



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

September 5-6, 2014

## Seasons Changing...

By Farmer Richard & Captain Jack—The Dog

**RICHARD:** There is something in the air, I feel it and see the signs. Fall is coming, or is it already here? Our yard has a new silence. This week I noticed the barn swallows and bank swallows congregating. They must have had a pre-migration meeting because suddenly they were gone! Did they see the same forecast we saw? Temperatures are dropping this week by 15 degrees! We're preparing to say goodbye to summer and usher in fall...although we long for just a few more days of summer fun.

The crops are changing too! We are harvesting a mature crop of winter squash this week, at the same time the summer squash, cucumbers and melons draw to a close. We are also picking the last crop of green beans, edamame and sweet corn. We missed a couple of plantings this spring due to wet soil, but gambled on a late sweet corn planting. Gambled? Yes, the dreaded corn earworm, which does not overwinter here normally, migrates north from the south in mid-summer. Late planted sweet corn is very susceptible to corn earworms. We use a pheromone trap to tell us when the earworm moths are laying their eggs. Last year it failed us, no moths in the trap, but lots of earworms in the corn! So far this year we haven't seen any signs of earworms, so let's keep our fingers crossed that they stay away for just a little while longer!

**JACK:** I check the corn every day with my dad, Farmer Richard. He checks the moth trap, I check for signs of deer or raccoons! We have a tall fence to keep the deer out and it has a low electric wire to keep the raccoons out. Sometimes I get excited sniffing around for signs of critters and forget about the wire. In fact the other day I got zapped by the electricity! I yelled and went back to the truck to recover from the surprise. I can guarantee that no raccoons will get in the corn this year! The corn field looks like a circus with flashy streamers and bird scare eye balloons all sparkling and flashing in the breeze. I know that is to keep the red-winged blackbirds from shredding the tip of the corn ears. I don't understand why the birds can't eat the entire ear of corn, but for some reason they must prefer just the tip of the ear.

This week I saw something else exciting flashing in the air. The last time we checked the corn field, I saw dragon flies everywhere, thousands of them! Their iridescent wings flashing in the sun! I asked Dad about them and he says it's just another sign of fall. Just like the barn swallows, the dragonflies congregate and migrate to the south for the winter.

Today we counted pumpkins! There are more than 500 pumpkins in the field (I got tired of counting) including some nice silky "Winter Luxury" pumpkins that make great pie. I hope you are planning to come to our Harvest Party on September 21st to help us pick all of these pumpkins. I might need my friends to help me find the pumpkin in the field with my name carved on it. Dad said it's out there, but I don't

## This Weeks' Box

**RED ONIONS:** A thinly sliced red onion is a nice addition to salads and sandwiches.

**ZUCCHINI OR CUCUMBERS OR EGGPLANT:** Sadly, this is likely the last week for zucchini and cucumbers. Make your favorite zucchini recipe one more time, or shred your remaining zucchini and freeze it so you can make zucchini bread this winter! Make one last creamy cucumber salad with thinly sliced red onions, or incorporate them into a refreshing beverage or cocktail.

**ASSORTED TOMATOES:** Slice for sandwiches, dice for salads or rough chop and cook down for a tasty sauce. Remember to ripen tomatoes at room temperature and try to avoid putting tomatoes in the refrigerator in order to maintain maximum flavor.

**RED OR YELLOW GRAPE TOMATOES:** Slice in half and use as a topping for salads such as the Late Summer Chop salad serving suggestion featured with the creamy roasted sweet pepper dressing in this week's newsletter recipe.

**ORANGE UKRAINE PEPPERS:** These are thick-walled, sweet peppers that resemble a small bell pepper except with a pointy bottom. They turn orange-red when ripe and can be roasted, sautéed, eaten raw or preserved.

**ORANGE ITALIAN FRYING PEPPERS:** You'll know this pepper by it's long, slender shape and bright, vivid orange color. This is a sweet pepper. You can enjoy it raw or cooked.

**EDAMAME:** Boil for about 5 minutes in heavily salted water, then cool immediately. Pop the beans out of their pods (pod is not edible) and add them to mixed veggie salads or just eat them as a snack.

**CARROTS:** Makes a great snack or lunch box vegetable for those heading back to school!

**FRENCH ORANGE, SUGAR CUBE OR GREEN JAPANESE MELONS:** Melon season is winding down, so enjoy the final bites of these tasty fresh melons. Dice and toss with Riesling wine and fresh mint for a tasty fruit salad to serve with Sunday brunch.

**CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO:** Cut into florets and toss lightly with olive oil, salt, pepper and any other dry seasonings you might like. Roast at 350°F until tender and just starting to turn golden.

**RED BEETS:** Don't forget to eat the tops as well! Cook them as you would cook spinach by lightly sautéing or steaming them. You can also blend them into your breakfast smoothie for an added kick in the morning!

**MINI ROMAINE LETTUCE:** Tear into bite-sized pieces and use as the base for a salad, or use the leaves to top off just one more Bacon-Lettuce-and Tomato sandwich!

**SWEET CORN:** Keep it cold! The key to maintaining sweetness in sweet corn is to keep the corn cold. Store it in the refrigerator and eat within 2-3 days of receiving it.

read very well and haven't found it yet. If it's a big one, I might need help hauling it home!

**RICHARD:** As for the other crops, the peppers have been slow to turn ripe, but here they come now! Enjoy the sweet taste of red/orange/yellow ripe, sweet peppers before the first frost ends the season!

The sweet potatoes and jicama are looking good, but they need to see a few more days in the 80's to accelerate their growth. The fall cole crops, including broccoli romanescos, cauliflower, broccoli, rutabagas and cabbage, are enjoying the cool summer and are maturing extra early this year! A few of you might even get a purple cauliflower in your box this week!

As we move into root crop season, I'm happy to report that the parsnips look great! Celeriac, leeks, beets, carrots and the late russet potatoes are all looking good and it won't be long before we harvest them for your boxes. Plus we may still see some nice greens

like salad mix or spinach before the winter freeze moves in.

**JACK:** Summer is fun, but I prefer cool weather. If you have as much hair as I do you would understand why I like fall and winter. My dad helps make the summer heat more bearable for me by turning on the A/C in the truck for me on hot days, but I prefer to get out and run around instead of sitting in the cool truck listening to NPR. I'm happy to see the temperatures dropping...it means we're one day closer to the first snow fall. Just like my dad, I can feel it in the air!

**RICHARD & JACK:** We hope you'll consider joining us for our harvest party in just a few weeks. We have a lot of exciting things to show everyone and we're hoping you'll help us dig some sweet potatoes, pick the last of the mini-sweet peppers, and find just the right pumpkin for you to take home! See you soon!

## Featured Vegetable of the Week: Peppers

Peppers are classified as either sweet or hot and can vary in size from 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. All peppers start out as a green pepper. As the fruit ripens on the plant, it makes a transition from 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 also increases. We will pack a variety of peppers in your box throughout the season. Always check the newsletter "What's In the Box" section so you can identify the peppers and determine if they are hot or sweet.

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 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 gives it kind of a smoky flavor. There are several methods for roasting peppers. 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, soups, etc.

Peppers are very easy to preserve as well. The simplest way is to just wash them and freeze them raw. You can also dehydrate 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 several weeks... summer won't last forever!

## Produce Plus

Roma Tomatoes, 25 pounds - \$38  
Edamame, 10 pounds - \$44  
Mini Sweet Peppers, 5 pounds - \$31  
Baby Red Beets, 10 pounds - \$25  
Red Cipollini Onions, 5 pounds - \$23  
Red Shallots, 5 pounds - \$23

Order by 5pm on Wednesday, September 10th for delivery on **September 12-13.**

To order, please call 608-483-2143 x2 or email

[csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

**Cross Plains, Mazo, Strathfield, Argyle, and Local:**

Please drop your check in the mail the same day that you place your order.

### Madison orders:

Madison Deliveries are at the Dane County Farmers' Market. Please pay by cash or check at our market stand when you pick up your produce on Saturday, September 13.

**Please be sure to include your name, telephone number and pick-up location with your order!**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**HARVEST PARTY,**  
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2014**

**FUN, FOOD & PUMPKINS!**

## Sweet Pepper Mashed Potatoes

Recipe developed by Chef Andrea Yoder

### Serves 6

2 pounds potatoes\*  
1 Tbsp plus 1 tsp salt  
4 Tbsp butter  
1 cup sweet pepper, small dice  
1 cup onion, small dice  
1 Tbsp garlic, minced  
½ cup milk  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Salt, to taste

1. Peel potatoes and cut into large chunks. Place in a medium sized saucepot and cover with cold water. Add 1 Tbsp salt. Place the pot on the stove, cover and bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Boil until the potatoes are tender, then remove from heat and drain off the cooking water. Turn off the burner you used for cooking and place the pot with the potatoes, uncovered, back on the burner. Allow the steam to roll off the potatoes for about 10 minutes.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, melt butter in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add sweet peppers, onions, garlic and 1 tsp salt. Sauté the vegetables in the butter until they are all soft. Reduce the heat to low and add the milk. Simmer just until the milk is warm.
3. Using a food processor or blender, puree the pepper and milk mixture until smooth. Set aside in a warm place while you mash the potatoes.
4. Once the potatoes have steamed dry, mash them using a potato masher. If you are using a starchy potato you can mash the potatoes until they are fairly smooth. If you are using a potato that is a little more waxy, minimize mashing and go for a more coarse mash with chunks in it.
5. Fold the pepper mixture into the potatoes. Season with additional salt and pepper as needed. Add more milk if needed to get the desired consistency. Reheat gently prior to serving.

\*Starchy potatoes, such as Russets or Purple Viking potatoes, work better for mashed potatoes than waxy potatoes. If you choose to use a waxy potato, try to minimize the amount of "mashing" you do to prevent them from becoming pasty.

## Creamy Roasted Sweet Pepper Dressing

Recipe by Chef Andrea Yoder

### Makes 1 cup

1 Orange Ukraine pepper or 2 Orange Italian Frying peppers\*  
1 small onion  
1 clove garlic  
½ cup mayonnaise  
¼ cup sour cream  
2 tsp apple cider vinegar  
Salt, to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Roast pepper(s) on a grill, under the broiler or use the flame of a gas range. You want to roast the peppers until most of the skin is blackened, turning as needed to roast all sides of the pepper. Remove from the heat and place in a bowl with a cover to steam for about 10 minutes.
2. Scrape the charred skin off the roasted peppers and remove the stem and seeds. Cool to room temperature, then place in a food processor along with the onion and garlic. Process until almost smooth.
3. Add mayonnaise, sour cream and apple cider vinegar. Blend to combine all ingredients thoroughly. Adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper as needed.

\*May substitute any other sweet pepper variety as well.

### Serving & Use Suggestions:

- Make a late summer chop salad using the vegetables in this week's box. Tear romaine lettuce into bite sized pieces and place on a dinner plate. Top with diced cucumbers, halved sungold or grape tomatoes, thinly sliced sweet peppers and thinly sliced raw onions. Add diced, cooked chicken, feta cheese and Kalamata olive halves. Drizzle with Creamy Sweet Pepper dressing and serve as an entrée salad.
- Use the dressing as a dip for fresh vegetables such as carrot sticks and cucumber slices
- Drizzle on top of sautéed green beans or grilled zucchini.
- Use as a sandwich spread.
- Use as a dipping sauce for grilled chicken or grilled sirloin kebobs.