

# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Customers - Since 1993  
Twin Cities Edition - Brown & Green Week Delivery



## Are We Done? by Richard de Wilde

No, but the end is in sight! Our H2A visa workers, the part of our crew that returns to Mexico to spend the winter with family, are checking off the harvest jobs as we finish them, hoping to finish this week or the next, before the cold and snow come. The leeks are finished and the sunchokes have been dug. As we dig the first sunchoke beds, we sort out the biggest and smoothest tubers to plant for next year. The last field of parsnips is in, leaving one field in the ground to overwinter and harvest in the spring. We'll also leave about half the sunchokes for spring, along with some horseradish. Most everything else has to come out of the ground and into the cold/moist cooler for storage. We store everything "dirty" and take items out to wash when they are ready to be boxed and delivered.

Garlic also spends the winter in the ground, under a cover of mulch and hopefully snow. The cloves put down roots in the winter and start a small green shoot that will be ready for spring. We planted more than ever of the premium Porcelain Garlic and lots of green onion and green garlic. The spinach that we've been planting since mid-September will winter over as a small plant, freezing and going dormant until the first warmth of spring. We have over half an acre of beautiful spinach that will overwinter, giving you something to look forward to in those early spring boxes. This year, we heard that the overwintered spinach was the best spinach many people had ever had! The taste really does improve with the cold. We still have two beds of spinach covered, hoping for another warm day to cut and wash it, later this month.

The Endive, Escarole and red chicory are double covered and fenced for deer. These are quite popular for winter eating in Europe, though little known here. Normally, they are quite bitter, but after many freezing nights, they develop a nice balance of bitter and sweet. We hope you like them!

For those of you who are new to Harmony Valley Farm, you should know that we started developing a local, seasonal diet for the Midwest climate about 30 years before the concept even started to gain popularity. We've been experimenting with

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**BABY BEETS:** Beets are easy to prepare and sweet and wonderful to eat. Cook beets whole in some orange juice and water and then use the sauce as a salad dressing mixed with some olive oil. Baby beets can be steamed whole for about 30 minutes, then peeled and sliced.

**CARROTS:** Toss grated carrot with potatoes for hash browns. Grated carrots also give body and impart subtle flavor, and they fit any tomato or creamy soup, sauce, or casserole.

**CELERIAC:** Celery roots must be scrubbed, trimmed at the top and bottom, quartered, and then peeled before eating. Avoid overcooking celery root as it will go quickly from firm to mushy. When peeled, celery root's creamy white flesh resembles that of a turnip and tastes like a subtle blend of celery and parsley.

**PORCELAIN GARLIC:** Use garlic-kissed oil to sauté greens or dress pasta. Heat 1 or 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet over medium. Add 3 or 4 garlic cloves and swirl. Cook until cloves are aromatic and golden. Remove, slice and use the sweet cloves as a garnish.

**ENDIVE:** Curly endive, often mistakenly called chicory in the US, grows in loose heads of lacy, green-rimmed outer leaves that curl at the tips with off-white center leaves that form a compact heart. The leaves have a prickly texture and a slightly bitter taste. Store curly endive wrapped in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

**FLOWERING KALE OR GREEN KALE OR KALE TOPS:** Kale is a hardy and hearty cooking green requiring a little more cooking time than other, more tender, greens. Try any of these in soup!

**LEEKs:** Sliced lengthwise, then braised in butter, leek whites remain soft and tender, and can be served alongside fish and other seafood. Add a pinch of curry powder or ginger for an added kick.

**BEAUTY HEART RADISH:** The bright, beautiful color of the inner flesh makes it an attractive sliced radish for an appetizer tray or for sandwiches. This radish is also tasty in stir-fries or miso soup. If you find the radish too strong or pungent, the skin can be removed prior to consuming.

**SPINACH:** This is our last crop, beautiful and sweetened by the frost. Enjoy!

**BUTTERNUT SQUASH:** For long-term squash storage, choose a well-ventilated, cool place, such as an open basement area, which has a consistent temperature of around 50 degrees. Chilling damage and flavor loss can occur at temperatures below 45 degrees, and it encourages decay. At temperatures above 60 degrees, moisture loss and stringy flesh occurs.

**DELICATA SQUASH:** Delicata squash can be baked or steamed like any other winter squash, except in this case, the skin is edible. To bake a whole squash, pierce the rind with a fork and bake at 350 degrees F. for about 45 minutes. Test for doneness by piercing with a fork. Or, simply steam quarters or rings for 25 minutes or until tender. To sauté, slice the seeded squash into 1/3-inch thick rings and sauté in hot olive oil over medium heat until richly colored on the bottom, about 6 minutes. Turn and cook on the second side until tender. Season with your favorite herbs or a pesto of parsley, garlic and salt.

**SWEET POTATOES:** The natural sugars in these sweet potatoes developed during our curing process so there is no need to add marshmallows or high fructose corn syrup! Store in a cool, dry place, never the refrigerator.

crops and varieties, timing the plantings for late fall, and then learning what crops would store well, for how long and under what conditions in order to prolong our delivery season. So now, when most CSAs are finished for the season and their workers are unemployed, we are still very busy harvesting for storage and getting ready to wash and pack three more regular season CSA boxes plus two more Extended season boxes in January. (Our dry bean crop was small, but enough to include in the extended season boxes – oops I guess it's not a surprise now!)

We still have sweet potatoes and squash for several more boxes, plus lots of sweet orange carrots, parsnip, celeriac, cabbage, the beautiful and mild pink Beauty Heart Radish, as well as a variety of turnips and lots of beets – three different varieties! Make sure to check your delivery schedule and keep picking up your boxes!

This has been quite the year for us. The very wet weather pattern that ended a period of drought in August 2007 (26" of rain in a weekend) continued wet through the fall and winter (100" of snow!) and it kept raining enough through the spring to keep the water table unusually high. June 7-9 gave us 12.5" of water and flooded crops, again. More storms with high winds continued until the weather started to settle down in late June. The remainder of the summer was on the cool side of normal and the late-planted tomatoes and peppers ripened only very late, and only because the first hard frost held off until well into October. The early-planted crops that got saturated with that 12.5" of rain never did recover or do well. As the fields dried out, even those flooded fields worked up nicely though and grew beautiful crops for us, and of course for you. Our crew was very diligent and dedicated and we seized every opportunity of dry soil to keep planting on schedule, working late and weekends when needed. That dedication and management made all the difference and produced the beautiful fall crops like Romanesco, the purple and cheddar cauliflowers, and the abundance of broccoli, carrots and spinach that have been in recent boxes.

In addition to planting, harvesting, washing and packing, we have managed to make a major clean up of our flood damaged creek and the Bad Axe River and recently bought a farm with the major help of long-time customers Mike and Mary in Madison. This week we drilled a new well on the new farm and did some major cleaning and improvements on the land and house. In addition, this week we received notice that the Director of the USDA Appeals Division

## Curly Endive Salad with Bacon and Poached Eggs

4 cups 1/2-inch cubes good-quality white bread

6 tablespoons olive oil

Salt

Fresh-ground black pepper

1/2 pound sliced bacon, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch strips

2 small heads curly endive (about 1 1/2 pounds in all), torn into bite-size pieces (about 5 quarts)

3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon red- or white-wine vinegar

4 eggs

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

-Put a large frying pan over moderate heat. Toss the bread cubes with 2 tablespoons of the oil and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Put them in the pan and cook, stirring frequently, until crisp and brown, about 5 minutes. Remove the croutons from the pan.

-Add the bacon to the pan and cook until crisp. Remove and drain. Put in a large glass or stainless-steel bowl with the endive. Pour off all but 1/4 cup of the fat from the pan.

-Fill a saucepan two-thirds full with water. Add the 1 teaspoon vinegar and bring to a boil. Break each egg into a cup or small bowl and slide one at a time into the water. Reduce the heat to a bare simmer. Poach the eggs until the whites are set but the yolks are still soft, about 3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

-To the fat in the pan, add the remaining 4 tablespoons oil, the garlic, thyme, and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Warm the dressing over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until the garlic barely starts to brown, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons vinegar and remove from the heat. Toss the dressing with the endive and bacon until the endive wilts slightly. Add the croutons and toss again. Put on plates. Top each salad with a warm egg.

## Squash-Leek Quiche

This quiche made with squash and leeks and topped with cheese is a simple yet elegant main course. Serve it with salad and rice or quinoa pilaf for a satisfying meal.

1 pie crust

salt

1 large squash

pepper

1 Tablespoon butter

1/4 c pine nuts

2 medium or one large leek, cleaned and chopped 1/2 c cheddar cheese, grated

1/4 c sour cream

2 eggs

-Preheat oven to 425. Cut the squash in half, scoop out seeds, and then cut the halves into 1-inch pieces. Place in baking dish with 1/2 an inch of water. Bake until soft, 45-60 minutes.

-Meanwhile, roll out pie crust and arrange in pie plate. Poke all over with a fork.

Melt butter, add leeks, and sauté until soft, about 10 minutes.

-Beat together eggs, sour cream, salt, and pepper.

-When the squash is done, remove from oven and lower heat to 350. Transfer squash to the large bowl and mash, then beat in the egg mixture, then stir in leeks. Pour into pie crust and sprinkle with pine nuts and cheese.

-Bake until firm and golden, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes. Slice and serve.

### Upcoming CSA Delivery Schedule

November 13 - Meat only. No other CSA shares will be delivered this date

November 20 - Brown AND green week, weekly veggies, coffee, cheese, fruit

November 27 - Happy Thanksgiving! HVF crew vacation, no deliveries until 12/4

issued a decisively positive decision on our 2007 insurance appeal, plus Dairyland Power will not be putting in a toxic ash dump in Vernon County or Harmony Valley! This has definitely been a good week!

Many of our fields are subsoiled, composted and cover cropped, ready for a new year. After the miserable wet spring, we hope that the fall crops have redeemed us as competent growers in your eyes and that you will continue with us for many years to come!