



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993  
Twin Cities Edition

May 6, 2010



## Introducing Farm Chef Katie Routh

Spring is here and that means another CSA season is beginning! Everyone at Harmony Valley Farm is looking forward to what this year has in store. I've only been here for a few weeks and I've already had many exciting culinary adventures. I can't wait to experience what's ahead of me. What a great opportunity to be Harmony Valley's farm chef for the 2010 season.

Originally from Mt. Ayr, Iowa, I had always enjoyed food and cooking, but didn't think about the restaurant world as somewhere I would end up. I had started studying dietetics and then realized that I really just wanted to cook. So I started my culinary adventure in Keystone, Colorado. I had been skiing a couple times in Colorado and had fallen in love with the mountains, so when I found out there was a culinary school in a ski resort I was sold. I went through the three year culinary program and then stayed on with Vail Resorts for another two years. The culinary world was and is so much more fascinating, exciting, and full of adventure than I had imagined. It's hard work, but completely worth it.

I was curious to see what was going on in other restaurants, so I moved to North Carolina. Why not, right?!! One of the benefits of working in this field is being able to travel and check out new places. Wherever you go, people love to eat. At Magnolia Grill in Durham, I had my first interaction with "know your farmer". We had several farmers dropping things off at the back door of the restaurant. Every time I heard the back door open, I was excited to see who and what was coming. The first time I went to the farmer's market, I was immediately in love. The colors, shapes, and smells of

everything around were inspiring. I wanted to buy everything and take it home and cook it all. And that's what I did!

After a couple years, the mountains were calling me back and so I found myself in Vail, Colorado. I worked for a great family owned restaurant group. My culinary career grew a lot with Larkspur Restaurant. I became a sous chef, which gave me some freedom to learn about myself and the cuisine that I would call my own. I then later helped open their new restaurant, Avondale. I had no idea how hard it was to open up a restaurant. I'm glad I have some experience under my belt for when I open up my own.

I had always thought it would be exciting to cook in a large city. I had played around with the idea of moving to Chicago for quite some time and thought why not now! I spent a year in Chicago and loved every moment of it. The restaurant I worked at, Perennial, was right across from the Green City Market. I loved going to the market before work and chatting with the farmers. I realized that I wanted to learn more about the farming aspect of the culinary world. I joke around about how it took me moving to a huge city to realize that I wanted to be on a farm! After a few months of trying to find ways that I would be able to cook while learning about farm ing I received an email

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**RAMPS:** It's Ramp Season!! See veggie feature on back

**ASPARAGUS:** Everyone is excited to start using their grills. Brush asparagus with a little extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper, and cook on the grill.

**CHIVES:** Chives have a mild onion flavor. Slice thin and finish a soup or toss in a salad

**PARSNIPS:** These sweet over-wintered parsnips are great tossed with a little oil, salt and pepper, and roasted in the oven till golden.

**RHUBARB-** Thinly slice and add to a stir-fry to mix things up a bit.

**SORREL-** Julienne and use in your next salad to give it a bright lemon flavor.

**SPINACH-** Sweet over-wintered spinach can be added to any pasta dish right before it's ready to serve.

**SUNCHOKES-** This nubby root vegetable can be used just like a potato. Scrub them, chop and roast alongside your parsnips or add to a soup or stew.

**SAUTÉ MIX-** Wilt slightly with warm bacon vinaigrette and serve as a side dish.

**FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISH-** Thinly slice these colorful mild radishes, toss with extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper. A great way to start a meal.

**RED RUSSIAN KALE-** Remove the tender outer stems, leaves, and flowers from the tougher bottom stems. Sauté them with garlic and chiles until the leaves are wilted. This makes a great side dish for fish.

**WILLOW OR DOGWOOD** - Not enough room in the box, so look for yours at the site. We sent along one per share box, not per household. Sharing households should only take one portion.

about the Harmony Valley Farm chef job. I couldn't believe it; it was too good to be true. It is great to be able to cook everyday with delicious organic vegetables grown just out the back door and harvested by people I know. My main responsibility is to cook lunch for the farm crew, about 45 to 50 people. It is a fun opportunity to play around with menu ideas, flavor combinations, and different vegetable cooking techniques. I find it rewarding to cook for those who provide me, and you, the CSA members, with healthy and beautiful vegetables. On top of that, I get to write in the weekly newsletter what I have learned about the vegetables that are grown at Harmony Valley. I can't believe this is my job, am I dreaming? I am looking forward to the many newsletters and recipes that are to come. The recipes I will be passing along to you are some of my own as well as some of my favorites from other chefs and CSA members. I am also here as a culinary resource to all of you, the CSA members. Please feel free to email or call me with any questions, comments, or recipes you may have. One of the greatest joys about the culinary world is you never stop learning. Let's all make use of each other's skills and knowledge to share recipes, tips, and any information. Happy Cooking!!!

**Homage to Richard de Wilde and the first  
Harmony Valley Farm Box of the Season  
by Susan O'Leary,  
CSA member since 1993**

Each spring  
it's the thought of those first ramps  
their curved white bulbs and graceful wide green leaves  
foraged in the forest shade of Wisconsin's Bad Axe River

and how we'll taste them once again  
in our one luxurious ramp omelet of the year  
Today or tomorrow  
the 2010 ramp omelet.

It's the first spinach  
crisper and richer than any leaf I've ever tasted  
A green so deep and cold  
it still holds those dark winter months beneath snow

It's the long stems of shining, optimistic rhubarb  
that incline, too, so softly to the side  
opening tart green with each slice

It's quiet here  
late morning in the kitchen  
I'm about to begin.

### **Ramp Frittata**

6 eggs  
2T parmesan cheese  
Pinch of salt and pepper  
1tsp butter  
1 bunch of ramps, cut into 1" pieces,  
keeping the greens and bulbs separate  
½ cup asparagus, cut into 1" pieces  
½ bunch of radishes, thinly sliced (optional)

-Preheat oven to 350°F  
-Mix eggs, cheese, salt and pepper. Set aside.  
Heat a 12 inch non-stick oven-proof skillet over  
medium heat. Add butter to the pan. When  
melted, add the ramp bulbs and asparagus.  
Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes.  
-Add the ramp leaves. Sauté for 1 minute or  
until wilted.  
-Turn heat to low. Pour the egg mixture into  
the pan and stir with rubber spatula.  
-Place in oven for 15-20 minutes until the eggs  
are set. Remove from the pan and top with  
sliced radishes.

### **Vegetable Feature: Ramps**

Whoever says robin's eggs are the first sign of spring has not yet had the excitement of experiencing ramp season. To those of us that are lucky enough, spring begins with the ramps making their appearance in forests throughout the eastern United States and Canada. Ramp season only lasts a few weeks, so they are in high demand in early spring. At Harmony Valley, we harvest about 1000 pounds a week. We are careful to take only the larger ones and keep the smaller ones in the ground so as not to deplete the population.

Ramps, or wild leeks, have a creamy white bulb that gradually turns to a deep pink extending to their lily-like leaves. The leaves and the bulbs can be enjoyed in many culinary preparations. They can be eaten raw or cooked, but when cooked their flavor is more mild and sweet. The flavor resembles that of garlic and onion. To prepare, first cut the root off and rinse the ramp. Separate the bulb and the leaf. Cook the bulb in oil or butter with salt and pepper until tender, 2-3 minutes. Add the leaves and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. As well as a side dish, ramps add great flavor to main dishes. Try using them in the next omelet or quiche you make. Sautéed ramps add their unique flavor to pastas and sauces. One of the favorites at Harmony Valley is creamed spinach and ramps. It's hard not to eat the ramps as soon as you get them, but pickling them is a great way to preserve the short lived ramp season.

When storing, be sure to be careful with the delicate ramps. Wrap them in a damp cloth, place in a plastic bag, and store them in your refrigerator. You should use them within 5 days.

### **Pickled Ramp Salad**

½ cup pickled ramps (see below)  
1 cup spinach  
1 cup arugula, watercress, salad or sauté mix  
½ cup sorrel, remove leaves from stem and cut into 1" pieces  
1 bunch radishes, thinly sliced  
¼ cup blue cheese

Toss ingredients together and dress with your favorite vinaigrette.

#### **Pickled Ramps**

Makes ½ cup

1 bunch ramps, cut into 1" pieces, keeping the greens and bulbs separate  
¾ cup red wine vinegar  
¾ cup water  
1/3 cup sugar  
4T honey  
1 tsp each coriander seed, mustard seed, black peppercorns, fennel seed, mustard seed

Bring all the ingredients except for the ramps to a boil. Cover and steep for 20 minutes. Strain and add the ramp bulbs. Bring back to a boil and simmer until ramps are tender about 5-10 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the ramp greens. Cover and steep for 10 minutes. You may strain and use right away or store in your refrigerator for two weeks.