



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

June 13-14, 2014

June Field Report

By Farmer Richard

After a cold, late, slightly wet start to spring, I'd say we have done a great job of playing catch-up! Most thanks goes to our very capable and dedicated crew who was willing to work late, even on Friday and Saturday nights, when we had brief windows of dry weather in between rains. Very early in my farming career I learned the importance of being ready to go as soon as it dries out. Sometimes you don't have much time before the next rain shower. If you get in and do a planting or some cultivating, it can mean the difference between having a crop or losing a crop. We have been taking full advantage of these short windows of opportunity, even though it means long days sometimes. The crew understands that if we don't plant a crop or keep it free of weeds, there won't be a crop to harvest... or eat!

Manuel and Juan Pablo have successfully planted six plantings of salad greens. Each planting has to be covered with field blankets (aka remay) to trap heat on cool nights and more importantly to keep the dreaded flea beetles from eating the crop. Every time we need to cultivate these crops we have to remove the big cover. It's no small task, but our crew has pulled it off! Rafael, Vicente, Rogelio and others on our hand-weeding crew have stayed busy killing weeds. Between precision cultivating and basic hand-weeding, the goal is to kill as many weeds as possible. They have successfully cultivated five acres of parsnips, three different plantings of tiny beets and carrots and a whole host of other crops. When we've done as much weed control as is possible with machinery, then it's time to turn it over to the hand weeding crew. It seems their job is never over!

All of the warm weather crops were planted before Memorial Day. The first planting of zucchini and cucumber was planted in early May, hooped and covered with the field covers. In this case, we put the cover on them mostly to help protect them from unexpected frosts and to keep them warm and toasty on cool days and nights. We could see the plants pushing up on the cover and knew they were getting big. I was excited to remove the cover this week and see that they are looking fantastic and starting to blossom. I even saw a few little baby zucchini! Even before we pick our first summer squash, we're thinking about winter squash. We planted over 2.5 acres of winter squash and it is looking good! The peppers and eggplant are out in the field and growing every day. Our first planting of tomatoes has been planted, the field is mulched, and the stakes that we use to keep the plants upright are in and ready to anchor

This Week's Box

SALAD MIX: This is a convenience fast food that is actually good for you! For a quick, simple salad, simply toss salad mix with a flavorful oil (eg: walnut or hazelnut oil) and a tasty vinegar (eg: Sherry vinegar).

ARUGULA: Use these baby greens to finish off a homemade pizza. Add the arugula to the top of a pizza after it comes out of the oven. Let the greens wilt down with the heat of the pizza and then serve immediately.

MINI RED & GREEN ROMAINE LETTUCE: These tiny, tasty heads of lettuce should be washed prior to using them. Pull the leaves off of each head of lettuce and wash each piece under running water or in a sink full of clean water. Store any unused portion of lettuce leaves in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your fridge.

POTATO ONIONS: You can use both the upper green portion of the onion as well as the white or yellow bulb at the base of the onion. You can tell the difference between onions and green garlic by looking at the shape of the green tops. Green garlic has flat tops and onions have round tops.

GREEN GARLIC OR GARLIC SCAPES: Use either of these in place of garlic in any recipe.

PEA VINE: See vegetable feature and recipes on the back of this newsletter.

HON TSAI TAI: See last week's newsletter for further information and a recipe.

RED RADISHES: See the recipes in this newsletter for ideas about how to use the red radishes in different recipes.

BABY WHITE TURNIPS: These little salad turnips are tender, sweet and delicious. They can be eaten raw or cooked. Don't forget about the green tops! They are edible as well.

ASPARAGUS: Remember to store asparagus in the refrigerator, standing upright in a glass of water until you are ready to use it.

RHUBARB: Incorporate rhubarb into a chutney. The tanginess of the rhubarb will make the chutney a great accompaniment to pork or duck.

the strings for the first round of tomato tying.

The celeriac, fennel, lettuce and leeks are growing nicely, have been cultivated and we're working on hand weeding them now. The first plantings of broccoli, cauliflower, kale and kohlrabi looked great when they were transplanted. We were sad to discover that a family of woodchucks had established residency in a brush pile on the edge of the field. Evidently they have good taste and found our new planting of tender, sweet plants to be a great salad bar to graze on. We saw the plants rapidly disappearing and knew we'd have to act quickly before this family of woodchucks "ate us out of house and home!" We cleaned up the brush pile and made the area less attractive for a woodchuck to reside in. "No place to run to, no place to hide!" We know it's important to remove any areas of harborage so critters don't hide out in these areas. They must've realized that they were not very welcome and moved on to a new home. We haven't seen them for awhile and we haven't seen our plants disappearing anymore.

Tomas, Nestor and the rest of their transplanting crew finished sweet potatoes earlier this week. The jicama was planted last Friday and is thriving on its bed of warm, green mulch. We have two nice crops of sweet corn and green beans. Both crops came up nicely and have already been cultivated. The edamame is up and we will need to put up a deer fence soon before word spreads that the

all-you-can eat nighttime buffet of tender soybean plants is ready to graze.

It won't be long before we'll be picking peas and strawberries. Isn't this kind of late? Yes it is. In fact this may be the latest year for strawberries that I can remember! We are hoping to do our first picking by the end of the week. There aren't a lot of ripe ones yet, but the early varieties will definitely be in full swing for Strawberry Day! I'd like you to consider wearing your ballet slippers to the Strawberry Day party. You will need to step carefully to preserve the plants when picking so we can have several weeks of strawberries for boxes!

Hold on for the ride...with all the new vegetables coming in soon, your CSA adventure is going to get exciting! Enjoy your veggies and we hope to see you at the Strawberry Day party on June 22!

We're looking for Volunteers!

Have you ever seen our big truck pull up and wonder "Gee, I wonder what it's like to do what those dashing men in the truck do?" Then we have an opportunity for YOU!

See your "What's In The Box" email or Contact the CSA Coordinator (csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com) if you'd like more information about this opportunity.

Vegetable Feature: Pea Vine

by Andrea Yoder

Pea vine is a unique vegetable that comes along just once a year in late spring. We plant a specific variety of peas that grows quickly to produce tender, sweet tendrils & shoots. Pea vine is actually an immature pea plant that is harvested before the plant starts to blossom. At this stage the pea vine has a sweet, mild, fresh taste of peas. Pea vine precedes sugar snap peas and snow peas. When you see it in your box, you know that sugar snap and snow peas are pretty close behind.

Pea vine can be eaten raw or cooked. In its raw form, pea vine is a fresh addition to salads and pairs well with radishes, chives, lemon, mint, eggs and fresh cheeses such as feta. Since it requires little cooking time, it can be used in a stir-fry or simply wilted and seasoned with salt, pepper, and a spritz of lemon juice.

To prepare pea vine, simply wash in a sink of water and shake off the excess water. You can usually eat the entire plant except for the bottom 1-3 inches of the stem which might be a little more fibrous and should be discarded. If you find a stem that is more fibrous and tough, simply pluck the leaves off the stem. There is a lot of flavor in the stem, so you could use it to flavor a broth or sauce. If you are looking for a quick and easy way to use pea vine without spending much time picking the tender leaves off, then consider using the pea vine for a "pesto" type preparation. This is by far the easiest way I've ever prepared or used pea vine. Check out the recipes in this week's newsletter!

Pea Vine Cream Cheese

by Andrea Yoder

Yield: 2 cups

4 cups pea vine, roughly chopped and packed (approximately 1 bunch)
3 Tbsp sunflower oil
2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp salt
8 oz cream cheese, softened
½ cup green onion, minced

1. Roughly chop one bunch of pea vine and put it in the bowl of a food processor. Add the oil, vinegar, and salt. Pulse the food processor a few times to start chopping the pea vine. Continue to run the food processor until the pea vine is processed to a very fine texture.
2. Cut the softened cream cheese into cubes and add it to the food processor. Process briefly, just enough to gently incorporate the cream cheese into the pea vine mixture.
3. Scrape the cream cheese mixture into a bowl. Fold in the minced green onion. Refrigerate the cream cheese mixture for 1-2 hours or overnight to allow the flavors to develop before you use the cream cheese.

****Note**** Any extra cream cheese mixture can be used in a variety of ways. A few ideas include: Spread it on your morning bagel; Serve it with grilled chicken breast; Spread it on a grilled flat bread and top with raw, fresh vegetables for a raw pizza.

Pea Vine Pesto Pasta Salad

by Andrea Yoder

Yield: 4-6 servings

12 ounces fusilli pasta
1 bunch pea vine (approximately 4 cups chopped and loosely packed)
¼ cup sunflower oil
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
1 Tbsp honey
3 Tbsp white wine vinegar
1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4-5 red or French breakfast radishes, small diced
1 cup green onions, minced (include white portion and green tops)
½ cup green garlic or garlic scapes, minced
1 cup asparagus, cut into ½ inch pieces
4 baby white turnips, sliced thinly.
2 oz sharp cheddar cheese, grated or crumbled

1. Cook pasta in salted boiling water according to package instructions. Once it is cooked to al dente, drain the pasta in a colander and rinse with cold water to immediately cool it off. Put the cool, cooked pasta into a medium sized mixing bowl and set aside.
2. Roughly chop the pea vine. (include the greens and stems except for the lower portion) Put the pea vine into the bowl of a food processor. Add the sunflower oil, mustard, honey, vinegar, and 1 tsp salt. Process the pea vine until it is a very fine consistency and all the ingredients are well combined.
3. Add the pea vine mixture to the pasta and stir to combine. Add the diced radishes, minced green onion and green garlic or garlic scapes, asparagus and white turnips. Stir to combine all the vegetables and pea vine pesto. Fold in the grated or crumbled cheese. Refrigerate until you are ready to serve.

Spring Vegetable Wraps with Pea Vine Cream Cheese

by Andrea Yoder

Serves 2-4

4-8 inch flour tortillas
½-¾ cup pea vine cream cheese
4-5 red or French breakfast radishes, sliced thinly
3-4 baby white turnips, sliced thinly
3-4 cups salad greens (salad mix, arugula, baby spinach or head lettuce)
6-8 oz deli meat, sliced thinly (optional)

1. Lay the tortillas out on a cutting board. Spread 2-3 tablespoons of cream cheese on each tortilla. If you are including deli meat in your wrap, layer it on top of the cream cheese now. Next add some of the sliced baby white turnips and radishes. Finish off the wrap with a handful of greens.
2. Roll the tortilla up burrito style and serve cold.

Join Us for Strawberry Day at Harmony Valley Farm!

Sunday, June 22 is our annual Harmony Valley Farm Strawberry Day!

12-1pm - Potluck
1:15-3pm - Wagon Tours
3pm-6pm - Pick Strawberries and eat Strawberry Ice Cream!

Please email rsvp@harmonyvalleyfarm.com if you're planning to attend!