



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

December 18-19, 2015

## Our Ancestors...Who Walked This Land Before Us?

by Richard de Wilde

As a boy growing up on our South Dakota prairie farm, I had a fascination for the early people who had lived there. We found evidence of their existence in the form of arrowheads, spear points and stone hammers as we picked rocks from our cultivated fields. The South Dakota farm of my youth had been scoured by an ancient glacier and left many rocks to be removed. Every year my four siblings and I picked rock from 300 acres of farm land. Two on each side of the rock wagon and the youngest driving the tractor. With time spent nearly every day after school and Saturdays picking rock, we had ample opportunity to find ancient stone tools and to contemplate how their owners lived and survived on the prairie.

As a youth, I was an avid hunter, trapper and went fishing whenever we could take a little time before and after our farm work. We would hunt ducks and geese on the prairie potholes every morning before school. "Mom, ducks in the garage! We're off to school." I'm sure that Mom got tired of processing our success, but wild game was a large part of our diet and we were poor farmers and a young family struggling to make ends meet. And all the time, I am thinking, "How did the early people do it without guns and trucks and electricity and chainsaws or even steel handsaws to cut the wood to build with and keep warm?" The answer seemed simple in my young mind. Of course... they had more time, because they didn't have to go to school! Nonetheless, I tried to fashion handles to stone hammers and made spears and bows and arrows. I often wondered if maybe I had been a Native American in a past life?

Wherever I have been since my childhood farm in northeast South Dakota, I have looked for signs of earlier inhabitants. My college years in western South Dakota introduced me to the Black Hills and the Badlands of western South Dakota. My college buddies in archeology were uncovering rich finds of prehistoric bones of giant mastodons and other interesting prehistoric creatures that used to live in the Badlands. It was during this time that I was also introduced to Native Americans from the Rosebud reservation and was fascinated to learn about their rituals and practices.

So it comes with no surprise that when I moved to southwest Wisconsin to our present farm that I continued, as time permitted, to explore the earlier inhabitants of our farm and region. I find the best time to look for artifacts is just after a rain, when the ground is dark and small stones are washed and

visible. For years I have collected chips and pieces of stone & rock that look as if they had been worked with the intention of becoming a tool of some sort. Sometimes they look like a characteristic arrowhead while it is less evident what others may be.

Recently I met Jim Theler, a neighbor and retired archeologist who has devoted his life to studying ancient people of this area through his work with the University of Wisconsin—La Crosse. This past year Jim showed us burial mounds on property adjacent to our farm. These mounds are called effigy mounds and are raised piles of earth built in shapes, which are often animals. Because we work in the woods, harvesting ramps & trees, we wanted to be able to identify these mounds so as not to disturb them with logging & harvesting....just in case we might have some as well! We feel it is important to continue to show respect for the people who struggled, lived and farmed this land before us. Building a logging road through the heart of a burial mound just doesn't seem like a respectful thing to do.

Shortly before meeting Jim, one of our landlords found out he had effigy mounds on

his land and he was kind enough to take us out to see them. While it is hard to identify them, I began to notice and study the subtle changes in the landscape that make up the mounds. I also started thinking more about where the mound builders might choose to live and build their burial mounds. Most of the mounds have been found on hillsides facing south and west and located above springs and water sources. My intrigue continued to grow and I started looking at some parts of our land that seemed to fit the criteria and may be a good location for a mound. I had an inkling we too may have some mounds on our land. Recently, I asked Jim to come to our farm and look at our land and the artifacts I have found over the past 25 years. I showed Jim my display of artifacts....ok, I dumped them out of a few cans I had stored them in. He sorted through my findings and was able to separate the different arrowheads and pieces of tools, etc. based on the time period in history they came from. Some of the pieces likely date back as many as 10,000 years ago! Interestingly, the mound builders who built the effigy mounds in this area were here much more recently—just a mere 1,500

## This Week's Box

**ORANGE CARROTS:** Check out this week's fruit newsletter for a recipe for Carrot-Poppy Seed Bundt Cake with Meyer Lemon Glaze.

**RED & YELLOW ONIONS:** You can store these onions well into the winter if you keep them in a cool & dry location. Try *Bon Appetit's* recipe for Quick Pickled Onions to top burgers and tacos.

**PORCELAIN OR RED RUSSIAN GARLIC:** Make your own garlic bread to go along with winter soups. Spread roasted garlic onto a loaf of crusty bread and roast with olive oil and Parmesan cheese.

**SWEET POTATOES:** Check out the recipe for Peanut & Sweet Potato Soup in the 10/16/14 newsletter.

**CELEBRATION OR BUTTERNUT SQUASH:** Celebration squash is best when roasted to bring out its flavor, or fill the center with chopped vegetables, rice and cheese for delicious stuffed squash. Butternut squash lends itself nicely to soups and baked goods.

**RED SAVOY CABBAGE:** Savoy cabbage has a mild, earthy flavor and is good when thinly sliced and added to soups and stir-fries. Head over to [www.bbcgoodfood.com](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com) for their simple recipe for Stir-Fried Savoy Cabbage.

**BEAUTY HEART RADISH:** Beauty Hearts are a mild, sweet radish that make a beautiful addition to winter slaws.

**SWEET SCARLET TURNIPS:** See this week's vegetable feature for more information.

**PURPLE VIKING POTATOES:** These potatoes are delicious when baked in the oven and topped with butter, salt & pepper. They'd also be excellent used to make mashed potatoes for your next holiday gathering.

**PARSNIPS:** Parsnips can be stored in the same way as carrots. If you enjoy their flavor and sweetness, try simply roasting or steaming them.

**CELERIAC:** Cut your celeriac into quarters, then peel the outer skin off with a paring knife. You can substitute diced celeriac for celery in any stuffing recipe.

years ago! I find it very interesting to think about the fact that people lived and survived on this land as many as 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. It makes our 30 years on this farm and the 200 years that European settlers have been in the area seem like such a small blip on the radar. It also makes me think we must try to tread lightly to preserve the land for those who will live here long after we are gone.

Jim will be coming back to our farm to continue helping us in our explorations. I'll be writing more about this topic and the findings on our own land in January. If you're interested in this topic, I'd like to recommend Jim Theler's book, *Twelve Millennia*...but you can't have my signed copy ☺

### Vegetable Feature: Storage Turnips

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

Let's face it—"exciting" isn't an adjective that people typically use when they talk about turnips. Quite honestly, the way in which turnips are most often prepared—boiled and mashed—leaves a bit to be desired. Like Brussels sprouts, overcooking them leaves you with a bitter, off-putting flavor. Recognizing this for the tragedy it is, we at Harmony Valley Farm want to set you and your turnips up for success during this winter season.

Turnips are a highly versatile culinary ingredient and an important part of a Midwestern seasonal diet. Storage turnips are hearty vegetables that are in it for the long haul. Place them in a plastic bag and they'll hang out in your refrigerator for months on end...thus providing sustenance through the long winter months. Purple top turnips are the traditional variety of turnips most people are familiar with. They have a distinct turnip flavor with crisp white flesh. In the last vegetable box you received golden turnips. These are a bit milder in flavor with gold skin and flesh. This week we're delivering our favorite storage turnip, sweet scarlet turnips. They have a magenta-colored skin with white flesh often flecked with pink. They are the mildest in turnip flavor and the sweetest. The flavor of all storage turnips becomes milder, balanced and sweet when they are harvested later in the fall when the temperatures are colder and we've had some frost. If you've had early harvested turnips...we can't blame you for taking a pass on them, but please don't write them off based on that one experience.

Turnips can be used in a variety of ways. They can be included with a mix of root vegetables to make a delicious roasted vegetable medley or root mash. Sweet scarlet turnips are a beautiful addition to a winter stir-fry or are mild enough to be eaten raw with a simple dip. Turnips can also be added to soups, stews and winter chowder. Quite honestly, one of our favorite ways to eat them is often simply sautéed with butter. If you want to take them a little further, you can also pickle them and ferment them making delicious and interesting condiments for winter fare. We've included a few enticing recipes in this week's newsletter, but if you're searching for even more inspiration, check out TheKitchn's Seasonal Cooking series on "Interesting Things to do with Turnips."

You may not believe me when I tell you this, but turnips rival kale and Swiss chard in terms of the amounts of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants they offer the eater. So, abandon the boil and mash mentality and start getting better acquainted with your turnips this winter!

### Roasted Turnip Ghanoush

Yield: 4 cups

2 lb. turnips

1 cup pitted dates

1 cup water

½ cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt

½ cup roasted tahini

3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 Tbsp minced garlic

Smoked paprika, 2-3 pinches\*

2 tsp kosher or fine sea salt

¼ tsp freshly ground pepper

1 Tbsp finely minced fresh flat-leaf parsley

Pita bread, baked pita chips or crudités for serving

Extra-virgin olive oil, for serving\*

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 375°F. Place the unpeeled turnips on a rimmed baking sheet and roast until very soft, 30 to 45 minutes. Transfer them to a heatproof bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let cool. The steam will make them easier to peel.
2. While the turnips are roasting, in a small saucepan, combine the dates and water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook until the dates have softened, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a food processor and process until pureed. Set aside to cool. Measure ½ cup puree to use for the recipe. (Cover and refrigerate the remaining puree for another use. It will keep for up to 1 month.)
3. When the turnips are cool enough to handle, peel them and transfer to a food processor. Add the yogurt, date puree, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, a few pinches of paprika, salt and pepper and process until smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with a drizzle of olive oil & the parsley. Serve immediately with pita bread, or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. (The dip can be prepared up to 1 day in advance, covered and refrigerated.)

Recipe borrowed from *Roots* by Diane Morgan. The ingredients marked with an \* were Andrea's adaptations to the original recipe. This recipe & cookbook were recommended by some longtime CSA members. I was intrigued by the idea of using turnips to make a dip, and found this to be a quite tasty way to use a turnip!

### Turnip and Carrot Kraut with Caraway

Yield: 2 ½ cups

1 lb. turnips, peeled and cut into large chunks

4 oz. carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks

2 ½ tsp kosher salt

½ tsp caraway seeds, toasted

1. Using the coarse holes on a box grater or food processor fitted with the coarse shredding disk, grate the turnips and carrots. Transfer the grated vegetables to a large glass container with straight sides, such as a 1 qt. glass measuring cup. Add the salt and toasted caraway seeds and toss to combine thoroughly. Place a glass or china plate on top of the mixture and press down firmly. Place a weight, such as a closed container filled with water, on top of the plate and press down to squeeze out the moisture that is released by the vegetables. Cover the container with a clean kitchen towel and place in a cool, dark place to ferment for 1 week.
2. Every day, press down on the plate to make sure the vegetables are submerged. The salt will continue to draw out moisture from the vegetables during fermentation, and pressing on the plate helps to extract the brine. The vegetables must be completely submerged for fermentation to occur and to avoid mold from developing on the surface. If mold does form, skim it off and discard it. (Don't worry, the kraut is still safe to eat!)
3. After 1 week, the kraut will be tangy and ready to eat. If left to ferment for 2 weeks or more, it will continue to develop complex flavor. When you think the kraut has fermented long enough, you can store it in a covered container in the refrigerator and enjoy it for several weeks.

Recipe borrowed from *Roots* by Diane Morgan.