



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Featuring Sorrel & Rhubarb...the Unsuspected Vegetable Cousins from the Buckwheat Family

By Chef Andrea

This week we have another double vegetable feature, which is very fitting since the two vegetables are in the same botanical family! We're talking about **RHUBARB & SORREL**. Rhubarb? I thought rhubarb was a fruit, not a vegetable. Lets talk, starting with rhubarb first.

Yes, rhubarb is a vegetable, although it is most often used like a fruit. Rhubarb is a perennial crop and it takes several years to build up the energy reserves in the rhizome. Thus, we don't harvest rhubarb until, at the very earliest, the third year. We remove the leaves in the field because they should not be consumed or eaten.

Rhubarb is thought to have originated in Asia, specifically the areas of western China, Tibet, Mongolia and Siberia. Thus, it's easy to understand it is well adapted to cold climates. Before it became a food crop, it was actually used for medicinal purposes. It was the early 1900's before it really gained much momentum as a food crop, at least in Europe and the United States.

Rhubarb has a distinct, unique flavor that is quite good. It may be eaten raw or cooked, however it's pretty tart and it is most often cooked first. Over the years it became known in some areas as "The Pie Plant" because it is most often used in pies. While the sweetness of baked goods helps to counter balance the tartness of rhubarb, this vegetable can also be used in savory preparations. Instead of masking the characteristic tartness of rhubarb with sugar, why not use those innate qualities to your advantage?! It can be used to create a flavorful braising liquid or sauce to serve with pork, duck, chicken thighs or other fatty meats. The flavor of rhubarb can stand up to bolder spices such as curry powder, cardamom, peppercorns, cinnamon and ginger, thus rhubarb chutney can make a nice accompaniment to Indian curry dishes or serve it with grilled or roasted meats. Rhubarb compote or chutney is also delicious served simply as a snack with

What's In The Box?

WILD RAMPS: Friends, this is it-- final harvest of the season. The leaves may be a bit more delicate, so use your ramps within a few days. **Check out last week's vegetable feature for more ramp information.**

BABY ARUGULA: This is a spicy green that actually has a bit of sweetness to it right now. Eat it in salads, wilt it into pasta or serve it on pizza!

OVERWINTERED PARSNIPS: While they may not look so pretty from the outside, peel away the skin to find white, sweet delicious flesh! Excellent roasted, added to soups and stews, or use them in baked goods such as the **Lemon & Poppy Seed Muffins** mentioned in last week's **Cooking With the Box** article.

CHIVES: For such a skinny little stem, these chives have a powerful onion flavor! Wrap them in a damp paper towel and store them in the refrigerator. If you aren't going to use them within a week or so, **consider cutting them up and drying them.**

NETTLES: The more proper name for this vegetable is "Stinging Nettles." This is the dark green, bunched vegetable that is in a clear plastic bag. **Before you open the bag, please read last week's vegetable feature for important information about how to handle and prepare them.**

GREEN TOP FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISHES: Don't forget you can eat the radish and the greens! **Radish tops are packed with nutrients.** Saute them with other greens, add them into your morning scramble, use them in soup, or just dip them in some dressing and eat them raw!

SAUTE MIX: This is a blend of Asian greens including tat soi, pac choi, red mizuna and red Russian kale. It's tender enough to eat raw as a salad, but you can also steam, saute or wilt these greens. Either way, this mix will help you get something healthy on the table in minutes!

RHUBARB: **Read on for more about rhubarb**, it's history & uses in this week's newsletter. This week's boxes have about 1.25# which is equivalent to about 3-3 1/2 cups chopped or 2-2 1/2 cups cooked.

SORREL: This is the bright green leafy vegetable with arrow shaped leaves and pinkish stems. This is also one of our featured vegetables. **Check out this week's feature article to learn more about this bright, tangy green.**

ASPARAGUS: With this week's warmer temperatures we're seeing some good harvest yields! Store asparagus in the refrigerator with a moist towel around the base or put the stalks upright in a glass of water to keep it crisp and fresh.

CHOICE: DECORATIVE WILLOW—We don't have very much left, so if you took a bunch last week please do not take another this week. These bundles are easy to care for. You don't need to put them in water. Just stick them in a dry vase and enjoy their beauty indefinitely!

CHOICE: CALENDARS—Make sure you pick up one of our beautiful CSA Calendars at your site! They are **FREE** and contain lots of valuable information and resources to help you have a fun and successful CSA season! We have extras, so feel free to take more than one for your household or to share with a friend.

cream cheese and crackers! Rhubarb can also be used as a stir-fry vegetable, added towards the end of cooking so it just starts to soften, but still holds its shape.

Whether sweet or savory, there are so many things you can do with rhubarb. If you can't decide what to make now and need some time to think it over, you can

easily preserve rhubarb by freezing it. Just wash the stalks, cut them into bite-sized pieces and put them in a freezer bag to pop in the freezer. Perhaps you'll come up with just the right use for it sometime during the winter!

Ok, moving on to **SORREL**. Sorrel is a leafy green that is bright lime colored with pinkish stems. Just like rhubarb, it is characterized by its tartness. It has a bright citrusy flavor and may be eaten both raw and cooked. In its raw form, it makes a nice addition to salads or some of our other spring favorites including **Sorrel Hummus**, **Sorrel-Lime Cooler** and **Frosty Sorrel-Banana Smoothies!** Thinly sliced sorrel is also a nice addition to spring tacos or use it as a garnish for lentils or beans in lieu of a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.

Sorrel is also commonly used in soups and sauces. It is an interesting green that literally melts when you put it in hot liquid. It gives soup a velvety texture and creates smooth sauces. You'll also notice the color will quickly go from bright green to olive green when you cook it. Don't worry, you didn't do anything wrong, that's just what it does. Sorrel pairs well with cream, eggs, chicken, fish, mushrooms, asparagus, spinach and other spring greens. It is also a nice balance to more neutral foods such as dried beans and potatoes.

There you have it, two unique spring vegetables with a long list of possibilities of delicious outcomes!

Greek-Inspired Sorrel-Spinach Soup

Yield: 4 servings

4 cups chicken or vegetable broth	3 oz baby spinach (approx. 4 cups)	1 tsp salt, plus to taste	¼ cup uncooked orzo or ¼ cup cooked rice (optional)
1 bu sorrel, roughly chopped (approx. 4 cups)	½ cup finely chopped chives (for garnish) AND 1 cup roughly chopped chives	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste	½-¾ cup shredded cooked chicken (optional)
		3 eggs	
		3 Tbsp lemon juice	

1. Place chicken or vegetable broth, sorrel, spinach and the 1 cup of roughly chopped chives in a blender along with 1 tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper. If your blender pitcher is too small to contain all the greens, just add part of the greens at first, run the blender for a few seconds and then add the remainder. Blend until all the broth is smooth and all the greens are well blended.
2. Pour the mixture into a large saucepan and bring it to a gentle simmer over medium to medium-low heat. If there is a froth on the top of the soup, use a large spoon to skim some of it off.
3. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk the eggs until they're well blended and a pale yellow. Whisk in the lemon juice, one tablespoon at a time.
4. Once the greens broth is warm, add the orzo or rice. Simmer just until the orzo is al dente or the rice is heated through. Reduce the heat to low.
5. Next you will need to carefully temper the eggs. To do this, ladle about ½ cup of the warm broth into the egg mixture and whisk to combine. Continue to do this 4 or 5 more times. The purpose of doing this is to slowly warm up the egg mixture without curdling the eggs. Be patient and don't skip this step.
6. Once you've tempered the eggs, add the egg mixture into the warm broth and whisk well to combine. Gently simmer the soup for another 1 to 2 minutes, whisking periodically. The soup should thicken slightly and lightly coat the back of a spoon. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking by adding more salt, pepper or lemon juice if needed.
7. Serve hot and garnish with the finely chopped chives.

This soup is based on the classic Greek soup called Avgolemmono. It is a simple chicken soup that is thickened with eggs and flavored with lemon juice. It yields a silky, slightly thickened broth and often has orzo pasta or rice added to it. This soup only takes 15-20 minutes to make from start to finish and while it's very simple, it's also rich enough to be filling. If you have leftovers, take care to reheat them gently over medium-low heat so you don't curdle the egg.

Recipe by Chef Andrea Yoder

Rhubarb-Almond Baked Oatmeal

Yield: 6 servings

⅔ cup chopped almonds, toasted	1 tsp ground ginger	½ cup maple syrup	2 cups rhubarb, small dice
2 cups old-fashioned oats	1 tsp baking powder	2 large eggs	Maple Cream (optional):
2 tsp ground cinnamon	¾ tsp sea salt	1 ½ tbsp unsalted butter, melted	1 cup sour cream or plain yogurt
¼ tsp ground nutmeg	1 ¾ cup whole milk or nut milk	2 tsp vanilla extract	1 ½ Tbsp maple syrup

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch baking dish or individual ramekins. You may also use a 9 ½ x 11-inch baking dish, the pieces will just be thinner.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the oats, almonds, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, baking powder and salt. Stir well to combine.
3. In a smaller mixing bowl, combine the milk, maple syrup, eggs, butter and vanilla. Whisk until well blended.
4. Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and mix well. Fold in the rhubarb.
5. Pour the batter into the baking dish or ramekins. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until the top is nice and golden.
6. While the oatmeal is baking, combine sour cream or yogurt with maple syrup and set aside.
7. When the oatmeal is finished baking, remove from oven and let it rest for 5-10 minutes before serving.
8. Serve warm topped with maple cream if you like. You could also serve it with a drizzle of melted butter or a drizzle of heavy cream or milk if you prefer.

NOTES FROM CHEF ANDREA: You can assemble this recipe a day ahead and hold it in the refrigerator overnight. In the morning, remove the baking dish from the refrigerator and let it warm up a bit while you preheat the oven. If you have any leftovers, they reheat very well in a toaster oven or oven. I have not tried reheating it in a microwave.

Recipe adapted by Chef Andrea from a recipe for **Honey & Nut Baked Oatmeal** originally published at dishingupthedirt.com.