



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

October 20 - 21, 2017

Sweet Potatoes By Farmer Richard

Sweet potatoes are a tropical plant originating in South America. The remnants of sweet potatoes have been found in Peru dating back 10,000 years and there is evidence of cultivation in Central America at least 5,000 years ago. Cultivated sweet potatoes spread to New Zealand, Polynesia and Africa. Today, Uganda is the second largest producer of sweet potatoes behind China. In this country, sweet potatoes have been traditionally grown in the southeast. North Carolina is the leading producer, with California in second and Louisiana and Mississippi also being significant producers.

Southern farms 'plant' selected sweet potatoes taken from last year's harvest pretty close together in a bed of sawdust or peat moss. The tubers send up green shoots which are cut off (called slips) and sent to us in bundles of 25 each. They don't look very good when we get them, but if we get them planted promptly, most of them will grow!

Researchers continue to experiment with new varieties. A new variety is created by cross pollinating flowers and planting 2 – 4 seeds that a flower produces. We continue to trial them when the slips are available to us. Our favorite slip producer is New Sprout Organic Farms. This year they offered some new varieties that we trialed. As we dug them this year, we looked at 'marketable yield', like tuber shape, set (how many tubers per plant), and color, both inside and out. Varieties 'set' 6-8 tubers in a banana like cluster from the main stem. If 5-6 grow to a nice shapely size, it will be a good yield. If only 2 or 3 fill out and one a 4 pound jumbo, maybe not as good. It may be a photo opportunity at our harvest party when a 40 pound child joyfully lifts out a 5 pound sweet potato, but those jumbo's may intimidate other CSA members who may not know how to cook a 'monster' that size or know how easily it will reheat in the oven. So, we

What's In The Box?

GARLIC: Feel a cold coming on? Slice a few garlic cloves and eat them on buttered toast. Raw garlic will help boost your immune system.

BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER: Oscar, one of our crew members, says we're nearly done with broccoli for the season and we're down to our last field of cauliflower.

ORANGE CARROTS: When carrots start to pile up in your crisper drawer, consider making a refreshing juice with them. Visit bonappetit.com for a simple **Carrot, Ginger & Lime Juice** recipe.

SPINACH: Check out our *Cooking With the Box* article where you'll find a recipe for **Indian Creamed Spinach**.

BABY ARUGULA: Enjoy these greens in a salad. Toss the greens with a simple raspberry vinaigrette and garnish with shaved Parmesan and toasted walnuts.

SEDONA YELLOW ONIONS: This onion variety is a Sweet Spanish type. It has a thick skin and should store well for awhile if kept in a cool, dry location.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH: Check out last week's vegetable feature posted on our blog for more information about this squash and a delicious recipe!

HONEYNUT BUTTERNUT SQUASH: This is a unique squash variety developed at Cornell University and it's one of the most sweet and flavorful squash varieties we grow. Just cut them in half and bake them in the oven until tender, then serve with a pat of butter.

ASSORTED POTATOES: This week's potatoes are waxy potatoes that are good for roasting or boiling!

BURGUNDY SWEET POTATOES: They're finally here! See this week's main newsletter article and vegetable feature for more information about this year's crop!

GREEN TOP RED BEETS: Delicious roasted whole or sliced and grilled. Use the greens to supplement spinach in the **Indian Creamed Spinach** recipe mentioned above.

SPICY MUSTARD: This is a new green we tried this year and it is delicious! When eaten raw, it had a delicious spicy mustard flavor that is much better than regular mustard greens. If you cook it, the flavor mellows significantly. If you like the spice, try using it raw in a sushi roll. If you prefer a more mild approach, try the **Red Lentils with Winter Squash and Greens** recipe on our web site. You will find it in our newsletter archives in 2015, October 17th.

try to avoid the 'monsters' by planting some varieties closer together, like 8 inches versus 12 inch to keep them to a manageable size! Every variety has its learning curve. And of course every year has different growing conditions, so varieties need careful evaluation over time!

Around the world there are 1,000's of different sizes, colors and shapes of sweet potatoes, from white to yellow and orange to deep purple. But, since they are a tropical plant, we are very limited in what we can grow in Wisconsin.

(See our **blog** for the rest of Farmer Richard's article)

Featured Vegetable: Sweet Potatoes

This week we're excited to be packing sweet potatoes in your boxes! Sweet potatoes are an important part of our fall and winter diets. If stored properly you can eat sweet potatoes all winter! The ideal storage temperature for sweet potatoes is 55-65°F. They can get chill injury if stored at temperatures below 55°F, so if you don't have the perfect location to store them at their ideal temperature, it's better to store them on your countertop in the kitchen instead of putting them in the refrigerator.

Sweet potatoes are less starchy and more sweet and moist than a regular potato and have a wide variety of uses. You can simply bake them whole until fork tender and eat the flesh right out of the skin. They are also delicious cut into bite-sized pieces and roasted or cut into wedges or thin slices and make roasted fries or chips. If you're going to do this, it's best to put the wedges or slices of sweet potatoes on a rack in a pan. That way the air and heat from the oven can better circulate on all sides of the sweet potato making it more crispy and less soggy. Sweet potatoes also make delicious, hearty soups and stews.

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this vegetable feature article)*

Cooking With This Week's Box!

After a year without sweet potatoes, we're super excited to be sending sweet potatoes in your box this week! Where do we start with cooking? There are so many things we could make with sweet potatoes! Don't worry, we'll be sending them for most of the remaining boxes, so you'll have plenty of time to make all your favorite recipes and maybe try a few new ones! This week we're pretty busy with harvest so I'm keeping things a bit more on the simple side. The **Moroccan Sweet Potato Salad** (See below) is pretty easy to make. You just toss roasted sweet potatoes with a simple, but flavorful vinaigrette and eat it at room temperature. I think I'll roast a chicken and serve the **Moroccan Sweet Potato Salad** with the chicken and this simple recipe for **Moroccan Couscous**. The currants and pine nuts in the couscous will go nicely with the sweet potatoes.

We are finishing off our last crop of broccoli raab which will give me a chance to make Alice Water's **Pizza with Broccoli Raab and Roasted Onions and Olives**. I think this would be good with a few little sautéed shrimp on top. We need something to go along with the pizza, but we already have our greens on the pizza. I think I'll go with this simple **French Grated Carrot Salad with Lemon Dijon Vinaigrette**.

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & Chef Andrea's suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)*

Moroccan Sweet Potato Salad

Yield: 6 servings

2 ½ pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

¾ tsp kosher or fine sea salt

2 garlic cloves, finely minced

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp sweet paprika

½ tsp cayenne pepper

3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

⅓ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley

⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro

⅓ cup sliced almonds, toasted

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 425°F.
2. In a large bowl, toss the sweet potatoes with the 2 Tbsp oil and ¼ tsp of the salt. Transfer the sweet potatoes to a large rimmed baking sheet and spread them out in an even layer. (Set the bowl aside to use for tossing the cooked potatoes). Roast the potatoes, stirring once at the midpoint of roasting, until they are tender when pierced with a fork but still hold their shape, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix together the garlic, cumin, paprika, cayenne, lemon juice, and the remaining ½ tsp salt. Whisk in the remaining ⅓ cup oil. Add the parsley and cilantro and stir to combine.
4. When the potatoes are ready, return them to the large bowl. Add the vinaigrette and toss gently. Add the almonds if you are planning to serve the salad within a few hours; otherwise, toss them in just before serving so they stay crisp. Serve at room temperature. The salad can be made up to 2 days in advance, covered, and refrigerated. Remove from the refrigerator 2 hours before serving.

This recipe was borrowed from *Roots* by Diane Morgan.

Coconut Pan-Roasted Sweet Potatoes

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

2 pounds of sweet potatoes

2 Tbsp coconut oil

Sea Salt, to taste

Maldon sea salt, for finishing

1. Scrub the sweet potatoes, then chop them into cubes a scant inch across.
2. Warm the oil in an 8-inch or 10-inch sauté pan. Add the sweet potatoes, turn them about to coat, and season with a few pinches salt. Put a lid on the pan, turn the heat to medium-low, and cook for about 20 minutes in all, giving the pan a shake every now and then to turn the potatoes. Taste a piece and if they're not yet soft, continue to cook a few minutes longer or until they are tender and browned. Serve with flaky sea salt.

This simple recipe was borrowed from Deborah Madison's cookbook, *The New Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*.