



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

May 3-5, 2012



Celebrating 20 Years of CSA by Andrea Yoder

Welcome to the 2012 CSA season! This is an exciting year for us as we celebrate 20 years of CSA and Richard's 40th year of farming! We've come a long way over the past 40 years and I guarantee you will reap the benefits of the many things we've learned along the way.

We thought we'd kick off the first week of CSA by sharing some updates from the farm...a lot has happened over the past 4 months! The first topic of conversation in farming always seems to be the weather, so we'll start there. We enjoyed a mild winter which seemed to transition into an early spring. March was unseasonably warm and dry. This allowed us to get into the fields early to get some plantings in ahead of schedule. We planted our first salad mix, arugula, spinach, baby bok choy, radishes, etc on March 27. We'll be harvesting from that first planting this week for your boxes! We have since completed 4 more "salad" plantings as well as all of our parsnips, beets, carrots and peas!

In April, the weather trended back towards unseasonably cool days....and rain. We got 2 inches of rain and then 5 days later another 2 inches. We needed the rain to germinate the seeds lying in dry soil. Unfortunately, the rains coincided with the arrival of our field crew from Mexico and it kept them out of the fields for much of their first week. We were starting to get worried as we watched the greenhouses fill up, the potatoes were cut and ready to plant, the strawberry and rhubarb transplants were in the cooler just waiting to go to the field....and then we got a window of opportu-

THIS WEEK'S BOX

BABY PARSNIPS: We stored these sweet little parsnips in the ground over the winter and dug them this spring. You will find them to be very sweet and flavorful. All they need is a toss with some oil, salt and pepper, then roast in the oven until golden brown!

SUNCHOKES: Anything you can do with a potato you can do with a sunchoke. Turn them into a spring soup along with green garlic, chives and parsnips.

CHIVES: See Vegetable Feature

GREEN GARLIC: See Vegetable Feature

OVERWINTERED SPINACH: This is not like any other spinach you'll eat this year. Overwintered spinach is more sweet and flavorful. Toss it with vinegar and oil and a shredding of cheese for a simple salad.

BLACK RADISHES: This is a storage radish that we've been able to store throughout the winter...and they are still just as good as the day we brought them in! I like to slice them thin and do a quick pickle on the stove top. Eat the radish pickles as a condiment with stir-fries, roasted meats, etc.

FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISHES: These tender little radishes are great to eat just as they are with just a little sprinkling of salt. Don't forget to eat the tender greens as well. Just toss them into your next salad—don't waste them!

SORREL: Sorrel has a tangy, lemon-like flavor. It will melt down in hot liquid to make a quick and easy sauce or soup.

STINGING NETTLES: Nettles are a nutrient rich and flavorful spring green. We have bagged the nettles to prevent them from wilting and to prevent anyone from an unexpected "sting." We have vigorously washed them here at the farm to remove their "sting," so this shouldn't be a problem, but handle with gloves just in case. See the Nettles info sheet on our recipe page online or at your site for more recipe ideas.

CHOICE: WILLOW—Don't eat the willow, it's a decoration to look at and admire! We plant willows and dogwood in our hedgerows to form a buffer, but also to provide beneficial habitats for birds, insects, etc. We have to trim them every year, so we bunched them and are offering them to you this spring so you can select one to enjoy this summer!

nity! Last week our guys made amazing progress—one day we had 3 transplanting crews and a potato planting crew planting all at the same time! It was a busy couple of days, but the payoff was huge. Benji's crew got all of our new strawberry transplants and leeks planted. Fresvindo and his crew planted the potatoes in less than 2 days. Nestor and Antonio's crew planted the first plantings of fennel, broccoli, cauliflower, Italian parsley, dandelion and head lettuce as well as spring cabbages. José Manuel and Daniel's crew planted about half our onion crop before they got rained out. Armando and Angel pulled back covers and did all the 5-row cultivating before the weeds got ahead and the rain came. Juan has been flame weeding the parsnips, carrots and cilantro crops---we're hoping to stay ahead of the weeds! After a weekend rain, the transplants look perky and are standing up like soldiers in the fields!

The warm weather did wake up the valley a little sooner than we typically experience.

Overnight the trees started to bud out, everything turned green and we were surprised to find the ramps already coming up in March! The ramp season started early and ended by the 3rd week of April! We brainstormed ways to hold them over until the first CSA boxes, but there was no way to do so. Our apologies, but there will be no ramps until next year.

The warm temperatures caused the strawberries to break dormancy early and they started to form buds and now have blossoms. Unfortunately, some of the blossoms have been damaged by the recent cold nighttime temperatures. We estimate about 40-50% of the strawberries that are blooming have been damaged as evidenced by the black centers when you look inside the flower. We've started harvesting asparagus, but have lost some to frost. Our overwintered spinach crop came in early too—it was gorgeous, but about 3 weeks early! We harvested a lot off that field in early April and were able to get some regrowth to harvest this week. We might have

a little gap while we wait for the first spring planting to mature.

Our year-round crew was scrambling and working long hours starting in March and through the first couple weeks of April. They became the crew that did everything—harvest, wash, pack, greenhouse work, yard work!! We hired several more people to help us with the workload until our permanent crew arrived. We started our H2A visa process as early as possible in January and requested a start date of April 2. This year we definitely needed them on April 2!! Unfortunately, we weren't able to move the process along any faster, experienced some delays, and finally saw the first of our guys on April 16. The second group came the following week and we are thankful that everyone arrived safely!

Our year is off to a good start and we're anxious to start sending you more delicious vegetables from our fields. We hope you'll mark your calendars with a visit to the farm this year. We have a lot to share with you and new baby goats to play with!

Chive & Parmesan Popcorn

Serves 1-2

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup popcorn

1 tbsp oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted

Freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup chives, finely chopped

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Fine sea salt

1. In a large pan over medium high heat, heat 1 tbsp oil. Add popcorn. Keep the pan moving to move the kernels in the pan. When the kernels start to pop, cover the pan. Once the popcorn has finished popping, transfer it to a large mixing bowl.

2. Grind fresh black pepper directly into the melted butter. Drizzle the butter over the popcorn, then sprinkle cheese and chives on top. Season with salt and then toss to combine the ingredients with the popcorn. Enjoy!

Recipe borrowed from *The Featherstone Farm Cookbook*. We weren't sure about this recipe when we first read it, but Farmer Richard made it himself and it was really good!

Vegetable Feature: Green Garlic & Chives

While we are thankful for the ability of onions and garlic to store throughout the winter, it is refreshing to have fresh alliums coming in from the field again! We strive to deliver a form of onions and garlic in every box throughout the season. We'll kick off the year with tender green garlic and flavorful chives.

A culinary delicacy, **green garlic** (or spring garlic) is comprised of the young stalks of the garlic plant that are harvested before they reach maturity. Green garlic looks just like scallions or green onions but has a much milder flavor. You can use the white bulb and green leaves in any recipe in place of regular garlic or leeks, and can enjoy it raw or cooked. Use sparingly in raw form & in abundance when cooked. Green garlic goes great with springtime dishes and gives a nice flair to sandwiches when made into an aioli spread. It can be used in salads as a stand in for scallions, added to a pesto for your pasta, sliced thin and sprinkled as a pizza topping, or used as the "secret ingredient" in your braising liquid for meats. Because it's so moist, green garlic is much more perishable than dried bulb garlic. Store them in a plastic bag in the vegetable bin with a damp paper towel. They should last at least 5-7 days.

Chives are perennial plants that start to come up early in the spring. These fine stalks are packed with onion-like flavor. Chives make a great garnish to springtime soups and salads when added right before eating. You can also dry them for use later in the year. Loosely wrap your bunch of chives in a moist paper towel and store in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator for 4-6 days.

Garlicky Sunchoke Salad with Dill & Feta

Serves 4

2½ cups thinly sliced sunchoke (about 8 sunchoke)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped scallions or chives

1-2 stalks green garlic, sliced thinly on the bias

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup cider vinegar

3 tbsps chopped fresh dill or 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsps dried dill

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Sliced radish

Crumbled feta cheese

1. Combine the sunchoke, scallions or chives, and green garlic in a bowl. Add the oil, vinegar, dill, salt and pepper. Toss well.

2. Marinate in the refrigerator for 8 to 12 hours, stirring occasionally.

3. When ready to serve, garnish with sliced radish and crumbled feta cheese.

Adapted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt on Vegetables*
by Farmer John Peterson and Angelic Organics

Enjoy the season!

Be kind to your site coordinator!

-Check your name (and only your name) off the checklist when you pick up your share. Do not take a box if your name is not on the list. Contact your site coordinator & Terri at the farm if you think your name should be on the list, or if you have any other difficulties at your delivery site.

-Call or email your site coordinator ahead of time if you will be late or unable to pick up your box! If you do not arrange with your site host ahead of time, they will give your box to a food pantry or neighbor. Site coordinators usually make courtesy reminder calls in the beginning of the season, but are under no obligation to do so. Their main responsibility is to find a good home for unclaimed boxes. **It is your responsibility to remember to pick up your shares during the hours specified at your site.**

-Make sure anyone who picks up your share for you knows what to expect and where to go!

-Keep your site clean. Flatten your box and put in the container labeled "Put flattened boxes here." Clean up any papers, trash, or random veggies at your site.