delight.

**GREEN "UW" ROASTER PEPPERS:** These are the green peppers that are long with a blocky bottom. These are a hot pepper. More info in the main newsletter article

**CARROT:** Starting to get in the fall mood? Instead of baking carrot muffins, one of my favorite ways to use sweet carrot is in cookies mixed with raisins, coconut, and walnuts.

**SUN JEWEL MELONS OR CANTALOUPE:** Get the kids involved and make fruit kabobs with chunks of melon, peaches, pears and other fruits. Dip in vanilla yogurt.

**WATERMELON:** Small dice watermelon and mix with diced tomatoes, cumin, fennel, chili powder, turmeric, a dash of sugar, lemon and lime juice, chopped mint, and season with salt and pepper.

**SUNGOLD TOMATOES OR GRAPE TOMATOES:** Mix these beautiful tomatoes with sliced radish, fresh herbs, spinach, and a sweetened yogurt dressing.

**LARGE TOMATO VARIETY:** These are great in various ways; salads, stuffed, roasted, or my favorite, a summer classic Bacon, Lettuce, Tomato sandwich on crisp wheat bread.

**GREEN BEANS:** Green beans will add a fresh crisp flavor to a spicy Thai soup with chili chicken broth, rice noodles, and diced chicken.

**BROCCOLI OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO:** Mix broccoli or romanesco with diced cucumber, cooked orzo, mint or cilantro, lemon juice, minced garlic, diced avocado, toasted almonds, edamame beans, and crumbled feta cheese for a fresh summer salad.

**ARUGULA:** It's a little spicy this time of year, but more richly flavored ingredients such as oil, cheese, cream and avocado will mellow it out.

**GOLD POTATOES:** Dice and boil these potatoes and let them cool, mix into your favorite potato salad recipe.

**CHOICE:** Basil

gloves and/or be aware of where you put your hands for awhile after you cut the pepper—as in don't rub your eyes!

As long as we're on the topic of hot peppers, let's talk about which ones you'll get in your box. Last week we picked gorgeous, deep green poblano peppers for you. This is a pepper with medium heat level. The big, blocky peppers are great for stuffing with cheese, grain and vegetable mixtures, etc. This week you are receiving a pepper we call the UW Roaster (as in University of Wisconsin). This is a pepper that is very similar to an Anaheim pepper. It has more heat than a poblano, but not quite as hot as a jalapeño. This pepper is also

great for stuffing and roasting. It also adds a nice heat and great flavor to chili, Mexican dishes and even curries. When this pepper turns red, it is a delicious mix of sweet and hot all in one. The last hot pepper you'll get in your box is the familiar jalapeño. Save these up and make jalapeño poppers, or just eat them as a condiment to meals. Jalapeños are great as pickles as well—which is a great way to preserve them so you can eat them all winter long!

Our earliest sweet peppers are bell peppers which are just starting to turn red. This week you're receiving the orange Ukraine peppers. These

are similar to a bell pepper, but with a pointy end and more orange-red flesh. They are a great multi-purpose pepper that adds not only color but also sweetness to dishes. We also grow Italian frying peppers which, as the name suggests, are great when sautéed or fried! This year we have an awesome new Italian Frying Pepper that turns orange when it is ripe. The flavor on this pepper is excellent—just one step under a mini-sweet pepper. Which brings us to another one of our favored sweet peppers...the precious little mini-sweet peppers.

Mini-sweet peppers are one of the sweetest, most flavorful peppers you'll likely ever taste. The plants look like little Christmas trees when they are loaded with colored peppers. These peppers make a great snack, are excellent when stuffed with soft cheese, and are great sautéed, grilled, or roasted. We save our own seed for this variety, making it even more special.

From a culinary perspective, peppers are very versatile in use. They can be eaten raw or cooked and pair well in dishes with other summer vegetables such as potatoes, zucchini, tomatoes and eggplant. Peppers mark the transition from late summer into early fall, and as such can dance on the line between summer vegetables and fall vegetables which means they also pair well with sweet potatoes and winter

squash to name just a few.

Roasting peppers helps to develop their natural sweetness and changes the flavors of the pepper to not only enhance sweetness, but gives it kind of a smoky flavor. There are several methods for roasting peppers—none of which are difficult. Fire-Roasted peppers can be roasted over a direct flame, either on a grill or over a gas burner. Just put the pepper directly over the flame either on a metal rack or just hold it with tongs. Rotate the pepper until the outer skin is charred. An alternative is to roast peppers under a broiler or just put them on a pan in a very hot oven. This last method won't give you as much of the smoky flavor, but still works great. Once you've roasted the peppers, place them in a bowl while they are still hot and cover with plastic wrap so they steam as they cool. Once they are cool enough to handle, pull out the cores and scrape the skin away from the flesh. Now you can chop or slice the roasted peppers and add them to sauces, dips, etc.

Peppers are very easy to preserve. The simplest way is to just wash them and freeze them raw. You can also dehydrate them or pickle them. Peppers are great to pull out in the winter and add to pizzas, soups, sauces, etc. Have fun with peppers for the next couple of weeks.....summer won't last forever!

### Pork & Green Chile Stew

Recipe borrowed from *Food & Wine*, September 2012

Serves 6

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
 2 pounds trimmed boneless pork shoulder, cut into ¾-inch cubes  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 1 large sweet onion, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise  
 3-4 green chiles (poblanos or roaster peppers)—halved lengthwise, cored and thinly sliced  
 1-2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and thinly sliced (keep some seeds for spicier flavor)  
 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
 2 cups chicken broth  
 ¼ cup chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish  
 Lime wedges, diced onion, diced fresh tomatoes, rice and warm corn tortillas for serving

1. In a large sauce pot or cast-iron casserole, heat the olive oil until almost smoking. Season the pork cubes with salt and black pepper and add them to the pan. Sear the pork over high heat, stirring once or twice, until lightly browned in spots, about 5 minutes. Add the onion, green chiles, jalapeno pepper and garlic. Cover and cook over high heat, stirring once or twice, until the vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Cover partially and simmer the stew over moderately low heat until the pork is just tender and the broth is reduced by about half, about 20 minutes.
2. Stir in the ¼ cup of cilantro and season with salt and black pepper. Garnish the stew with cilantro and serve with lime wedges, diced onion and tomatoes, corn tortillas and rice.

### Produce Plus:

**Roma Tomatoes, 25 pounds for \$36**  
**Tomatillos, 10 pounds for \$33**  
**Jalapeño Peppers, 5 pounds for \$19**  
**Edamame, 10 pounds for \$44**  
**Sweet Red Peppers, 10 pounds for \$30**

**Mazo, Cross Plains, Strathfield, Argyle, Token Creek, Madison and Local:**

Order by 5pm on Wednesday, September 11 for pick-up on September 13/14. Madison CSA members will pick-up at our Dane County Farmers' Market Stand on Mifflin St. on Saturday and should pay at market.

When ordering, please include:

First and Last Name  
 Delivery Site  
 Phone Number  
 Quantity of each item you are ordering

### Shakshuka (Poached eggs in a Tomato-Pepper Sauce)

Recipe adapted from *Healing Foods Cookbook* published by Vegetarian Times

"An Israeli favorite, this poached egg dish gets a burst of flavor from diced red pepper. You can prepare the sauce in advance, and then reheat it just before cooking the eggs." Excellent for brunch, a light lunch or for dinner.

Serves 4

1 ½ tsp olive oil  
 1 medium onion, chopped (1-1/3 cups)  
 1 sweet red pepper, diced (1- 1/3 cups)  
 1 jalapeño chile, chopped (3 tbsp)—optional with level of heat adjusted to your liking  
 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp)  
 3 ½ cups fresh tomatoes, diced  
 1 tsp ground cumin  
 Salt & Ground Black Pepper, to taste  
 4 large eggs  
 3-4 Tbsp chopped parsley, optional

1. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add onion and red pepper, and saute 7 to 9 minutes. Add jalapeno and garlic, and saute 1 minute more. Add tomatoes and cumin. Simmer the saucé over medium-low heat for 15-30 minutes. As it cooks, the mixture should thicken and more of the juice will evaporate until you are left with a thick, chunky sauce.
2. Reduce the heat to low. Taste the sauce and add salt and pepper as needed. Make 4 holes in the mixture with a spoon. Break 1 egg into a small dish, and slip the egg into one of the holes. Repeat with remaining eggs. Cover the pan and cook 8-10 minutes, or just until egg whites are set. Remove from heat, garnish with fresh parsley and serve.