



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

June 22, 2017

Strawberry Fields Forever: Strawberry Day 2017--What a Fun Day!

By Farmers Richard & Andrea

Last Sunday we hosted our 24th annual Strawberry Day event at the farm. While this day is sometimes a scorcher, we were pleased to have a very pleasant day for the party. With just a little rain overnight and a few clouds passing through, we made it through the day with just a few sprinkles of rain. The cloud cover and temperatures in the 70's was the perfect backdrop for comfortable strawberry picking. We had an estimated 120-130 members in attendance. One member referred to our visitors as members of our "fan club." Our "fan club" included people ranging in age from the very little ones riding in carriers with their moms to seasoned veterans returning to the farm for another visit to check in on us and make sure we still know what we're doing!

We started off the event with our annual potluck. We enjoy seeing our vegetables return to the farm in various forms. Jars of fermented vegetables and salsas preserved from last year's bounty, pasta tossed with garlic scape pesto garnished with sugar snap peas and baby white turnips, and strawberry-rhubarb lemonade were just a few of the foods that made their way to this year's potluck. We also enjoyed a delicious and refreshing batch of Strawberry Basil Kombucha made with our strawberries and basil by NessAlla. Of course a farm party isn't complete without Iced Maple Latte made with cold brew coffee from Kickapoo coffee!

After the potluck, we loaded up the harvest wagons and made our way to the fields to check out some crops. We enjoy taking members to the fields every year and feel that it makes your CSA experience so much more personal and meaningful...

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & pictures fresh from the fields)*

What's In The Box?

PURPLE SCALLIONS: These purple scallions have a stronger flavor than the other green onion varieties we had previously...and just might make you cry! Eat them raw or lightly cooked.

RED OAK AND/OR GREEN/RED BOSTON LETTUCE: This will be the last week of head lettuce until our fall plantings are ready!

BABY KALE MIX: This is a blend of different kale varieties that may be eaten raw as a salad green, added into smoothies, or lightly stir-fried or sautéed.

SALAD MIX: This is nature's fast food and a convenient way to include vegetables in your meals when you're short on time. Just add a light vinaigrette and you have a simple salad that can stand alone or add your favorite accompaniments to it.

GREEN & PURPLE KOHLRABI: See this week's vegetable feature and recipes for more information!

GREEN TOP RED BEETS: The green tops on this week's beets are, in Farmer Richard's words, "pristine." The beet greens are edible, so don't throw them away! They may be eaten raw or cooked and may be used interchangeably in any recipe that may call for swiss chard.

GREEN & ITALIAN ZUCCHINI: You may receive one or two different kinds of zucchini. The dark, solid green zucchini are a traditional zucchini that has a tender skin. The lighter colored striped zucchini with vertical ribs is an Italian zucchini variety. This variety has a thick, yet tender skin and holds its shape better when cooked.

SUGAR SNAP PEAS: This variety of peas has an edible pod. You do need to remove the string that runs on top of the pod. Start at the stem end and "unzip" the pod to remove the string on top. After that's gone you can eat the remainder of the pea...pod and all!

Cooking with This Week's Box!

Welcome to summer...and all the delicious vegetables it brings with it! As we start cooking from this week's box, how about making a cake to celebrate the first day of summer this week? Cake, with vegetables? Yes—**Zucchini Pecan Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting!** You can make this cake and still have plenty of zucchini left to make **Hummus and Grilled Zucchini Pizzas**. There are so many things you can do with zucchini, so don't let them intimidate you this summer. Rather, put them to use and find interesting ways to use and enjoy them throughout the summer!!

Sugar snap peas are one of my favorite vegetables, and one of my favorite dishes to make during their season is a simple dish of **Sugar Snap Peas and Scallions**. This is a recipe we featured in our June 2008 newsletter. It calls for fresh thyme, but it's also good with other herbs such as dill or parsley. I like to serve this as a side dish with a variety of meals, but it goes particularly well alongside grilled or sautéed fish or roasted chicken. I also like to make **Quinoa Salad with Sugar Snap Peas and Mint**. This is a recipe we featured in our June 2007 newsletter. It's a light, refreshing, simple salad to make and travels well. Take a larger portion of this to enjoy as a main item in your pack-and-go lunch or serve it as a side dish at dinner.

We're excited to finally have fresh beets! Notice how beautiful the greens are this week...and don't forget to use them! Fresh, green top beets are like two vegetables in one...

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & our suggestions for utilizing every item in your box!)*

Featured Vegetable: Kohlrabi

The name for kohlrabi is derived from “khol” meaning stem or cabbage and “rabi” meaning turnip. While it is in the cabbage family and resembles a turnip, it grows differently than both. Many people mistake kohlrabi for being a root vegetable that grows under the ground, but it is actually an enlarged stem that grows above the soil level. Its stems and leaves shoot up from the bulbous part to give it, as many describe, the appearance of a space ship.

We grow both green and purple kohlrabi, which are no different from each other once they are peeled. Kohlrabi is seeded in the greenhouse in early March and transplanted to the field as early as possible in April, along with other vegetables in the same family of cole crops including broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage. Kohlrabi is reliably the first of this family of vegetables to be ready, so it has earned its “niche” in seasonal eating while we wait for broccoli and cauliflower to make heads.

The fibrous peel should be removed from the bulb prior to eating. You can do this easily by cutting the kohlrabi into halves or quarters and then peeling away the outer skin with a paring knife. The flesh is dense and crisp, yet tender and sweet with a hint of a mild cabbage flavor. The leaves on kohlrabi are edible as well, so don't just discard them. They have the texture and characteristics of collard greens, so you could use them in any recipe calling for collards. They are also good eaten raw. Just make sure you slice them thinly and toss them with an acidic vinaigrette to soften the leaves. To store kohlrabi, cut the stems and leaves off. Store both leaves and the bulbs in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. The leaves will keep for about 1 week, and the bulbs will last up to several weeks if stored properly.

Kohlrabi can be prepared in many different ways, both raw and cooked. The simplest way to eat it is to peel it and munch on slices plain or with just a touch of salt. It can also be shredded and used in slaws with a variety of dressings or sliced and added to sandwiches or salads. Just this week we enjoyed a creamy kohlrabi slaw for dinner when Richard's mother and brother joined us for a visit. This is reliably Richard's favorite way to eat kohlrabi and every year as he puts kohlrabi on the kitchen counter he asks, “Can we have creamy kohlrabi slaw?”

I always think of kohlrabi as an old-world European vegetable, which it is, but don't forget that kohlrabi is also eaten in other parts of the world such as China and India. You can find some interesting ways to prepare kohlrabi in stir-fries and curries if you look to these parts of the world for recipe ideas. In this week's newsletter we've included two recipes from Andrea Bemis, a recipe developer and farmer who lives in Oregon. She has more recipes including kohlrabi on her blog, *Dishing up the Dirt*. There are also some interesting recipes at cooking.NYtimes.com. Hopefully you'll find a recipe that sparks your interest this week as you find ways to use this interesting vegetable!

(Visit our Website for Pg. 3 of this week's newsletter, or our Blog to find our recipe for a BLK Sandwich (Bacon, lettuce & kohlrabi))

Kohlrabi & Chickpea Salad

Yield: 4 servings



- 2 medium-sized kohlrabies, about 1 ¼ pounds
- 1 ¼ cups cooked chickpeas (rinsed and drained, if from a can)
- ¾ cup full-fat plain yogurt
- 2 ½ Tbsp minced dill
- 2 ½ Tbsp minced parsley
- 1 large clove of garlic, minced
- 2 ½ Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ½ tsp honey
- 2 ½ Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- A few healthy pinches of salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds, lightly toasted
- ½ cup raisins, soaked in hot water for 10 minutes, then drained
- ¼ tsp sumac* (optional) *See an additional note on Pg. 3 of this newsletter on our Website or Blog!

1. Trim the leaves and stems from the kohlrabies and use a sharp knife to peel the bulbs. Cut them into ¼ to ½ inch cubes and place them in a large mixing bowl. Add the chickpeas and set the mixture aside.
2. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the yogurt, dill, parsley, garlic, lemon juice, honey, oil, salt, and pepper. Taste test and adjust seasonings as needed.
3. Pour the dressing into the bowl with the kohlrabi and chickpeas. Mix until well combined. Add in the toasted sunflower seeds and raisins.
4. Sprinkle with sumac and serve.

*This Kohlrabi & Chickpea Salad recipe was borrowed from Andrea Bemis's book, **Dishing Up The Dirt**.*



* The Kohlrabi & Chickpea Salad Recipe on Pg. 2 of this newsletter featured Sumac, here's a little more information about this spice!

What is Sumac?

Sumac is a common Middle Eastern spice and is one of the main ingredients in the spice blend za'atar. It has a tangy, lemony flavor. I like it because it isn't as tart as lemon juice and it adds a lovely finish to a variety of dishes, from scrambled eggs to roasted veggies and even hummus. It can be found in Middle Eastern grocery stores, spice shops, and online.

BLK (Bacon, Lettuce & Kohlrabi) Sandwich

Yield: 2 servings

Cashew Herb Spread

1 cup raw cashews, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes
2 ½ Tbsp fresh lemon juice
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves of garlic, minced
2 ½ Tbsp minced parsley
2 ½ Tbsp minced basil
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



Sandwich

4 slices of good quality bread
6 slices of good quality bacon (may substitute a vegetarian alternative "bacon")
1 medium kohlrabi, peeled and sliced into ¼ inch thick rounds
1 small head of lettuce, washed and individual leaves separated
Flakey salt and fresh ground pepper

1. Drain the cashews and rinse under cold water. Place all the ingredients for the spread in a high speed blender— along with ½ cup of water and whirl away until completely smooth and creamy, adding more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until desired consistency—it should be smooth and spreadable. Taste test and adjust flavors as necessary.
2. Fry your bacon in a large cast iron skillet or frying pan until fully cooked and crispy. Drain on paper-towel lined plates. Pour out half of the bacon fat (save for another use) and return the pan to medium-high heat. Add the sliced kohlrabi in a single layer and cook in the bacon fat until crisp tender and lightly browned on both sides, about 1-2 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towel lined plates.
3. Toast your bread in a toaster oven, outdoor grill, or under the broiler until golden brown and crisp.
4. To assemble the sandwiches spread a tablespoon or two of the spread over each slice of bread. Layer with the bacon, kohlrabi and lettuce. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pepper and enjoy.

*This recipe is featured on Andrea Bemis's blog, **Dishing Up the Dirt**, where she shares this recipe as well as other tasty ones featuring kohlrabi and other season vegetables!*