



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

August 16, 2012

What is Summer Without Tomatoes!

The amounts of food our fields are producing now are overwhelming this time of the year.... even for us and we're supposed to be used to seeing this! On Monday of this week the crew harvested 10 bins of watermelons, 1,300 French Orange Melons, and 5,000# of tomatoes!!! Every summer vegetable has its "peak," and I think all of these vegetables decided to peak this week. The CSA philosophy is for the farmer and the member to share both the risks and the bounty. Well, this week is definitely a week to share the bounty....so much so we packed your veggies in a larger box this week!

As we enjoy the flavors of summer, tomatoes are often at the top of the list of favorites. There are so many different colors, shapes, and flavors of tomatoes and the best time to eat them is shortly after they come off the vine. There are literally thousands of varieties of tomatoes—some modern hybrids and others fall into the category of "heirlooms." We carefully select our tomato varieties based on flavor, size, texture, color and their disease resistance.

Don't forget that tomatoes do not like to be kept cold. Their ideal storage temperature is about 50-55°F. At temperatures less than 55°F tomatoes will suffer chill injury that affects the texture of the skin and flesh as well as robbing the tomato of its flavor. If you receive some tomatoes that are still a little green, ripen them on your kitchen counter and eat them as soon as they are ready. If you have more tomatoes than you can eat right now, consider preserving them. Cook them down and make them into tomato sauce that can be canned or frozen for later use. Dehydrating tomatoes is another easy way to preserve them for later use. Throughout the season you will be receiving a mixed variety of tomatoes and we want you to be able to identify them for yourself. So here's the list of our favorite tomato varieties and their characteristics.

Sungolds: These little round, orange tomatoes will always be delivered in a plastic pint container. They are one of the most flavorful tomatoes you might ever eat. They are sweet and delicious—perfect for eating fresh as a snack or in a salad. Their flavors intensify when cooked, so they are also excellent in pasta dishes, cooked down into a sauce or roasted in the oven. They are also an excellent tomato to dry and enjoy on winter pizzas.

Red & Yellow Cherry Tomatoes: These little gems are easy to eat as a one-bite snack. They are also very useful to keep on hand for

THIS WEEK'S BOX

Porcelain Garlic: Slow roast these large beautiful cloves and make a personal bowl of roasted garlic soup.

Yellow Onions: Use in a fresh batch of pico de gallo. Reserve the outer skins for stock.

Tomatoes: The variety of colors and acidity make for a beautiful sliced tomato salad topped with splashes of red wine vinegar, olive oil, basil, and feta cheese. Check out recipes on the reverse side!

Red & Yellow Cherry or Sungold Tomatoes: These bite size tomatoes are great for a snack, but also fantastic in quiche with garlic, cheddar cheese and jalapenos.

Wisconsin Roaster Pepper: Stuff the roaster pepper with a blend of cream cheese, cheddar cheese, bacon, and Italian sausage and bake for dinner! These peppers do have heat in them!

White or Green Cucumbers: Add some fresh cucumber to your favorite mojito recipe and enjoy the refreshing taste it adds.

Summer Squash: Sauté diced squash with diced tomato, garlic, and fresh basil for a light side dish.

Green Top Carrots: Cut into sticks and dip in hummus for an afternoon snack.

Celery: This fragrant celery adds great flavor to any beef roast.

Sweet Corn: Instead of just dousing this delicious corn with butter, try spicing it up by adding minced jalapenos and lime zest to the butter.

Watermelon: Puree the watermelon and run through a mesh strainer and add water to the reserved watermelon juice. Serve on ice and enjoy a guilt free summer drink.

French Orange Melon: Remove skin and seeds, and cut into bite size pieces. Toss with honey, lime juice, and crushed red pepper flakes.

Red Maria Potatoes: Slice into rounds and sauté in a cast iron skillet with butter and onion slices for a crispy breakfast accompaniment.

Jalapeños: These are spicy peppers, so be careful when using! One goes a long way, especially if you keep the seeds intact!

Broccoli: Make a broccoli salad with onions, garlic, bacon, golden raisins, sunflower seeds, and a tangy dressing for your next picnic.

Green and Yellow Beans: A favorite use for beans is a simple soup with small diced potatoes, chopped beans, milk, butter, and season with salt and pepper. It is quick and delicious!

Choice Item this Week: Eggplant and Italian Basil

use in salads, on skewers for the grill, or roasted with herbs and oil and tossed with fresh mozzarella

Roma Tomatoes: These tomatoes are considered "paste" tomatoes meaning they are best for cooking and canning because they have more flesh and are less watery. They are also a good tomato to use in fresh salsas and pico de gallo.

Black Velvet: This tomato quickly became our favorite black tomato because of its unique characteristics. The flesh on this tomato is very dense, so even when it is ripe it will always be firm. The skin on this tomato is a blackish red and it has green shoulders. Even when ripe this tomato will have some green on

the top. This is an excellent slicing tomato with its beautiful pinkish interior flesh.

Golden Slicer: This is the best golden variety we've grown in years. It is a consistent producer with high yields. It has a beautiful golden skin and true orange flesh. The flavor is outstanding with low acidity. The seed company says this tomato is 10 x higher in beta carotene than a usual tomato!

Momotaro & Odoriko: These are our two favorite pink Japanese varieties. They are a beautiful rose color on the inside and outside. In fact, the reason why these tomatoes appear to be pink is because they have a translucent skin that allows the color of the flesh to show through.

In contrast, many red tomatoes have a flesh color that looks very similar to the Japanese pink flesh, however they look red because they have a red-orange skin. Check it out for yourself. These pink tomatoes are best used for fresh eating.

Fabulous: This is our red slicing tomato—perfect for topping a burger. It was named for its “fabulous” old-fashioned tomato flavor. This tomato is appropriate for fresh eating or cooked dishes.

Riviera: This tomato is one of our heirloom tomatoes and is classified as an “oxheart” tomato. This is an Italian variety that is good for cooking, stuffing and making a flavorful sauce. The flavor in its raw form is mild, but intensifies with cooking.

Russian Heart: This is one of Richard’s favorite tomatoes this year—for both flavor and appearance. You’ll recognize this tomato by its large heart shape—wide shoulders tapering to a point. It is yellow & red with variegated yellow and red flesh in the center. This is a low acid, mild tomato that looks gorgeous on a tomato platter.

Rose de Berne: This is one of our favorite heirloom tomatoes that will come later in the second planting. We enjoy this tomato for its excellent flavor as well as its beautiful pink color.

Hopefully you’ll be able to identify the tomatoes you receive and call them by name. There is nothing like eating a tomato right off the vine, but we do our best to pick them at the right time and handle them with care so we can pass as much of that experience on to you as we are able. We have a second field of tomatoes to follow this one, so we are planning for a long tomato season if the fall frosts hold off until late September. We hope you enjoy these tastes of summer!

Now Hiring

Are you interested in organic produce and farming? Are you able to accurately and efficiently enter information into a database? Do you like interacting with great customers? Have you ever edited a newsletter using InDesign or used Photoshop? If you answered yes to these questions, then we might be a match. We are seeking a seeking a full time organic minded individual to join our team as the CSA Coordinator. If you are willing to work hard and immerse yourself in an organic farming culture, we would like to invite you to be a member of our team.

Visit the “Opportunities” page on our website www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

PRODUCE PLUS

Roma Tomatoes, 25 pounds for \$35

Italian Basil, 3 pounds \$25

Dancer Eggplant, 10 pounds for \$22

Jalapeño, 5 pounds for \$19

Twin Cities: Please order by 5pm Monday, August 20 for delivery Thursday, August 23.

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Black Velvet Tomato Egg Cup with Bacon & Avocado By Chef Abbey J. Steffen

4 each black velvet tomatoes
4 each fresh eggs
4 strips apple-wood smoked bacon
1 each Hass avocado
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut the top of the tomatoes off, and with a melon baller, scoop out the inside of the tomato. Place the tomatoes in individual custard cups.
3. Crack one egg into each tomato cup. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Place the custard cups on a cookie sheet and place in the oven and bake for 35-45 minutes or until egg is set.
5. Meanwhile, cut the strips of bacon into small pieces.

Place the bacon in a small sauté pan and cook on a low heat until crispy or to preferred doneness. Remove from heat and place bacon pieces on paper towel to drain extra grease.

6. Cut the avocado in half, and remove the seed. Gently scoop the flesh out of the skin with a spoon. Slice the avocado into ¼” thick slices and set aside. There should be at least 8 slices.
7. Once the egg cups are finished, remove from oven. Top each cup with chopped bacon and avocado slices. Serve immediately.

Watermelon & Tomato Cooler with Ginger & Lemongrass By Chef Abbey J. Steffen

Yield: 4 – 8 oz. glasses

1 cup gold slicer tomato, dice
2 cup yellow or red watermelon, dice
½ tsp ground ginger
4 stalks lemongrass, peeled and trimmed

1. Place tomato, watermelon, and ginger in a blender and puree.
2. Run the mixture through a fine sieve to separate the pulp and seeds. Place the reserved liquid in a pitcher and refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow time to marinate.
3. Fill glasses with crushed ice, and top with the tomato-watermelon cooler.
4. Smash the end of the lemongrass stick with the back of a knife to release the aroma and oil. Use the lemongrass as your stir stick.
5. This is a great brunch drink, and feel free to add your favorite sparkling wine, peach schnapps, strawberry vodka, or a splash of lemoncello.