



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

August 19-20, 2016

A Prescription for Nature-Deficit Disorder

By Bobbie Harte

It was early May. My jeans were damp where my knees made contact with the ground, and I was digging around a clump of ramps with my hands. Their wild, onion-garlic scent drifted up as I heaped dried leaves and cool soil from the deep, ineffective hole I was making. Black dirt caked my fingernails, but the ramps held firm. My friend, who knew better, laughed and handed me a shovel. "When was the last time you interacted with the landscape like this?" he asked. I could not remember.

The day before, I had driven from Madison to visit my friend's family homestead near Ontario, Wisconsin, just north of Wildcat Mountain State Park and about an hour's drive east of Harmony Valley Farm. My schedule had been busy for weeks, and these two free days were a luxury. The interstate hummed beneath my wheels until Mauston. After that, two-lane roads undulated over hills and under a blue sky filled with clouds that chased their shadows over green valleys.

We spent most of that first afternoon walking through brown grass, talking to neighbors, and taking photographs. Later, gathering firewood, we paused on an outlook that was so high, cars that seemed to be the size of ants rolled along a road that stretched for miles. The air was cool and the trees were just beginning to leaf out. The memory of winter still fresh, my eyes eagerly sought the shades of green that were emerging from the bare trees covering the distant bluffs.

The next day we visited another neighbor to search for morel mushrooms. We hiked through the woods, down into draws and up steep hillsides not yet choked with underbrush. We did find morels, as well as wildflowers and that green carpet of ramps. With the aid of my friend's shovel, I filled a bag with them to turn into pesto later. Not only could I not remember the last time I had interacted with the landscape so directly, I also could not remember the last time I had gone for nearly two days without checking Facebook, Instagram, email or text messages, or when I had felt so relaxed and content. The scent of the forest floor – a combination of dried leaves, wet dirt, oniony ramps and crisp air – saturated my clothes and imagination. Even when I was back in Madison, it remained.

Northerners know how tempting it is to stay indoors during the cold months. Eventually cabin fever sets in, a restlessness that can only be discharged by activity in the fresh air, no matter how cold. This partially explains why that early

spring visit to Ontario was so moving, but now I think a larger force was also at play: nature-deficit disorder.

Richard Louv created the phrase in his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods*, as a way to talk about our culture's increasing alienation from the natural world and why it matters. In 2011, Louv expanded on those ideas in *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*. The ramifications of our disconnection from the landscape are disheartening: attention and behavioral disorders, depression, obesity and environmental degradation. Through anecdote and formal research, Louv explores the power of nature to increase cognition, creativity, intelligence and productivity; enhance physical and mental

health; enrich communities that value all living things; and create a purposeful sense of place, where natural and human histories combine to create regional and personal identities. The book's central questions are, "What would our lives be like if our days and nights were as immersed in nature as they are in technology?" and, "How can each of us help create that life-enhancing world, not only in a hypothetical future, but right now, for our families and for ourselves?" *The Nature Principle* is an uplifting read, especially because it suggests actions that each of us can take in our daily lives immediately. In a world that seems to have gone mad, it is easy to feel paralyzed with fear, not knowing how to help. Louv's book is not an attempt to convince people that technology is bad.

This Week's Box

ITALIAN GARLIC: Make a Roasted Garlic Dip to use as a topper for a baked potato or on top of grilled steak. There's a recipe at allrecipes.com.

SWEET ONIONS: For a simple side dish, slice the onion in thick slices and place in a baking dish. Mix bread crumbs, melted butter, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle mixture on top of onions and bake until golden brown and tender.

ZUCCHINI OR FLYING SAUCER SUMMER SQUASH: Chop up zucchini or summer squash along with tomatoes, peppers, onions and garlic. Saute until vegetables are tender and toss with cooked pasta, fresh herbs and your favorite cheese.

CUCUMBERS: Cucumbers are a great addition to a summer pasta salad. Chop up and add to cooked macaroni or ringlet noodles along with onions, peppers, tomatoes and cubed cheese. Add your favorite creamy dressing or vinaigrette.

SWEET CORN: Cook corn and cut the kernels off the cob. Mix into Spanish rice or make a sweet corn & tomato frittata.

RED/YELLOW GRAPE OR SUN ORANGE TOMATOES: These tomatoes are great marinated and slow roasted. Drizzle with olive oil, add fresh thyme, oregano, salt and pepper. Slow roast until the skins split then serve with grilled chicken or flatbread.

MIXED VARIETY OF TOMATOES: Start your day off right with a fresh tomato sandwich. Spread soft cheese or cream cheese on toast and top with a thick slice of fresh tomato, salt, pepper and a few basil leaves.

ORANGE UKRAINE PEPPERS: These are orange-red in color with a blocky top and pointed on the bottom. This is a sweet pepper!

POBLANO PEPPERS: See this week's vegetable feature for poblano ideas and tips.

FRENCH ORANGE OR SUGAR CUBE MELONS: Both of these small cantaloupe varieties are sweet and delicious. Dice up melon and toss with fresh cilantro, mint and lime juice for a refreshing fruit salad.

GREEN JAPANESE MELON: This melon is round with a finely netted rind that has a greenish hue. The flesh is green, smooth, sweet and some describe it as having "hints of cream soda."

RED SEEDLESS OR YELLOW SEEDED WATERMELON: Watermelon is delicious just sliced and eaten, or cube it up and add fresh cilantro, diced onion and lime juice. A splash of tequila is optional!

BABY ARUGULA: Make a tasty salad with arugula, fresh tomatoes, feta cheese and a vinaigrette dressing of your choice.

SUN JEWEL MELONS OR BROCCOLI OR WHITE CAULIFLOWER: Sun Jewel melons have the yellow rind and are oblong in shape. They are delicious eaten with a piece of prosciutto wrapped around a slice! While you have the prosciutto out, consider making an antipasto platter with fresh roasted sweet peppers, slices of cucumber, marinated grape tomatoes, sliced cheese, prosciutto and roasted broccoli or cauliflower! Serve with grilled bread.

CHOICE - EGGPLANT & BASIL: You can have both basil and eggplant if you would like. We still ask that you only take one share's worth of each item (1-2 eggplants, a handful of basil), but feel free to take both items if desired.

Rather, he asserts that the more technology we have in our lives, the more we need to balance it with a solid connection to the natural world. We can do that in lots of ways right now: by tending houseplants or potted herbs on a fire escape, by going outside for a walk or by visiting a local nature conservancy.

Another way to maintain a connection to the natural world is to continue supporting enterprises like Harmony Valley Farm, what Louv calls the “new agrarianism.” This is a way of life that nurtures “lands covered with biologically diverse vegetation; lands tuned to functioning water, mineral and solar cycles; lands with abundant and diverse wildlife; a community benefiting from locally grown, healthy food; and a people aware of the importance of agriculture to the environment.” These have been the working principles of Harmony Valley Farm for decades.

On Sunday, September 25, Harmony Valley Farm will hold its annual harvest party. Visitors to the farm will be able to pick pumpkins, tour the fields and eat gorgeous organic food. This would be an excellent antidote to any nature-deficit disorder you might be experiencing. I am certainly looking forward to leaving my cell phone in the car, getting my hands in the dirt again and connecting with the land. I hope to see you there!

Vegetable Feature: Poblano Peppers

By Lindsay the CSA Coordinator

Originating in Puebla, Mexico, the poblano pepper is mildly spicy. While it does have some heat compared to a sweet bell pepper, it is significantly less intense than a jalapeño. You will still want to make sure to thoroughly wash your hands after chopping, but the oils are not intense enough as to require gloves when working with a few peppers. The color of the poblano is such a dark green as to almost be black. You can identify poblanos by their dark color as well as by their shape: block-like on the stem-end but narrowing to a point.

You can use these peppers to add a subtle kick to many different dishes or as a main ingredient in recipes such as chile rellenos or mole sauce. If you aren't able to use them right away, raw peppers can be frozen after they are deseeded and chopped. You can also freeze the peppers for later use after roasting and removing the skin. Poblanos can also be preserved by drying the peppers and grinding them or storing whole. If you have ever come across ancho chiles, these are the dried form of the poblano. It can be helpful to store small portions of the dried peppers in several containers in case any mold began to develop while drying.

Because of their comparatively thicker flesh, poblanos will stand up to cooking without falling apart. They are great in summer soups and stews alongside other summer vegetables such as corn, tomatoes and tomatillos. Poblanos are often roasted either using an oven broiler or other open flame. Let the charred pepper sit in a covered container for 15 minutes and the skin should subsequently rub off more easily. Roasted poblanos have a unique flavor that can add interesting depth to tomatillo or tomato salsa as well as guacamole. They are great in sauces atop summer vegetables, enchiladas or tacos. Poblano Rajas is an easy condiment consisting of strips of roasted poblano pepper. You can either roast your poblanos and then cut into strips, or experiment with the time-saving recipe by Rick Bayless available at www.fronterafiesta.com/cook/salsa-a-condiments/262-poblanorajas. Also check out Chef Andrea's recipe adaption below!

Produce Plus

Produce Plus is a benefit of CSA membership, allowing you to buy some of your favorite items in bulk to put up (can, freeze, preserve) for later use.

Produce Plus Current Offers

Roma Tomatoes**, 25 pounds - \$42.00

Edamame, 10 pounds - \$45.00

Sweet Italian Basil, 3 pounds - \$33.00

Jalapeño Peppers, 5 pounds - \$18.00

Porcelain Garlic, 3 pounds - \$27.00

****Note:** We anticipate we will have romas for about three weeks. Keep an eye on the Produce Plus offerings each week for changes, but we should be able to offer romas for the next few weeks.

Cross Plains, Mazo, Parkwood Hills, Argyle and local customers:

Order before 5 pm Wednesday, **August 24** for delivery to your site **August 26-27**. Pick up your produce at your site, delivered in a box with your name on it. Please send payment the same day as placing your order.

Madison customers: Order before 5 pm Wednesday, **August 24**. Your

Produce Plus items will be available for pick-up at our Dane County Farmers' Market stand between 6:30 am and 12:30 pm on Saturday, **August 27**. Our market stand is located on Mifflin St. between Pinckney and Wisconsin streets. Any market crew member can assist you with your pick-up and payment.

To order, please call 608-483-2143 x2 or email csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com

Please be sure to include your name, telephone number, pick-up location and quantity of each item you would like with your order!

Roasted Poblano, Onion & Jack Quesadilla

Yield: 2-4 servings

- 3 poblano chiles
- 2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced lengthwise (about 1 ½ cups)
- 1 cup thinly sliced fresh mushrooms
- ¼ cup loosely packed fresh cilantro

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Two 10-inch flour tortillas
- 4-8 oz grated Monterey Jack cheese
- Sour cream or crème fraîche, to taste

- To roast the peppers using a gas flame: Turn a gas burner to high and char the poblanos directly over the flame, turning them with tongs as soon as each side becomes fully blackened, about 6 to 8 minutes per pepper. To roast the peppers in the oven: Preheat the oven to 400°F. Halve and seed the peppers and place on a parchment-lined (for easy cleanup) baking sheet. Roast for about 30 to 35 minutes or until charred in some places. (Don't let them get too black or you will have trouble peeling them.)
- Immediately after roasting, put the poblanos in a bowl, cover, and set aside to steam and loosen the skins. When they're cool enough to handle, peel the charred skin off with your hands or a small paring knife. Pull out and discard the stems and seed clusters (if you haven't already). Slice the peppers into ¼ inch wide strips and put them in a small bowl.
- Put a baking sheet in the oven and heat the oven to 150°F (or its lowest setting).
- Meanwhile: heat 1 Tbsp of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until soft and lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Add another tablespoon of oil and the mushrooms. Continue to cook until the mushrooms are soft. Add the poblano strips, season with a generous pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the peppers are heated through, another 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate and wipe the skillet clean.
- Heat 1 tsp of the oil in the skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add one tortilla and scatter over it half of the cheese, half of the poblano mixture, and half of the cilantro. When the tortilla smells toasty and the bottom is browned in spots, in 1 or 2 minutes, fold it in half, pressing it with a spatula to flatten it. Transfer to the baking sheet in the oven to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining ingredients to make one more quesadilla. Cut each quesadilla into wedges and serve with the sour cream or crème fraîche on the side.

Recipe adapted from www.alexandracooks.com.