



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

December 6-7, 2013

Rolling Out Our 2014 Shares

by Richard de Wilde

We have spent many, many hours reading through the 814 survey responses. We want to thank everyone who responded! In the coming weeks we'll provide you with a more detailed report and response to the survey results, but for now we want to highlight a few components that have helped to shape our 2014 plans.

The 96% overall satisfaction rate and the high number of members planning to return is very gratifying for us, knowing it is among the highest return rates for a CSA in the nation. Of the vegetable share members who completed the survey, 87% plan to return for the 2014 season. Even with great return rates, each season we lose some members who move away, have a change in their household situation or even those who start their own gardens. For this reason, we always strive to bring in new members each season. Knowing our members are returning is great to read, but what really brings joy to our eyes is the level of satisfaction expressed in the comments: "Perfect," "The Best," "Keep up the great work," "The best CSA I know of." Words such as "variety" and "quality" appeared 300 and 177 times respectively, throughout the comments in the survey, indicating that these are two very important factors to our members. We will never compromise quality and will be making only minor "tweaks" to the variety based on some comments. A very large number of members also indicated that they had an interest in adding meat, fruit, cheese or coffee to their 2014 order, which is encouraging as well. We enjoy offering these specialty shares and knowing there is a demand for them is important for us.

On the topic of our specialty shares, we are making some adjustments to both our fruit and cheese shares while coffee offerings and pricing will remain the same. In response to survey feedback, our fruit shares will be slightly smaller and offer a similar variety and quality, but the price will be reduced. Our fruit newsletter this week will outline these changes more fully. Our cheese shares will also be decreasing in quantity, and therefore price, in response to producer availability as well as survey responses. These changes are also outlined in this week's cheese newsletter.

Determining pricing is always a difficult task for us. We have some good financial and production tools to help us with our decisions, but deciding on 2014 pricing

This Week's Box

RED BEETS: Store beets in a plastic bag or container with a lid to keep them from getting soft. It's best to boil or roast beets with the skin on and root intact to prevent valuable nutrients from leaching out of the beet.

GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE: Store loosely wrapped in plastic in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. This is delicious both raw in salads & slaws and cooked into soups or other hot dishes.

CARROTS: Store carrots in the resealable bag they are packed in this week in the refrigerator and they'll keep well into the winter.

CELERIAC: This is the large, round, gnarly looking root. It should be peeled prior to use. To do this, cut the celeriac into four pieces. Now it is more manageable to peel away the bumpy outer skin with a paring knife.

GARLIC: Mince garlic and mix with a little salt, fresh lemon zest, dried herbs & oil. Spread the mixture on top of grilled beef or a pork chop.

RED & YELLOW ONIONS: Store onions in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight. Make sure you don't stash them in your garage if the temperatures fall below freezing at night. Check out the recipe for a Roasted Onion Melt in this week's cheese newsletter.

BEAUTY HEART RADISH: This radish will store well into the deep of winter. Shave them and mix them into cabbage slaws, stir-fries, etc.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: This is a very versatile squash that is excellent when simply roasted, but also can be used in baked goods or purees.

FESTIVAL SQUASH: This is the squash that usually keeps the longest. Store it in a cool, dry location and check it periodically.

SWEET POTATOES: Starting to accumulate a lot of these? Don't worry—they'll store for quite awhile if kept in a cool location at about 65 degrees. You could also cook them, scoop out the flesh and puree it. Freeze the puree and use it later for baked goods, casseroles, etc.

SCARLET TURNIPS: This is the round root vegetable with magenta skin and white flesh. This is our most mild, sweet turnip and can be eaten raw, cooked or stir-fried. It doesn't need to be peeled and should be stored loosely wrapped in plastic.

PARSNIPS: Parsnips are excellent when roasted or made into a soup. Store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

DRIED SUPER CHILI PEPPERS: These peppers will store for a long time now that they are dried. They are hot little peppers and will add a nice kick to soups, stews and chili. You can grind them briefly in a spice grinder and use them as a spicy red pepper flake or grind them a little longer for a chili powder.

comes before our end of the year reports are ready. This means we have to base our decisions on financial comparisons from this time last year and try to forecast our expenses for the coming year. Fuel cost is modest, but also affects box and packaging costs. We also have to consider our employees, as they represent 60 families who rely on their income from the farm for their financial well-being. We are dependent on these employees and their skills and together we are an efficient team. While we all deserve a raise, a large number of survey comments expressed members' desire to eat healthy food, but they feel 'the recession' still lingering and their finances stressed, therefore limiting their ability to 'eat well'. What a sad dilemma!

We want to feed people regardless of their financial means, and we do. We

have members on food stamps and members who are subsidized through the Partner Shares program of the FairShare CSA Coalition. We also offer several payment plans – single payment, split payments, and monthly account withdrawals – for our members to find ways to best make CSA affordable. Are we willing to work for less and absorb the ever increasing costs to allow more households to continue or join our CSA? For now, yes. But before I talk myself out of keeping our vegetable share prices the same for 2014, I want to encourage you to stay aboard with us for another season. As a matter of fact, it's too late for more changes – we've already released the new 2014 CSA sign-up form and posted it on our website! We have decided to hold our vegetable share prices the same as 2013 and have a bonus offer for those who sign-up early. Sign-up before February 1st and we will include a coupon with your

invoice, good towards future Harmony Valley Farm purchases, including your 2015 CSA shares! You can also refer a friend to earn additional gift certificates. We are looking forward to another fantastic season and hope to have you and your family join us yet again!

Carrot Soup with Toasted Curry and Pistachios

Borrowed from Chef Andrea Reusing's book *Cooking in the Moment*

Serves 6 to 8

3 Tbsp unsalted butter
 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
 2 garlic cloves, sliced
 2 ½ tsp kosher salt, divided
 2 pounds carrots
 1 Tbsp plus 2 tsp curry powder (recipe below)
 Pinch of cayenne
 ½ cup dry white wine
 Thick Greek-style yogurt or sour cream, for garnish
 ½ cup shelled roasted pistachios, coarsely chopped

1. Melt the butter in a heavy 4-quart pot. Add the onion, garlic, and ½ tsp of the salt. Cover and cook over low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, until the onions are soft and translucent.
2. Meanwhile, wash the carrots and slice them into thin rounds.
3. Raise the heat to medium and add the curry and cayenne. Stir and cook for 1 minute, until fragrant. Add the carrots, wine, and another ½ tsp of the salt. Cook for 2 minutes, until the wine reduces a little. Add 6 cups water and the remaining 1 ½ tsp salt. Bring to a simmer and cover. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes, or until the carrots are completely tender.
4. Puree the soup in a blender. Add water if the soup seems too thick. Adjust the seasoning and serve in warm bowls. Garnish with yogurt or sour cream and pistachios.

Curry Powder

Makes about ½ cup

Homemade curry powder keeps well for a few weeks and can be used in any recipe calling for curry powder. It is also tasty added to rice and/or bean dishes or to season freshly popped popcorn or oven fries.

¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp coriander seeds
 1 tsp cumin seeds
 1 tsp black mustard seeds
 1 tsp fenugreek seeds
 1 tsp black peppercorns
 2 small dried chili peppers (such as de arbol)
 2 Tbsp ground turmeric

1. In a small pan over medium heat, toast the coriander seeds, cumin seeds, mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds, peppercorns, and chiles, tossing constantly, for about 2 minutes, until fragrant and slightly colored. Let cool completely.
2. Grind the mixture in a spice mill or clean coffee grinder until very fine. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in the turmeric.

Vegetable Feature: Carrots

by Andrea Yoder

As we move into the heart of winter, carrots become an important staple food for Midwesterners who eat a diet based on local foods. Carrots are packed with important nutrients, specifically beta carotene which is an important antioxidant and vitamin for our bodies. It's important for vision, immunity and a whole host of other health benefits. Carrots aren't always an easy crop to grow. The varieties selected for winter storage are planted in the summer when growing conditions can be hot and dry. It takes an observant farmer to get enough moisture to the seed so it can germinate. Once they are up, it's a battle against weeds to keep the crop clean and make sure they have enough nutrients to produce a healthy plant and a tasty carrot! The storage carrots in your box this week can be stored for months if you kept them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. They are versatile in their uses and can be eaten raw, roasted, boiled, baked, and even fried! They can be added to soups, stews, braised meats, root mashes, pancakes, bread, cookies and a whole host of other uses. Since they are such a common vegetable, I think sometimes they get overlooked and we forget that there are so many more things you can do with a carrot aside from the traditional carrot sticks in dip.

I'd like to challenge you to think "outside the box" this winter and try some different ways to use carrots throughout the winter months. I love making carrot salads for something fresh, light and crunchy. Carrots pair well with a variety of herbs & spices as well as fruits such as apples & citrus. You can make a very simple, quick, and easy salad with just a few ingredients. Soup is another great way to use carrots---either as the main ingredient or as part of a mélange of vegetables in say, chicken soup. If you get lucky and get a snow day at home with the kids, take advantage of the day to bake with your kids. Carrot cake, carrot cookies, apple-carrot muffins, carrot pancakes...who doesn't love baking on a snowy winter day!

Did you know there is a World Carrot Museum online? You can browse this site located at www.carrotmuseum.co.uk. This site is packed full of games for kids, trivia, fun facts, history, cooking tips, recipes and a lot more! Check it out while you munch on your carrot cookies!

Winter Veggie Wraps with Miso-Carrot Spread

The Miso-Carrot Spread portion of this recipe was borrowed from *The Sprouted Kitchen* cookbook by Sara Forte

Serves 4

Miso-Carrot Spread

1 cup coarsely chopped carrots
 1 Tbsp fresh grated ginger
 1 small onion, minced
 1 Tbsp sweet white miso
 1 tsp honey
 2 ½ Tbsp rice vinegar
 3 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
 ¼ tsp sea salt

Dipping Sauce

3 Tbsp peanut butter or almond butter
 2 Tbsp maple syrup
 3 Tbsp soy sauce
 2 tsp toasted sesame oil
 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
 ¼ tsp super chili red pepper flakes
 1 clove garlic, finely minced

Wraps

4 large wheat tortillas, slightly warmed
 1 large beet, peeled & shredded
 ¾ cup finely shredded cabbage
 Salt, to taste

Other optional ingredients could include avocado, cooked quinoa, pan-seared tofu or shredded chicken

1. To make the spread, combine the carrots, ginger, onion, miso, honey, vinegar, sesame oil & salt in a food processor. Process until fairly smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. It will still have a somewhat chunky texture from the carrots. Set aside or refrigerate until ready for use.
2. To make the dipping sauce, combine the maple syrup and nut butter. Once well-combined, whisk in the soy sauce and vinegar. Lastly, drizzle in the sesame oil and add the pepper flakes and garlic. You could also make the sauce in a small kitchen blender. Set aside or refrigerate until ready for use.
3. To assemble the wrap, spread a generous layer of miso-carrot spread on each tortilla. Layer shredded cabbage & beets on top of the miso-carrot spread on each tortilla. Season lightly with salt and ground black pepper. Fold up the bottom of one tortilla, then roll tightly. Secure the wrap with a toothpick or wrap it in a napkin to hold it together. Repeat with the remaining wraps. Serve with the dipping sauce.