



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

December 4, 2014

## Sustaining our Woods:

by Richard de Wilde

Our primary focus is producing top quality vegetables for our thousands of customers throughout the Midwest region. Our silt loam valley fields are prime land for vegetable production with rich soils mixed with sand and silt loam deposited in this valley over thousands of years. Our tillable land for vegetable production on the land we own is about 40 acres, however our total property is about 500 acres. There are another 60 acres of hillside fields that were tilled in the late 1800's, sometimes with disastrous erosion problems. These have since been converted to pastures for grazing animals. This is a much more appropriate use for the land and helps to prevent invasive plants such as prickly ash, multiflora rose, sumac and unwanted trees from taking over. Beyond vegetable ground and pasture, we still have over 400 acres of woods that are not suitable for either vegetables or animals.

So just what do we do with all of this wooded land? Unfortunately, we pay a high tax rate for this land based on 'recreational value', ie, deer hunting, bird watching, mushroom hunting and just enjoying nature. Our other option is to put the land into a "managed forest" program through the DNR. This would significantly decrease our taxes, however this program would require us to conform to a plan which dictates when trees will be harvested every 10 to 15 years. It is assumed that we will hire a logging company to come in and cut down the trees when indicated. While the logging company does have some obligation to seed down the logging roads they need to access the trees, their interest is in removing the best timber which is most saleable. So what remains when they are done? The crooked, storm damaged or diseased trees are left behind. This is not a recipe for forest improvement, but a huge taxpayer subsidy of the large scale forest industry! In addition, the amount of money the landowner receives for the logs that are removed is only about 1% of the value of the lumber when it is sold as a finished product to the consumer. The bottom line is you will never get enough return from selling standing timber to cover the tax liability, pay for the land and compensate for the time spent managing the woods over time in order to maintain a healthy woods and produce more "good" lumber-quality trees (ie removing undesirable trees). At present, we have about 80 acres of woods that is in the managed forest program, while we manage the remaining 320 acres ourselves.

Over the past three years we have been selectively logging and cutting down trees that are too close to our fields or were left from previous logging. We have tried to put this resource to use by using much of the wood for firewood to fuel clean-burning stoves which heat as many as 6 buildings on our farm. We also saved 15,000 board feet of lumber that, after kiln drying, was made into paneling and

## This is a Brown and Green Week Delivery

### This Week's Box

**SWEET POTATOES:** If you haven't yet made a sweet potato pie, now's the perfect time. Sweet potatoes also pair nicely with pineapple—dice both and spread on a baking sheet, sprinkling with salt and cayenne pepper, and roast for 30 minutes.

**YELLOW & RED ONIONS:** Here, here! Cold weather calls for comfort food. Try your hand at homemade French onion soup with thick-cut, crusty bread and gobs of Gouda, Gruyere, Parmesan or pecorino.

**GARLIC:** The University of Maryland Medical Center reports that garlic is chock-full of antioxidants, has numerous anti-inflammatory properties and is believed to help prevent heart disease. So next time, make it two cloves instead of one.

**FESTIVAL SQUASH:** These squash are the perfect size for stuffing. Choose among a few common ingredients—quinoa, onions, bacon, blue cheese, kale and sundried tomatoes—or get creative and make it up as you go!

**CELERIAC:** Roast cubed celeriac with diced apples and a maple-bacon glaze, or use celeriac in place of or in concert with potatoes in a classic shepherd's pie.

**RED SUNCHOKES:** Shred your sunchokes, along with celeriac and green apples, and toss with a mustard vinaigrette and toasted walnuts. Or, head to [www.food52.com](http://www.food52.com) and check out the recipe for Lemony Saffron Roasted Fennel with Sunchokes, Shallots and Herbs.

**RED BEETS:** Don't let the idea of a chocolate beet cake frighten you. Instead, take my word for it that this cake is most certainly delicious. Find the recipe for Nigel Slater's Extremely Moist Chocolate-Beet Cake at [www.food52.com](http://www.food52.com).

**DAIKON & BEAUTY HEART RADISH:** See this week's newsletter for recipe ideas!

**CARROTS:** A favorite go-to recipe of mine is Deb Perelman's Carrot Salad with Tahini and Crisped Chickpeas—a salad that is, above all things, "exquisite in its simplicity." Find the recipe at [www.smittenkitchen.com](http://www.smittenkitchen.com).

**GOLD TURNIPS:** Finely sliced or julienned turnips make a nice, crunchy addition to a bowl of ramen. They also work well alongside bacon and Parmesan in a savory winter risotto.

**GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE:** Braised cabbage is quite the culinary treat. Head to [www.bowenappetite.com](http://www.bowenappetite.com) for Madison food blogger Bowen Close's take on Braised Cabbage with Onions and Carrots.

flooring that we were able to use in our new home. We have a great satisfaction in 'knowing' the trees that became our house! We learned a lot in the process and want to continue to sustainably manage our woods well into the future. However, our on-farm needs for wood are limited in comparison to the amount of this resource available to us. Thus, we are now considering options that would make this resource available in a variety of ways to many of our customers who may also have a use for wood. Perhaps you are considering building a home or have a remodeling project and would like to use wood for flooring, paneling to cover walls or ceilings, cabinets, or furniture. You could quite literally choose the trees that would end up in your new house, addition or room. If you are planning a project and are interested in wood products, give us a call and we can send you samples of wood, paneling and flooring.

We are planning to build our own solar kiln this spring, which would allow us to kiln dry our own lumber instead of having to haul it to a kiln for drying. This fall we cut down quite a few ash trees that died as a result of the emerald ash borer. We're hoping to turn some of this into lumber that could be used for building projects, furniture, doors, etc. As we look into the future, we know we will have many more ash trees that will soon succumb to the invasive ash borer and need to be harvested. In addition, we have several varieties of oak, cherry and walnut that will need to be removed to make room for new growth. We would like to turn some of this wood into interesting and unique products such as cutting boards, cheese and



Richard preparing to haul a load of freshly sawed boards to the kiln to be dried

bread boards, bowls, wooden kitchen utensils and wine bottle stoppers, all finished with beeswax and organic oils safe for use with food. We have some of these types of products made for us by family members and friends and really cherish their uniqueness in our own home. In our end-of-the-year survey, we will be asking you about your interest in this endeavor and value your feedback as we explore this opportunity. Other options we are considering for adding value to this resource includes deliveries of firewood brought right to your home, cut, stacked and ready to load into your wood stove or fireplace.

It is exciting to learn more about this valuable, beautiful natural resource that we are blessed to have on our property. Our goal is to preserve and care for our woods well into the future and set the precedent for the generations of caretakers of this land that will follow in our footsteps. We have a lot of logistics to explore and many more details to work out, but we're excited to see what the future may hold.



Sawing logs into boards at Harmony Valley Farm.

## Featured Vegetable: Daikon and Beauty Heart Radishes

By Sarah Janes Ugoretz

There are two kinds of radishes—the quick growing, spring varieties, and the slower-to-mature winter varieties. As winter varieties, daikon and beauty heart radishes share the spotlight for our vegetable feature this week. Members of the mustard family, radishes were first domesticated in the Mediterranean during pre-Roman times. By 500 B.C., traders had carried them first to China and shortly thereafter to Japan where cultivation quickly became widespread. Early on, radishes were most commonly grown for their seeds, which were pressed into oil. Despite the multitude of varieties, all radishes share certain characteristics—a crunchy texture, with a unique sharp bite and a varying degree of pungency. They are rich in vitamins C and B, are an excellent source of potassium, calcium and iron, and are often utilized as a digestive aid, detoxifier and blood cleanser.

Winter radishes are, you might have guessed, built for storage. In order to preserve their quality, however, be sure to keep them sealed in plastic bags in the refrigerator. Preventing moisture loss is key to maintaining freshness! If stored properly, daikon will store for several weeks and beauty heart radishes will store for several months. Don't let a little browning on the surface fool you. This is a normal development with extended storage, but the radish is still good on the inside.

Daikon radishes, commonly referred to as Japanese horseradish or mooli, are rather easy to identify. A staple in Asian cuisine, daikon radishes are much milder than the traditional red radish. Their crisp, juicy texture is complemented by a sweet, slightly peppery bite. Interestingly enough, the thickest part of the root is the mildest, with pungency increasing as the root narrows. Although the typical daikon will measure between 15-20 inches in length, certain varieties can grow to be 36 inches long!

Beauty heart radishes, on the other hand, look more like a storage turnip than anything. Their pale, cream-colored exterior hides a rather stunning interior, however, the flesh exploding with unique patterns of fuchsia, white, and green. It's no surprise then that their Chinese name, *Xin Li Mei*, literally translates to "heart inside beautiful." At the Harmony Valley Farm market stand, the crew continually encourages patrons to give beauty hearts a try. They are, as we say, "the radish for non-radish lovers." I like to think of these beauty hearts as a gateway variety—one taste of this mild, slightly sweet radish and you'll be whisked away into a glorious world filled with tens upon tens of radish varieties! Well, maybe that's wishful thinking, but these radishes are most certainly a culinary treasure.

Daikon radish is most often used raw and is often pickled. It can be used as a condiment to eat on sandwiches, alongside vegetarian rice dishes, or to accompany grilled or roasted meats. It is also a common ingredient in kim chi.

Beauty heart radishes can be eaten raw or cooked. They are a beautiful addition to winter vegetable slaws or can be the feature of a winter radish salad. We also enjoy them on winter crudité platters served with creamy dip or sliced cheese or slice thinly and put them on a sandwich for a little crunch. They also make a nice addition to stir-fry and are a great vegetable to add to simple soups such as miso or hot & sour soup.

If you are looking for recipe ideas, go to our searchable recipe database on our website and use the search terms "daikon radish" & "beauty heart radish." You can also look to the Local Thyme online CSA recipe service for more ideas.

### Hot & Sour Soup

This is a recipe sent to us by CSA members who adapted a recipe for Hot & Sour soup to incorporate beauty heart radishes. The original recipe came from *The Meatless Gourmet* by Bobbie Hinman (now under the title *The Vegetarian Gourmet's Easy International Recipes*).

#### Yield: 4 servings (1 cup each)

- ¼ cup water
  - 2 Tbsp cornstarch
  - 4 cups vegetable broth (4 cups water + a veggie bouillon)
  - 1 large carrot, coarsely shredded
  - 1 cup beauty heart radish, coarsely shredded
  - 1 Tbsp sherry
  - 4 ounces firm tofu, sliced, then cut into small rectangles
  - 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
  - 1½ Tbsp soy sauce
  - 1 tsp sesame oil
  - ½ tsp pepper (white or black)
  - 2 green onions, thinly sliced (may substitute minced red onion)
1. In a small bowl, combine water and cornstarch. Stir to dissolve cornstarch. Set aside.
  2. In a medium saucepan, combine broth, carrot, beauty heart and sherry. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer 5 minutes.
  3. Add tofu, vinegar and soy sauce. Increase heat to medium and when mixture boils again, cook uncovered, 3 minutes. Stir cornstarch mixture and add to saucepan while stirring. Continue to cook and stir for 2 more minutes. Remove from heat and stir in sesame oil and pepper. Garnish with onions.

*Are you looking for last minute gifts?*

## Harmony Valley Farm's CSA Specialty Share Samplers

**Order deadline December 10th!**

#### **WINTER FRUIT SHARE SAMPLER: \$15**

We will pack a mini-fruit share just for you! Selections will include a sampling of our current winter fruit varieties which may include mandarin oranges, tangerines, apples, pears, cranberries, dates, pomegranates, grapefruit or persimmons

#### **CHEESE SHARE SAMPLER: \$19**

This is your opportunity to taste some of our delicious cheese selections for yourself. This sampler selection will include approximately ½ pound each of Northwood Organic Farm's Gouda, McCluskey Brothers' Mozzarella and Castle Rock Organic Dairy & Harmony Valley Farm's Ramp Cheddar.

#### **KICKAPOO COFFEE SAMPLER: \$25**

In this sampler offering you will receive 1 pound each of the Winter Solstice Blend and a single origin Colombian coffee, two of our favorite Kickapoo coffee selections.

**Please send payment along with your order form no later than December 10th for delivery to your site on December 18/19/20.**

Find our order form on our website  
[www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/SpecialOffer.pdf](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com/SpecialOffer.pdf)