



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

June 29 - 30, 2018

Evolution of a Farmer

By Dennis de Wilde

So, I am on my semi-annual visit to my brother's Harmony Valley Farm....always an enjoyable experience to be in "the valley" and observe the bustle of more than 40 people engaged in the work of raising and marketing over 100 different varieties of organic vegetables while hearing how this large "farm family" is dealing with the accompanying weather and every year's new business challenges. (As a retired business consultant, I find the depth and breadth of these challenges and the solutions to deal with them to be fascinating and inspiring.) And, I often wonder, "How did this brother (Farmer Richard as he is now known) evolve, from the teenage rebel I grew up with, into the successful businessman/Farmer he is today?!"

In some ways, it is not so hard for me to look at who he was and to see how he became who he is today. As brothers who were born only 16 months apart and were more or less of the same physical size since age 8/9, we shared equal responsibility for yard chores and later farming duties on the 800 acre family beef and grain farm in northeastern South Dakota. But, it was clear from the start that Richard was the leader (or the brains of this duo), while I was a skinny version of the brawn - in other words, he laid out our daily work program and I executed (Richard also did his share). But more importantly, he answered to (or argued with) Dad regarding the planning decisions he made and the results from our efforts - Dad had a part-time day job, once this two-son crew was able to take on the farming duties. Richard was leader, yes; but no one would have thought he was destined to be a Farmer - he left the farming to me and a younger sister every summer after his sophomore year in high school. He spent the first summer weed-walking bean and corn fields in Nebraska, he worked a salmon fishing boat in Alaska the next and it was the stone quarry after that. Now, while some might observe that he was a young lad mostly interested in young ladies during those summers away from the farm, I

What's In The Box?

GREEN SCALLIONS OR GREEN TOP PURPLE CIPOLLINI ONIONS: This week we're finishing up the last of the green scallions and are moving into fresh Cipollini onions. The green tops are totally usable on both selections, so don't let them go to waste!

GREEN ROMAINE LETTUCE: We intended to harvest this lettuce variety as a romaine heart, but they developed into a more robust, full-sized head than we had anticipated! Enjoy this crispy, crunchy lettuce with a creamy dressing or cut it into quarters and grill it!

ITALIAN AND/OR GREEN ZUCCHINI: Zucchini production is directly correlated with temperature. When it's hot the plants really produce and when it's cool the harvests taper off. This is a staple vegetable for our summer boxes, which means we need to get creative with ways to use it!

GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: If you receive a pale yellow cucumber-like vegetable in your box this week, you got a silver slicer cucumber! Both green and silver slicer cucumbers are good for fresh eating and the skin is usually tender enough that you don't need to peel them.

STRAWBERRIES: Sadly, this is likely the last week we'll be picking strawberries. Last week we had over 4 inches of rain and this week is looking like it may be equally rainy which means the berries might be more perishable. Keep them cold and eat them soon or freeze them.

SWEET BABY BROCCOLI: Spring broccoli is often smaller than fall broccoli, hence the size of this week's broccoli. We did harvest them with some of their tender, young leaves intact which are edible and very delicious! Cook them along with the broccoli or use them as you would use kale, cabbage or collard greens. Don't forget to eat the broccoli stem as well!

RAINBOW CHARD: This colorful green is packed full of nutrients! This is a great green to add to simple pasta or egg dishes.

SNOW PEAS: Snow peas have a larger, flat pod with smaller peas inside in comparison to sugar snap peas. Snow peas also have an edible pod and may be eaten raw or lightly cooked.

PURPLE AND/OR GREEN KOHLRABI: No, the color of the kohlrabi doesn't indicate a difference in flavor or anything else. We grow both colors just to have a little variety in our lives. Once you peel away the skin the pale green, tender vegetable inside is delicious regardless of skin color. The same concept applies to people. Put aside the color of our skin and we're all humans with the potential to be tender and sweet if that's the choice we make.

FENNEL: This is the long, slender vegetable with a white bulb and soft, feathery stalks. Take a moment to read this week's **vegetable feature** for more information about this unique vegetable.

CHOICE--ITALIAN BASIL: We've sent enough to each site with the intention that there is a handful of basil for each vegetable share. Basil is sensitive to cold, so store it on your counter top loosely wrapped in plastic or a moist towel and use it within a day or two. If you have some basil that has a longer stem, you can also put it in a glass of water to preserve it until you're ready to use it.

remember him returning with observations connecting the how and why regarding the way they did things in these different environments - he was an explorer and a learner. When he returned at the end of the summers, he saw no reason not to put his new learnings into practice - an independence that may not have always been appreciated by the farm owner, his father.

See our **blog** for the rest of this article!

Featured Vegetable: Fennel

By Chef Andrea

When I was in culinary school I worked as a cook at a restaurant called Mojo Grill. One of the signature appetizers on the menu was a classy dish of bacon-wrapped scallops served with fennel and a delicious Sambuca cream sauce. I was pretty excited when I was granted permission to prepare this dish, and even made it for a restaurant critic one night! After cooking the scallops until they were nicely browned and the bacon was crispy, I'd remove them from the pan, add several pieces of fresh fennel and then get ready for the excitement. With a bottle of Sambuca (an Italian anise-flavored liqueur) in one hand and my other hand on the handle of the pan, I'd pour some of the liqueur into the pan and announce "STAND BACK" as I tipped the pan away from me and watched the alcohol shoot up in flames! It was meant to be an impressive display for diners to watch as they peered into our open kitchen. (Do not try this at home.) Once the flames burned off I reduced the heat, added some heavy cream to the pan and let the sauce cook down a little bit until it was thick, creamy and fragrant and the fennel was tender. I will never forget the perfect way all the components of this dish came together with fennel as the star of the show. I believe it was this dish that gave me a new respect and appreciation for this unique vegetable.

(See our [blog](#) for the rest of this vegetable feature article!)

Summer Vegetable Lasagna Casserole

Yield: 8 servings

| | | |
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| 12 oz fusilli or penne pasta | 1 ½ cups zucchini, small dice | 1 egg, beaten |
| 2 Tbsp olive oil | 1 cup greens, thinly sliced (chard, kale, etc) | ¾ cup chopped fresh herbs of your choice (basil, parsley, oregano, etc) |
| 1 cup onions, chopped finely | 1 ½ tsp salt, plus more to taste | Red pepper flakes, to taste (optional) |
| 2 Tbsp garlic, chopped finely | Freshly ground black pepper, to taste | 4 cups tomato sauce |
| 1 cup fennel, small dice | 8 oz ground beef, browned | 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar |
| 1 cup broccoli or kohlrabi, small dice or florets | 16 oz cottage cheese | ¼ cup red wine |
| | | ¾ cup Parmesan Cheese, grated |

1. First, preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until it is about ¾ cooked. You want it to be undercooked when you add it to the casserole as it will soak up some of the moisture in the casserole and continue to cook and soften while baking. Once the pasta is ¾ cooked, drain the pasta into a colander, discarding the cooking liquid. Set the pasta aside.
3. In a medium sized sauté pan, heat the olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 1-2 minutes or until tender and fragrant. Next add the fennel and broccoli and sauté for another 3-4 minutes before adding the zucchini. Season the vegetable mixture with 1 tsp of salt and freshly ground black pepper. Add the greens. Cook the vegetables about half way and then remove them from the heat so they don't become overcooked! They'll continue cooking in the casserole so you want them to be a little undercooked when you remove them from the heat.
4. While the vegetables are cooking, mix the following ingredients in a large mixing bowl: ground beef, cottage cheese, egg, fresh herbs and red pepper flakes. Once the vegetables are finished, add them to the mixture. Taste a little bit and add more salt if necessary, then stir in the pasta. Set aside.
5. Heat the tomato sauce in a pan over medium heat. Stir in the balsamic vinegar, red wine and ½ teaspoon salt. Stir to combine and bring the sauce to a simmer. Once the sauce is heated through, remove from the heat and taste a little bit. Add more salt or pepper if necessary.
6. Put a thin layer of the hot tomato sauce in the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Spread the vegetable mixture over the top, and then pour the remainder of the sauce over the entire dish being sure to evenly cover the vegetable mixture.
7. Bake the casserole in the oven, uncovered, for 25-30 minutes or until the tomato sauce is bubbling a little bit. After 25-30 minutes, remove the casserole from the oven and spread the Parmesan cheese evenly over the top. Put it back in the oven and bake it for another 10-12 minutes or until the cheese is fully melted.
8. Remove from the oven and serve hot.

Recipe created by: Chef Andrea Yoder

Note: You can vary the vegetables you include in this casserole according to what you have available as long as you have about 3 ½ cups of diced vegetables and about 1 cup of greens.

Missing our Cooking With This Week's Box section? You will find all of Chef Andrea's suggestions and all the recipe links on our blog as usual.

Second Recipe: Roasted Fennel & White Bean Dip can also be found on our online version of the newsletter, our recipe database and on our blog.

Roasted Fennel & White Bean Dip

Serves 12 as an appetizer

For Roasted Fennel:

1 large or 2 small Fennel Bulbs,
trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
2-3 Tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, still in papery shell
1 pinch salt and pepper (more to
taste)

For the Cannellini Bean puree:

¾ cups olive oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
2 ½ cups cooked cannellini beans,
drained and rinsed
1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, chopped
1 Tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed

½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese,
grated
1 baguette, sliced

1. First make the roasted fennel. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Toss the fennel and garlic cloves in the olive oil and spread on a sheet pan. Season generously with salt and pepper. Roast for 30-40 minutes, turning twice during cooking. Take out and let cool. When cool squeeze the roasted garlic out of their skins.
2. Start the cannellini bean puree. In a small frying pan heat ½ cup olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic cloves and cook until lightly golden, add rosemary and cannellini beans and cook for one minute more. Be careful not to burn the garlic. Take it off the heat.
3. In a food processor combine the garlic bean mixture, fennel, roasted garlic, lemon juice, remaining ¼ cup olive oil and all but 3 Tbsp of the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Puree until smooth.
4. Raise oven temp to 450°F. Transfer puree into a small baking dish and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Feel free to add more. If your dish is near full, place it on a baking sheet, in case it bubbles over in the oven. Bake until cheese is golden on top, about 15-20 minutes. Serve with crostini.

NOTE: This recipe was borrowed from *Food52.com*. Serve this dip with bread as suggested, or serve it with fresh vegetables, olives, cured meats. You could enjoy this as an appetizer, or eat it as dinner!