



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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Vegetable Feature: Sorrel

By Chef Andrea

Eating with the seasons can be an exciting, yet sometimes challenging adventure in the spring. For many people, some early spring vegetables may be less familiar and come with a bit of a learning curve. Most of the early spring vegetables are perennial plants that are either wild harvested, such as ramps and nettles, or are crops we planted in a previous year that start poking through on their own early in the spring. Some of these vegetables include sorrel, chives, rhubarb and asparagus. They play an important role in nourishing our bodies and have unique nutritive properties that help us transition from winter into a new season. If you are not familiar with these vegetables, they might be a little intimidating at first. However, don't let a vegetable intimidate you, just dive in and start learning how to enjoy something new! Don't worry, we'll help guide you along the way!

This week we are featuring sorrel, a unique perennial plant that is amongst the first greens of the season. Sorrel leaves have a pointy, arrow shape and are thick in texture and bright green in color. You'll recognize sorrel by its tart and citrus-like flavor if you nibble on a raw leaf. It has a bright flavor that will call your taste buds to attention. It is a very nutritious green that contains antioxidants as well as vitamin C, fiber, iron, magnesium and zinc.

Sorrel may be used in a wide variety of preparations and may be eaten either raw or cooked. Raw sorrel can brighten any salad and is excellent when blended into cold sauces, vinaigrettes, dressings, dips or smoothies. Because of its bold, tart, invigorating flavor, it is often treated more like an herb when used raw and will give the end product a bright, cheery green color. When cooked, sorrel behaves in a very interesting way. First, its color changes from bright green to a drab olive green almost immediately. Don't worry, this happens to everyone and it's just the way it is with sorrel! The other unusual thing about sorrel is how it "melts" when added to hot liquids. The leaves will almost immediately change

What's In The Box?

SORREL: You will find 4 ounces of sorrel packaged in a clear Ziploc bag. The leaves are bright green and have more of an arrow shape. Read more about this unique vegetable in this week's Vegetable Feature article.

WILD RAMPS: This is the final week of ramp harvest and we've packed 3 bunches in your box! If you're not sure what to do with these, visit our blog and check out **last week's Vegetable Feature** about this spring vegetable.

OVERWINTERED SPINACH: This spinach is unlike any other spinach we'll have this season. Notice its leaves are thick, yet tender with a sweet flavor. Saute lightly in a little oil with green garlic for a quick side dish.

OVERWINTERED PARSNIPS: Use these sweet parsnips in baked goods such as muffins or cake. They are also delicious roasted, pureed or used in soups. Peeling is optional.

OVERWINTERED SUNCHOKES: This is the knobby looking root vegetable. **You can read more about Sunchokes, including how to store and prepare them, on our blog.** They may be eaten raw or cooked, but are most often cooked.

They contain inulin, a non-digestible fiber that has health benefits, but in some individuals can also cause gas and abdominal discomfort if you eat too many at one time. So, we recommend enjoying them in smaller portions, more like a condiment.

CHIVES: With fresh, bright, onion flavor, chives are a nice addition to soups, salads, pasta dishes and more. They can also be used to make sauces and spreads such as chive cream cheese!

NETTLES: *Before you open the bag, please read our previous blog post from 2018 for important information about how to handle and prepare them (<http://harmonyvalleyfarm.blogspot.com/2018/05/10-CSaboxfeaturingnettles.html>).*

Their proper name is "Stinging Nettles." This is the dark green, bunched vegetable that is in a clear plastic bag. They taste similar to spinach and are packed with nutrients, however they do have "stingers" on the stems that may cause skin irritation when handled before they are cooked. No, we're not trying to harm you with this vegetable. Use them anywhere you would use cooked or wilted spinach.

GREEN GARLIC: This plant resembles a green onion, but onions have rounded green tops and garlic has flat green tops. Both the green tops and white bottoms are edible. Use it just as you would use garlic cloves.

ASPARAGUS: You may be wondering "Where's the Asparagus? There's none in my box this week!" Asparagus growth is directly related to temperature and any spears that are poking above the ground when it freezes do not survive. Last weekend and earlier this week we saw temperatures in the mid-twenties and low thirties. We were able to harvest a small amount from our own fields and tried to supplement with certified organic asparagus grown at J & S Organic Asparagus Farm located not far from us in De Soto, WI. Unfortunately, there hasn't been much asparagus growing anywhere in this area this week! We hope to have more in the coming weeks.

CHOICE: Pollinator Packs—We are delivering the last of the pollinator plants this week. Refer to our **BLOG POST** from last week for help in identifying the native grasses and wildflower plants in the pack. If you took a pack last week, please do not take another one. Reserve them for individuals who did not receive one last week.

CHOICE: DECORATIVE WILLOW—We've sent one bunch of decorative willow for most shares at a site. We plant curly willow and pussy willow trees in between fields and around property perimeters both as a buffer and to provide habitat and a food source for birds, wasps, bees, and other beneficial creatures. We trim them every year and have bundled the clippings so we can share their natural beauty with you! They don't require water and will last for years. Put them in a vase indoors or as part of an outdoor patio arrangement.

color and start to soften. The longer it's cooked, the more the leaves break apart and you can stir it into a coarse sauce. This is one of the reasons it's often used in soups and sauces.

The acidity of sorrel makes it a natural companion to rich foods such as cream, butter, sour cream, yogurt, buttermilk, duck, and fatty fish (salmon & mackerel). Additionally, it pairs well with more "earthy" foods such as lentils, rice, buckwheat, mushrooms and potatoes. As with many other spring vegetables, it pairs well with eggs and is often used in quiche, scrambled eggs, custard etc. Don't be afraid to think "outside of the box" and explore some other interesting ways to use sorrel such as in desserts including sorbet, ice cream and panna cotta or beverages including smoothies and cocktails! Sorrel also pairs well with citrus fruits and berries.

We have featured a wide variety of sorrel recipes in past newsletters and I encourage you to take a look at the **searchable recipe database on our website**. I have a few favorites that I mention every year because they are easy, delicious and have been well-received by other members over the year. **Sorrel Hummus**, **Sorrel-Lime Cooler** and my **Frosty Sorrel & Banana Smoothie** rank as my top three.

If you're looking for a vegetarian main dish, the recipe for **Spiced Lentils with Nettles & Sorrel Yogurt Sauce** is excellent. There is also a recipe for **Spring Greens Soup** that uses not only sorrel but four other vegetables from this week's box!

We hope your spring is off to a good start and you are enjoying these early boxes. Don't forget we have an awesome **Facebook Group** available to all CSA members. This is another great resource to find recipe suggestions and talk to other members about vegetables!

Strawberry-Orange Sorrel Smoothie

Yield: 2 servings

1 cup plain yogurt	¾ cup fresh orange juice	2 ounces sorrel
1 cup milk (dairy or dairy-free alternative)	1 tsp vanilla	¼ cup maple syrup
	2 cups frozen strawberries	6-10 ice cubes

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender. Put the lid on and blend on high speed until all ingredients are thoroughly blended and the mixture is smooth.
2. Serve immediately.

Recipe by Chef Andrea

Pasta with Sorrel Butter & Nettles

Yield: 3-4 servings

Sorrel Butter:	Pasta:	3 cups loosely packed nettle leaves (1 bunch)
2 ounces sorrel leaves, roughly chopped	9-10 oz dried pasta (bow ties, shells, fettucine or pappardelle)	6-8 Tbsp sorrel butter
1 stick butter, softened	1 Tbsp olive oil	Salt & freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tsp fresh lemon juice	12 ounces (2 each) boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces	½-¾ cup chives, minced
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste		Parmesan cheese, for serving

1. First, prepare the sorrel butter. Put roughly chopped sorrel in the bowl of a food processor and blend briefly until coarsely chopped. Add the butter, lemon juice and black pepper. Blend until all ingredients are well combined. Set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Once the water is boiling, add the pasta and cook according to package instructions or about 5 minutes until al dente. Drain the water and set the pasta aside.
3. While the pasta is cooking, heat a medium saucepan on the stove top over medium heat. Add the olive oil and once the oil shimmers, add the chicken. Season with salt and black pepper. Cook until browned on one side, then flip the pieces over.
4. Add the nettle leaves to the pan along with the chicken and season with salt and pepper. Put a lid on the pan and continue to cook the nettles and chicken for 2-3 minutes or until the nettles are wilted. Remove the lid from the pan and cook until nearly all the moisture in the pan has evaporated.
5. Add the sorrel butter to the pan. Once melted, add the pasta and gently toss to combine all ingredients and thoroughly coat the pasta with the butter.
6. Once the pasta is fully heated through, remove the pan from the heat. Adjust seasoning to your liking with salt and black pepper.
7. Serve garnished with freshly grated Parmesan and chives.

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