



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

December 16-17, 2016

Rolling Out 2017 CSA Shares!

It's hard to believe this is our final week of CSA deliveries and Christmas will be here in less than two weeks! As we wrap up another year, we are already looking ahead to another CSA growing season. Regardless of how a year may unfold, we always strive to be prepared each year, with a plan for success in hand. 2017 will be no different and we're anxious to put our plans in action and see what will unfold.

We're excited to roll out our 2017 offerings and are already receiving CSA sign-ups for next year! You'll find our updated CSA sign-up form on our website and there's a link to it in this week's email. We are offering an "Early Bird" sign-up offer again this year for members who sign up before February 14, 2017. You can find more details about this offer on the front page of the sign-up form. Our share offerings will remain the same for the 2017 season. We are continuing to offer the same vegetable share options, summer & autumn fruit shares and a coffee share in partnership with Kickapoo Coffee Roasters. While the pricing for our fruit shares will remain the same, we did apply a small increase to our vegetable and coffee shares. As we discussed the 2017 coffee share price with Kickapoo Coffee, they felt it was important to institute a small increase this year as coffee prices are rising. The good news is that this increase will be passed on to the producers! As for our decision to increase our vegetable share price, we'd like to offer a little background.

For the past six years we've chosen to hold our vegetable prices at the same rate. Back in 2010 we reached our peak in CSA membership and were packing 1,100-1,200 boxes per week. We enjoy growing vegetables for CSA and consider it a very important part of what we do. Our plan, at that time, was to maximize our CSA membership and decrease our production for wholesale accounts. Unfortunately, the year we made this decision was the year we started to see a slight decrease in our CSA membership. It was also about the time we were experiencing the economic recession and we assumed the decrease was associated with a change in consumer priorities and resources. When we consulted with some of our core, longtime CSA members and shared with them what was happening. They advised us to hold our prices steady, continue to do a good job and ride out the hard economic times. Word of mouth advertising has always been our greatest way to sell CSA shares, so we decided to hold our prices to make it affordable for our members and focused on looking for ways to increase efficiency, decrease expenses, etc.

Unfortunately we have continued to see a slight decrease in CSA shares each year and overall the decrease each year has added up to about a 25% decrease in vegetable shares since our peak in 2010. We've queried our membership as well as other growers around the country who are also experiencing the same reality. Why is this happening? Perhaps it is related to the fact that organic food has become more available at farmers' markets as well as in mainstream grocery stores, Wal-mart and even the local Kwik Trips and convenience

This Week's Box

PURPLE & ORANGE CARROTS: Have a lot of carrots in your crisper drawer? Lucky you! Time to get creative and find delicious ways to use them over the winter. Sticks in dip is good, but get creative and turn them into winter salads, soups & sauces. Roast them, add them to pancakes, waffles, oatmeal, cakes, cookies, bread and more! If they get floppy...put them in a bowl of cold water to rehydrate them or just put them in a pot of soup. Sweet, delicious, nutritious and durable. Read this week's vegetable feature to learn more!

PARSNIPS: Store parsnips in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator and they'll store well into the deep winter. If you're still learning to like parsnips, consider using them to make a cake for the holidays! They pair well with rum, apples and maple frosting...just a suggestion.

RED BEETS: For a healthy twist on beets, make beet chips! The recipe can be found at marthastewart.com. Store beets in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer.

CELERIAC: Celeriac pairs well with apples in raw salads and creamy soups. Store dry celeriac in a plastic bag in the vegetable drawer in the refrigerator.

POTATOES: Keep potatoes in a cool, dry and dark place in an ideal temperature range of 40 to 50°F. Moisture will spoil them, light will turn them green and onions will cause them to sprout.

GARLIC: Store fresh garlic bulbs in a dark, dry, cool spot. Your kitchen cupboard or a shady corner of your kitchen counter top is perfect for this. Feel like you're getting a cold....don't forget Farmer Richard's therapeutic garlic sandwich. Slice a clove of garlic on a piece of toast with butter or nut butter and then take it down—maybe two or three a day. It will not only keep away the vampires and half the neighborhood, it will also help you fight off the cold.

YELLOW OR BLUSH RED ONIONS: Find a cool, dark and dry area with plenty of air circulation and onions will last for quite awhile. If you haven't made French Onion soup lately, maybe it's time to do so!

SWEET SCARLET TURNIPS: The Turnip & Apple Quiche recipe on our website in the recipe archives is a great holiday brunch item. The leftovers reheat nicely as well if you'd like to enjoy leftovers for breakfast, lunch or dinner the next day! Store turnips in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. If you notice signs of dehydration (spongy or wrinkly) soak turnips in water to rehydrate them.

SHALLOTS: This is not just any onion. It's slightly sweet with a more refined, sophisticated onion-garlic like flavor. It is the base of many traditional French sauces and vinaigrettes. Store shallots as you would any allium in a cool, dry, dark place with plenty of air circulation.

stores! While it is good to see growth in the organic market, we believe it has impacted consumers' choices to shop at other outlets instead of choosing to "eat out of the box." We continue to value our direct relationship with our CSA members. We believe sourcing your food through CSA provides a value beyond just the price you pay when purchasing food at Wal-Mart and the like. We continue to invest resources, time and effort to produce the highest quality vegetables with good taste and nutrient density. We try to do our part to connect you with "your farm" and provide a transparency that is not always present in our food supply today. We understand that "eating out of the box" is different than shopping at the grocery store and do our best to provide our members with resources so they can find success in using the vegetables and creating delicious meals.

So, despite the fact that our CSA numbers have decreased, we still value CSA and want it to be part of our business. The reality though is that we cannot continue to absorb the increases in expenses we've experienced over the past six years. The cost of some packaging and field supplies has gone up, at times fuel prices have been high, and the cost of labor has also gone up. We recognize our

crew works hard and we want to continue to support a living wage. Thus our final decision was to increase our vegetable share price by about 3% on average across the vegetable share options.

Most of our CSA Sites will remain the same for 2017. In the Twin Cities we are adding a new site in the St. Louis Park area. We are still looking for a new site location in the North Plymouth area on the west side of Minneapolis. If you are in this area or have a friend who may be interested in hosting a site, please contact us for more information. Additionally, we are continuing our partnership with Lunds & Byerlys which allows us to expand our delivery options to the greater Twin Cities area with delivery to any of their 27 store locations. If you are interested in learning more about this option, please reference the "Lunds & Byerlys CSA Sign-Up Form" on our website. In the Madison area we will be closing our Marinette Trail site, however we will be adding a site located nearby on Robin Circle.

Before the end of the year you will be invited to participate in an End of the Season Survey. We appreciate your feedback and this is your chance to offer input about what vegetables you might like to see in the boxes

next year (Time to grow jicama again? Radish seed pods, escarole, lemongrass or cardoons?) or communicate any other ideas or thoughts you may have for the future of our CSA.

In closing, we'd like to thank you for your support of our farm this year. While we had some weather challenges to deal with and certainly miss having sweet potatoes this fall, knowing our membership was behind us is a huge encouragement for us. We hope you and your families have a peaceful and restful holiday season and winter. We look forward to growing for you again in 2017. Sincerely, Farmers Richard and Andrea

Vegetable Feature: Carrots, A Winter Staple

By Laurel Blomquist

As 2016 comes to a close, you can be proud that you, as a CSA member, accomplished something that few Americans can claim: you ate with the seasons. You supported the regional economy. You based your diet on the freshest, most nutritionally-dense vegetables you could find, simply by being a member. And you can continue to do so until the root vegetables that you received in your share run out.

The subject of this week's feature is the humble carrot. Luckily, carrots will last for months if stored in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer. I have kept Harmony Valley Farm carrots for 2-3 months without a problem. It is best to store carrots away from apples, pears or potatoes, which give off ethylene gas and cause the carrot to deteriorate.

While the carrot may seem a little pedestrian in nature, they are ubiquitous because of their delicious sweet flavor and their versatility. Carrots are one of the ingredients in mirepoix, the flavor base from which many sauces, soups and other dishes get their start. Traditional French mirepoix is 2 parts onions, 1 part carrot and 1 part celery. These vegetables are called aromatics because they impart subtle flavor to a dish. You probably wouldn't be able to single out that they were used, since they often are cut so small and cooked so long in a dish that they all but disappear. However, they give dishes layers of flavor that can't be replicated without them.

With this in mind, make sure to grab a carrot or two every time you make anything in the slow cooker: soup, stew, braises, stock or under a piece of chicken, pork or beef. Carrots are also a nice addition to a jar of lacto-fermented vegetables, such as kimchi. If you would rather see carrots on the plate and enjoy their sweetness, try roasting, braising or glazing them for maximum flavor. Juicing, salads and carrot cake or bread are more options.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't inform you of the health benefits of carrots. One carrot will provide over 200% of the RDA of Vitamin A through the conversion of beta-carotene in your liver, as well as some Vitamin K, C and calcium. Including orange foods in your diet lowers your risk of coronary heart disease and antioxidants such as beta-carotene lower the risk of lung, prostate and colon cancer.

Until the Dutch bred orange carrots in the 17th century, most carrots were purple, yellow or white. Purple carrots, in addition to having the phytochemicals that orange carrots have, also contain anthocyanins, the antioxidant found in blueberries. (Foley) I would recommend keeping these carrots for roasting, braising, or glazing, so that your guests will notice them and remark on their beautiful color.

Enjoy our bountiful carrot harvest in as many ways as you can. And congratulations on completing another year of eating seasonally!

Foley, Denise. "Surprising Health Benefits of Purple Carrots." *Rodale's Organic Life*, Rodale Inc. 1 April, 2015.

Mercola, Dr. Joseph. "What are the Health Benefits of Carrots?" *Mercola*, Joseph Mercola. 28 December, 2013.

Carrot Oatmeal Cookie

Yield: About 2½ dozen cookies

1 cup whole wheat pastry flour or unbleached all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

scant ½ tsp fine grain sea salt

1 cup rolled oats

⅔ cup chopped walnuts

1 cup shredded carrots

½ cup real maple syrup, room temperature

½ cup unrefined coconut oil, warmed until just melted

1 tsp grated fresh ginger

1. Preheat oven to 375°F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and oats. Add the nuts and carrots.
3. In a separate smaller bowl use a whisk to combine the maple syrup, coconut oil, and ginger. Add this to the flour mixture and stir until just combined.
4. Drop onto prepared baking sheets, one level tablespoonful at a time, leaving about 2 inches between each cookie. Bake in the top ⅓ of the oven for 10 - 12 minutes or until the cookies are golden on top and bottom.

Note From Chef Andrea: This recipe was borrowed from Heidi Swanson's blog, 101cookbooks.com. Heidi encourages experimenting with making different versions of this cookie. When I made them, I used ½ cup chopped cashews and ½ cup shredded coconut in place of the walnuts. I also added 1 tsp fresh lemon zest....and the results were delicious! My friend, Steph, uses this recipe quite frequently. One of her favorite ways to make this is to add mini dark chocolate chips in place of some or all of the nuts. I think you'll be pleased with the results any way you choose to make them!

Roasted Root Vegetables with Asian Honey Ginger Glaze

Yield: 7- 8 servings

Root Vegetable Blend

1 medium yellow onion, medium dice

9 cups root vegetables and/or winter squash, cut into medium dice (include any vegetables you have available—carrots, turnips, celeriac, potatoes, parsnips, beets)

3 Tbsp olive oil

2 tsp Herbs de Provence or Italian Seasoning

1 tsp chili powder

1 tsp sea salt

Asian Garlic-Ginger Glaze

1 Tbsp ginger, peeled and grated or minced

3 cloves garlic, minced

½ cup soy sauce (reduced sodium recommended)

2 to 3 Tbsp pure maple syrup or honey, to taste

2 tsp red chili sauce (such as sriracha) or ½ tsp red pepper flakes

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Put the diced onions and root vegetables in a large mixing bowl. Drizzle the vegetables with oil and sprinkle with the Herbs de Provence, chili powder and sea salt. Use your (clean) hands to toss the vegetables and mix to ensure everything is well-coated.
3. Spread the vegetables in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Use two baking sheets if you need to in order to keep the vegetables in a single layer.
4. Roast the vegetables in the preheated oven for 40 minutes, turning and stirring once, or until they are tender and golden-brown.
5. While the vegetables are roasting, prepare the Asian Garlic-Ginger Glaze. Simply add all of the ingredients to a small skillet and bring to a full (but controlled) boil. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and cook, while whisking frequently, until the volume is reduced by half. This should take about 4 to 6 minutes. Remove the glaze from the heat and set aside until ready to use (Note: as the glaze sits, it will continue to thicken).
6. Once the vegetables have finished roasting, remove them from the oven. Drizzle the garlic-ginger glaze over the vegetables. Stir to coat the vegetables with the glaze. Serve warm.

Recipe adapted from one featured on theroastedroot.net.