



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

April 25, 2014

## April Showers Bring... Green!

by: Andrea Yoder

We're less than 2 weeks away from the first CSA delivery of the season... is spring finally here?! I must admit, we were a little bummed out when we woke up to a couple inches of snow blanketing our gorgeous valley on April 14. Hopefully that is the last of the snow and Mother Nature was just teasing us. The temperatures are starting to warm up and our dreams of green are starting to come true! Green garlic is poking through the mulch and the spikey green chives have shot up while their neighboring sorrel is encouraged to do the same. This is the first week the pastures truly look GREEN. They are short, but brightly colored after a little sunshine and some rain this past weekend. Needless to say, the cows are happy to taste the green grass again! Of course we've spotted the ramps and Alvaro has been checking them regularly. The forest is getting a little more green with every day of growth!!

The month of April has brought other exciting things to the farm as well. Our baby goat count for the spring is up to 7 kids, with more to come! Richard has been getting to know one of his favorite kids a little better. He's been spending time with one of our little boy goats that we've lovingly named Rico. Rico and Ricardo (Richard's Spanish name) hope to teach each other a few tricks in time so they can perform for all the CSA children at our Strawberry Day and Harvest Party this year. Rico is still pretty young and has a lot to learn, but he is a fan of back scratches, belly rubs and chewing on Richard's clothes!

The month of April brings new faces to the farm as well! We are happy to have Chef Caleb on board for the season and the crew is anxious for him to start cooking lunches next week. Eric has joined the office crew as our CSA Coordinator and is quickly learning the ropes of CSA. Next week the rest of our field crew will arrive from Mexico and we will officially be a full house!

We have had a few windows of opportunity to sneak into the field over the past two weeks. Rafael, Manuel, Angel and Nestor have been working the ground to get it ready for planting. Manuel and Juan Pablo were able to do

## Coming Soon: Ramps!

Ramps will be coming in the first CSA box!

Here is a list of some of our favorite ways to use Ramps:

- Great in egg dishes: Frittatas, Omelets, Scrambled Eggs, or Quiche
  - Make a pesto to spread on flatbread or pizza
- Make a white lasagna and incorporate ramps into the layers along with asparagus, spinach and nettles.
  - Toss into a creamy alfredo sauce and serve with fettuccine
- Spread soft cheese such as Brebis or Chevre on the leaves and roll them up to make Wisconsin Sushi
- Blend into a basic recipe for buttermilk dressing - it's way better than Ranch!

the first "salad" planting of the season last Saturday! Their planting included salad mix, spinach, arugula, cilantro, bok choy, dill, baby white turnips and more! They finished just in time for everything to get watered with the weekend's gentle rains. Thankfully, Rafael was able to plant our first beets, carrots and chard on Wednesday afternoon and the onion transplanting crew worked late to get about half the onions planted... just before it started to rain!

We have already started planting crops for CSA boxes, such as napa cabbage, broccoli & cauliflower. While our CSA season is just a couple of weeks away, the number of households we have signed up at this time is less than last year and, therefore, less than we have had in previous years. Over the past week or so we've been getting some calls and emails inquiring whether it is too late to sign up. We do still have shares available and would like to continue signing up more members to eat the food we've planned to grow and have already planted! If you have a friend, family member, neighbor, etc. who has been considering signing up, please give them a little nudge and let them know the season is starting soon! We've included a coupon at the bottom of today's email that you can share with anyone you might know who is interested in signing up for the first time with Harmony Valley Farm. If this is their first time signing up with our farm, they can send in the coupon and receive \$20 off a Weekly share, or \$10 off a Peak, Every Other Week, or Flex Vegetable share, or a Fruit share.

Don't forget to remind them to put your name on their coupon and sign-up form in the referral section and we'll send you a gift certificate as a "thank-you" for spreading the good word of CSA!

Time flies when you're having fun, and the fun of the CSA season is about to take off! Make sure you mark your calendars now with our fun farm events so they don't pass you by! This year our Strawberry Day event will be held on Sunday, June 22nd and our Fall Harvest Party with pumpkin picking will be held on Sunday, September 21st. Happy Spring!

## We're looking for Volunteers!

Every Saturday, Jose Manuel and Rogelio journey to Madison to deliver your shares. They're looking for helping hands to volunteer



to unload boxes at our sites and nicely stack them for our members. Bring your boots and gloves for a rewarding experience and get to know the people who grow your food.

If you're interested in waking with the birds and meeting up with our delivery crew for a half day of fun, contact our CSA Coordinator to volunteer or to learn more about this opportunity.

csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com  
608-483-2143 x2

## Maple Syrup is BACK!

For the second year, we are offering certified organic, premium Grade A, medium-amber syrup produced by our friend, Alvin Miller, and his family. The family, including the children, has been farming without chemicals for 10 years outside Cashton, Wisconsin. Their maple syrup is certified organic and comes from beautiful woods with a stream running through it. They tap the trees and then haul a horse drawn tank to the cookhouse where 30 gallons of sap, reduced by wood heat, produce one gallon of premium syrup. We are happy to be working with the Miller family again to bring you this wonderful product. If you use the syrup for more than just pancakes, a small family can consume a gallon in a year. Be sure to order early as we will sell out fast!

Maple syrup is shelf stable until opened, will keep for years if refrigerated after opening, and it is not just for pancakes! It is a great natural substitute for white or refined sugar, and it's not only sweet, but it also has a great maple flavor. The syrup is sweeter than sugar, so if a recipe calls for 1 cup of sugar, substitute just ½ cup maple syrup. Use it in salad dressings, baking, marinades, stir-fry sauces, beverages, drizzled on oatmeal and to add a complementary flavor to many fall root vegetables, sweet potatoes and squash. Be sure to watch the newsletters throughout the season for more delicious ways to use maple syrup.

**Certified Organic, Grade A, Medium Amber Maple Syrup - ½ gallon glass jug: \$32**

To order, email [csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com) or call (608) 483-2143 x2

### When ordering, include:

Full Name  
Quantity  
Delivery Site  
Preferred Delivery Date (listed to the right)

### Delivery Dates

Twin Cities: May 29 (brown) and June 5 (green)  
Local: May 30 (brown) and June 6 (green)  
Madison: May 31 (brown) and June 7 (green)

## Overwintered Parsnips... Coming Soon in the May CSA Boxes!

by: Andrea Yoder

Why did Richard first decide to grow parsnips? Because they are a challenge to grow and not that many people can pull it off successfully! Parsnips have a long growing season, so they have to be planted early in the spring. It takes parsnips as much as 2 weeks to germinate and at the same time the parsnip is working on producing a sprout, so are all of the other weed seeds in the field! That same period of slow germination allows us to execute a carefully timed flame weeding just before the parsnips emerge. This is a very important step in having a weed free field. They still require a lot of care to keep the field weeded, cultivated and watered until they are ready for harvest in the fall. But we don't harvest all of them in the fall. One of the techniques Richard learned a long time ago is that parsnips have the ability to survive a long, cold winter in the ground. Just how do they do that? Parsnips convert their starches to sugars as a means of survival and the result is that overwintered parsnips dug in the spring are very sweet and delicious. One of my favorite ways to prepare overwintered parsnips is to simply slice them thinly, toss them with oil and roast them until they are crispy and golden. They are so sweet when roasted that they taste like candy!

Parsnips are very versatile and there are many ways to incorporate overwintered parsnips into your spring meals. They pair well with mushrooms, asparagus, sorrel, sunchoke and chives. In addition to the simple technique of roasting, another simple way to prepare parsnips is to slice and sauté them in butter until they are tender. Parsnips also make a creamy, silky puree that can be served similarly to mashed potatoes or you can thin it out and make a tasty soup.

I seldom peel parsnips when I use them. I usually just give them a good scrubbing and then cook them. If you are making a dish where you want their bright whiteness to shine, you can peel them similarly to a carrot. The flavor of parsnips can be best highlighted when they are cooked, bringing out their sweetness and softening the texture. They can also be eaten raw as more of a salad preparation. Shred the parsnips and toss with a lemon vinaigrette and fresh herbs. Let the mixture set for awhile to allow the lemon to soften the parsnips.

In addition to other spring vegetables, parsnips pair well with apples, nuts, spices, maple syrup, honey, fresh herbs, onions and garlic. Remember that overwintered parsnips are going to have more natural sweetness. If you are using maple syrup or honey in a preparation, do so in moderation to add flavor to the dish, not sweetness.

## Parsnips with Brown-Butter, Pecans & Maple

by: Andrea Yoder

Serves 2-3

2 cups parsnips, cut into ¼- ½ inch slices  
(approximately 1 pound)  
2 Tbsp butter  
½ cup pecans, chopped finely  
Salt and ground black pepper, to taste  
1 Tbsp maple syrup

1. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium to medium-high heat. Add the butter to the pan and allow it to melt and sizzle in the pan. Swirl the butter around to evenly coat the pan and continue to heat it. Watch closely for the butter to turn golden brown and smell toasty.
2. When the butter is golden, add the parsnips and season with salt and pepper. Sauté the parsnips until they are tender, about 3-5 minutes. Add the pecans and stir well to combine. Reduce the heat just a bit to medium and stir frequently. You want to cook the mixture for 3-5 minutes longer or until the nuts are toasted and fragrant.
3. Once the nuts are toasted, drizzle the maple syrup over the parsnips. The syrup should sizzle a bit as you stir the parsnips. Immediately remove the pan from the heat. Serve warm.