



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993
November 22-23, 2013

What is the Value of CSA? Taking Time to Reflect

by Megan Muehlenbruch

We can hardly believe that another CSA season has nearly passed us by! It seems like just yesterday we were out in the wet spring harvesting ramps! As another season ends we have a lot to be thankful for: a wonderful and dedicated crew, weather that, though challenging, cooperated enough for us to grow bountiful amounts of produce; and, of course, all of our supportive members. Each year we are incredibly grateful for both our returning and new members who are dedicated to eating fresh, local and organic produce while supporting their farm.

We work hard to ensure that what arrives in your CSA boxes is a great value. We plan our box contents with the seasons and concentrate on including a balance of staple items (e.g. carrots, garlic, potatoes) as well as challenging, unique ones. Our overall goal is for our members to feel that the whole experience is of value to their family. This is part of our reasoning behind having shoppers in the Twin Cities and Madison to help be our eyes and ears to stay in touch with what is available in your area. Time and time again we find ourselves feeling grateful that we have been able to not only offer a great monetary value to our members, but many other values as well that cannot be found in the grocery store.

This season's price comparisons found that, on average, members would be paying \$42.97 a week for the items in their vegetable box if they were to buy them at the stores. This would mean a weekly share (30 boxes) amounts to just about \$1,290! That is \$330, or 25%, more than our weekly vegetable share price! Aside from the monetary aspect, comparison showed on average that about 4 items from each box were unavailable each week in the stores. Of the items that were available, about 18% were not available organically. Many of our unique varieties were unavailable or difficult to find, especially some of our greens. The early spring green garlic, garlic scapes and potato onions proved especially challenging. We were surprised to see that fresh edamame was nearly impossible to find in any of the stores, but instead was offered only as a frozen, bagged item, which is much different in terms of quality and flavor. The juicy melon varieties we grow were another item that was difficult to match in the stores.

This Week's Box

GOLD BEETS: Store beets loosely wrapped in a plastic bag or in a storage container with a lid in the refrigerator. Note that cooking times will need to be adjusted depending on the size of your beets.

RED SAVOY CABBAGE: Store cabbage in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. If it will be awhile before you use it, you should put it in a plastic bag. This is a versatile cabbage that can be cooked or eaten raw in salads and slaws.

CARROTS: Carrot salad, carrot soup, carrot cake....just to name a few. There are lots of things you can do with carrots aside from eating them with dip. Get creative and include them in your Thanksgiving dinner. Store carrots in a the refrigerator in a plastic bag.

CELERIAC: You can substitute diced celeriac for celery in any bread dressing or stuffing recipe. Store the celeriac in your crisper drawer.

GARLIC: Store in a cool dry place or just on your counter.

YELLOW ONIONS: Store onions in a cool, dry place, preferably away from potatoes.

RADICCHIO: This will be a bonus item in some boxes this week. See the bonus page in the weekly email newsletter for more information and recipe ideas.

BEAUTY HEART RADISHES: Slice the radishes for a crudité platter at Thanksgiving dinner and they will catch everyone's attention. Store radishes in a plastic bag or covered container in the refrigerator.

FESTIVAL SQUASH: The seeds in both of these squash are great for roasting. When you use the squash, scoop out the seeds, separate from the stringy flesh and rinse well. Let the seeds dry before you roast them.

SWEET POTATOES: There are a pile in your box this week, but what would Thanksgiving dinner be without sweet potatoes? Store sweet potatoes in a cool dry location until ready for use.

TAT SOI: See vegetable feature on back

GOLDEN POTATOES: This is the last of the potatoes for the season. Store them in a cool, dry, dark location.

PARSNIPS: Store parsnips in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator. Enjoy in soups or as an alternative to carrots.

When analyzing the fruit boxes, we found that our boxes averaged about \$47.15 if they were to be purchased at co-ops, natural food stores and grocery retailers. This means that our full fruit share would cost \$754.40, or \$82.40 more than our full fruit CSA share. With about 6 or 7 fruit varieties in each box, on average about one fruit selection from each box could not be found in the stores. The delicious Warren pears from Frog Hollow Farm and the unique Meyer Lemons were two examples of selections not available anywhere but our fruit share. The Pixie Tangerines that we received in the spring are another. It was also difficult to find the wonderful champagne grapes, Rainier cherries and the green plums. The fruit share shined in its ability to offer unique, organic, high-quality fruit varieties that weren't easily found in stores. Finding all the items in a week in one store was an incredibly rare occurrence.

We are always happy to see end results like these, but there is so much

more than just money when it comes to the value of our boxes. Time can be a big value to many people. By having the items in your box already packed and paid for, members save time from having to go to the store, select their produce and stand in the checkout line. In addition, as a CSA member you have the option to buy a variety of bulk produce plus items throughout the year. Of course, we can't pass over the value of knowing your farmer and where your food comes from! The newsletters help you connect with the farm week to week and also offer you recipes that help you to discover new ways to prepare both familiar and unfamiliar foods. That leads to another value, too: CSA shares often offer the chance to try new and unique vegetables and fruits that many members may not otherwise pick-up and try if they were shopping in the stores. Many members appreciate this opportunity to experience new and exciting flavors.

Furthermore, CSA members also are able to connect with their farm through visits and on-farm events. Members have

told us that this experience has proved to be invaluable for their children in terms of learning to eat vegetables and connecting with the source of their food. It also allows them to see what the food looks like before it is cleaned, trimmed and packed in the box. There is always the additional value of quality and freshness that you get each week when you open the box. These boxes are packed with high amounts of nutrition, taste and flavor that can be difficult to pick out on store shelf.

Our secret shopper experience is just one piece of information that we utilize in making decisions for next year such as, "What will we grow for all these boxes?" Our survey is another great tool for this as well (we'll recap the survey in a future newsletter). Overall, our goal is to offer a great value that cannot be matched in the grocery store. Your desire to choose the fresh, local, and organic produce that we offer is a large part of our drive to keep growing them year after year. While we reflect on the past year and all the bounty that it has brought us, we are also looking ahead to our 2014 season to plan and prepare for another successful year. There is always plenty to be thankful for each holiday season, and we hope that for all who are celebrating Thanksgiving next week, you enjoy great food and company to share it with!

Vegetable Feature: Tat Soi

by Andrea Yoder

We've saved the best for last. Tat soi is the last of our fall greens and it's a stunning one. You'll recognize the tat soi in your box this week as the large, flat, green flower-like vegetable. Tat soi has small, dark, spoon-shaped leaves. These leaves are tender, yet full of flavor with a full, sweet, mild mustard flavor. The stem of the tat soi is sweet, crisp and edible—this is where the plant stores most of its sugars. Tat soi is in the same family with bok choy, yukina savoy and mustard greens, all of which can be used interchangeably.

This is one of the last greens we plant during the season with the intention to harvest it from the field as late as possible—early to mid November. As the temperatures start to decrease, the plant lays itself flat to hug the ground for warmth. The result is a very open, flat rosette that is a gorgeous deep, dark green. Tat soi is very resilient to cold temperatures and can recover after being frozen. If you see some outer leaves on your tat soi that have a whitish hue to them or look a little different, this is a little bit of frost damage. If you can be forgiving of a few frosted leaves, simply remove these leaves and I think you'll be very happy with the flavor of this green.

Tat soi can be eaten raw or cooked. Since other greens are limited this time of year, tat soi is a great choice to use for raw salads. Combined with other veggies such as beauty heart or daikon radishes, carrots, and cabbage, tat soi only needs a light, simple vinaigrette to enhance its rich flavors. It can also be lightly sautéed, stir-fried or steamed, similar to bok choy. Tat soi pairs well with onions, garlic, mushrooms, winter radishes, carrots, soy sauce, sesame oil, rice, cilantro, toasted almonds and sesame seeds.

To prepare tat soi for use, turn it over with the bottom facing up and carefully trim each stem from the base. Wash the stems and leaves vigorously in a sink of clean, cold water. Remember, tat soi lives very close to the ground so there is often dirt on the stems at the base of the plant. Once the leaves and stems are clean, spin them dry in a salad spinner or loosely wrap them in a large kitchen towel and shake them to remove excess water. If you are cooking the greens, it is a good idea to trim the stems from the leaves and put them in the pan first to give them a 1-2 minute head start before you add the leafy portion. To store your tat soi, place it in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.

Tat Soi & Chicken Stir-Fry

Serves 4-6

1 large egg white, lightly beaten
 1 tsp plus 4 Tbsp tamari or soy sauce
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 2 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced
 1 cup fresh shiitake mushrooms, or 0.5 ounce dried shiitake mushrooms, rehydrated
 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into small dice
 2 tsp vegetable oil, divided
 1 cup carrots, small dice
 1 medium onion, small dice
 1 cup beauty heart radish, small dice
 1 tsp garlic chile paste
 2 Tbsp lime juice
 6 Tbsp orange juice
 5 cups tat soi, stems & leaves cut into bite-sized pieces
 Salt, to taste
 White pepper, to taste

1. In a medium mixing bowl, mix the egg white with 1 tsp tamari, garlic, ginger, mushrooms and chicken. Mix well to coat the chicken evenly. Marinate, refrigerated, for 1 hour.
2. When you are ready to cook, heat 1-2 tsp of vegetable oil in a wok or saute pan over high heat. Saute the chicken for 6-10 minutes, stirring constantly until the chicken is cooked through and is slightly golden brown. Remove the chicken from the pan. Add another teaspoon of oil to the wok or pan. Stir-fry the carrot, onion, and beauty heart radishes for 3-4 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the tarmari, chili paste, lime juice and orange juice, and the tat soi. Continue to cook until the tat soi has wilted down.
3. Return the cooked chicken to the pan and cook for another 1-2 minutes. Season with salt and ground white pepper. Serve with rice.

Pan-Seared Sesame & Garlic Marinated Tofu with Wilted Tat Soi

Serves 3-4

Marinade

3 cloves garlic	2 tsp vegetable oil
2 tsp fresh ginger, minced	2 cloves garlic
2 tsp toasted sesame oil	1 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced
¼ cup tamari or soy sauce	1 medium onion, small dice
1 Tbsp rice vinegar or cider vinegar	4-5 cups tat soi, stems & leaves cut into bite-sized pieces
1 Tbsp maple syrup	1 Tbsp tamari or soy sauce
1 Tbsp sesame seeds	Salt & Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tsp crushed red chili flakes	1 cup shredded carrots
¾ cup orange juice	1 cup shredded beauty heart radish
¼ cup white miso	Toasted Sesame Oil, garnish
1 pound tofu	

1. Prepare the sesame-miso marinade for the tofu. Combine all the marinade ingredients, except for the tofu, in a food processor. Process until smooth, then pour in a shallow dish. Drain the tofu and cut into 4 pieces, 1/2 -inch thick. Put the tofu in the pan and turn so each piece is well-coated. Marinate for at least 2 hours or overnight.
2. Heat a large saute pan over high heat. Add 1-2 tsp vegetable oil to the pan. Remove the tofu from the marinade, but reserve the marinade for later use. Put each piece of tofu in the pan. Sear the tofu slices for about 2 minutes on each side, or until well-browned, turning once. Remove from pan and set aside in a warm place.
3. In the same pan, add a little more oil and then saute garlic, ginger, and onion for 1-2 minutes. Add the tat soi and tamari and stir until the greens are wilted.
4. Place some of the wilted greens on each plate and arrange a tofu steak on top. Put a small pile of carrots and beauty heart radish on each plate. Drizzle the vegetables and tofu with a little bit of the remaining marinade and garnish with a drizzle of toasted sesame oil.

Bonus Vegetable Feature: Radicchio

by Andrea Yoder

The bright reddish-burgundy colored “green” in your box this week is called radicchio. While this vegetable can be grown at other times of the year, we consider fall to be the best time to grow and eat this plant. Radicchio is part of the family of bitter fall greens. Why in the world would you grow a bitter green?! Every vegetable has its place in the plan, so let me explain this one. Radicchio is characterized by its bitterness, however, the bitterness is mellowed by cold weather which is why we grow it in the fall and don’t harvest it until the very end of the season. It can handle some frosts and still recover so we leave it in the field, often under a cover to protect it a little bit from the really cold nights. Then, before the temperatures really drop below freezing, we go in and harvest them. The cold temperatures sweeten the radicchio and mellow the bitterness and allows us to still have some fresh leafy greens to enjoy in November!

Radicchio resembles lettuce, but it is not used in the same way as lettuce. It can be eaten both raw and cooked. In its raw form it is best when mixed with other greens or vegetables as opposed to making a salad of only radicchio. Lightly cooking radicchio will help mellow the bitter flavor and will change the flavor to more of a sweet, nutty flavor. Cooking will also change the color from vivid red to a more dull color. Radicchio is best when paired with other assertive flavors, fats, or sweet ingredients. There are a lot of fall fruits and vegetables that are great to pair with radicchio. Winter squash, sweet potatoes, apples, pears, and persimmons are just a few. Other ingredients often paired with radicchio include caramelized onions or shallots, lemon, balsamic or Sherry vinegar, bacon or prosciutto, cream, and strong cheeses (such as Parmesan, blue cheese, or other strong, aged cheeses).

If you aren’t one to gravitate toward bitter flavors, I would suggest you try cooking the radicchio. There is a delicious recipe for Baked Pasta with Sweet Potatoes & Radicchio in this week’s cheese newsletter. There is also a recipe for Flatbread Pizza with Roasted Squash and Treviso Radicchio in our recipe archive on the website. Search for this recipe using the search term “Squash.” Both of these recipes are delicious and offer a very balanced flavor from the radicchio.

Brussels Sprouts Salad with Pickled Red Onion, Apples & Blue Cheese

By Andrea Yoder

Serves 4-5

½ cup apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp maple syrup
1 tsp salt
½ tsp ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
½ large red onion, very thinly sliced
¾ pound medium Brussels sprouts, cut in halves or quarters
1 ½ cups radicchio, sliced thinly
½ apple, grated
1 Tbsp walnut oil
2-3 ounces blue cheese, crumbled

1. In a small sauce pan over medium-low heat, combine vinegar, maple syrup, salt and pepper., and bay leaf. Warm slightly, just enough to incorporate the syrup and dissolve the salt. Put the onion slices in a pint jar or a small bowl and pour the vinegar mixture over them. Let cool to room temperature. Set aside until you are ready to assemble the salad.
2. Steam the Brussels sprouts in a steamer just until bright green and slightly tender, 5-6 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and put in the refrigerator to cool.
3. In a medium bowl, combine Brussels sprouts, radicchio, apple, about ¾ of the onions and walnut oil. Season with salt and pepper and stir to combine. Stir in blue cheese crumbles.
4. Adjust the seasoning with salt & pepper to your liking. Add more pickled onions as well if you would like a more tangy salad. Refrigerate until you are ready to serve the salad.

Grilled Radicchio with Lemon-Hazelnut Dressing

Borrowed from *Food & Wine Magazine* in August 2013

Serves 6

¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp hazelnuts
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing
2 Tbsp freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, or any other aged hard cheese
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 head of radicchio

1. In a skillet, toast all the hazelnuts over moderate heat, shaking the pan until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a clean towel and rub off the skins. Coarsely chop ¼ cup of the hazelnuts. Finely grind the remaining 2 Tbsp of hazelnuts.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the lemon juice with the ¼ cup of olive oil, the cheese and the 2 Tbsp of finely ground hazelnuts. Season the dressing with salt and pepper.
3. Light a grill. Brush the radicchio halves with oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill over moderately high heat, turning, until the edges are lightly charred, 4 minutes. Transfer to a platter and let cool slightly. Spoon the dressing on top, sprinkle with the chopped hazelnuts and serve. (An alternative to grilling is to use a cast-iron skillet. Heat the skillet over medium-high heat and follow the instructions above for cooking)

Produce Plus:

Sweet Potatoes, 15 pounds for \$30
Red Onions, 3 pounds for \$7.50
Yellow Onions, 3 pounds for \$7.50
Shallots, 5 pounds for \$24
Red Cipollini Onions, 5 pounds for \$22
Orange Carrots, 10 pounds for \$18

To Order:

Call 608-483-2143 x2 or email csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com by 5pm on Wed. December 4 for delivery on December 6/7.