



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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Pollinator Packs..Doing Our Part! By Farmers Richard and Andrea

This week is our first of two deliveries for our Pollinator Packs. These are a garden pack of nine different native plants including grasses and flowers that have been carefully selected by Richard. These plants are beneficial for our environment for many reasons including providing habitat and food sources for a variety of species that provide pollination services, help control pests, and contribute to keeping our ecosystem healthy and in good balance. The idea for these Pollinator Packs came about back in 2015. In May 2015 the White House released the *National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators*. Many individuals felt this was a groundbreaking step towards acknowledging and mobilizing action around rapidly declining pollinator populations within North America. The importance of setting a national strategy to guide the protection, restoration, and enhancement of pollinator habitats is largely undisputed among scientists and others operating within conservation circles. However, this national plan failed to address a selection of key considerations that appeared to have been left out of the national plan. Primarily, questions surrounding pesticide use—including that of glyphosate and systemic insecticides like neonicotinoids, which have been directly linked to the decline of bee and other wildlife populations.

As organic farmers, we do not use these agrochemicals, but felt it was important that we fully understand the impact these chemicals are having on our pollinating creatures as well as our environment and human health. So, we launched a series of newsletters that we called "The Silent Spring Series." Over the course of six articles, we sifted through a variety of resources, journal articles, etc in an effort to educate ourselves about some of these agrochemicals and the direct impact their use is having on

What's In The Box?

NETTLES: Nettles are the dark green, bunched item packaged in a clear plastic bag. **Yes, these are the stinging kind and should be handled with care as they may cause skin irritation if touched with bare hands before they are cooked.** Please read this week's newsletter and refer to the handling instructions on our **blog** before you open your bag.

RAMPS: Ramps are wild-harvested from our wooded hillsides. You can use both the leaves and the bulb, but trim away the root end. Wrap ramps in a damp paper towel and place them in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator. Eat them within a few days as the leaves are delicate. If you'd like to read more about ramps, read about them on our **blog**.

OVERWINTERED SPINACH: This is the last of this year's overwintered spinach. Planted in the fall and harvested this spring, this spinach has a unique sweetness with thick, yet tender leaves. Store spinach in the bag and keep it in the refrigerator.

OVERWINTERED PARSNIPS: Peel these parsnips to reveal the creamy, white flesh inside. Overwintered parsnips are the sweetest of the season. Use them to make a creamy soup, roast them for crispy sweet chips, or shred them and make muffins or cookies!

OVERWINTERED SUNCHOKES: These are the knobby root vegetables that some think resemble ginger. The darkening you may see on the surface does not affect the flesh inside which is crisp, firm and white. They have a delicious nutty flavor and may be used in a variety of ways. Reference our **May 14, 2016 newsletter** for more information.

BLACK SPANISH RADISHES: This is a storage radish that is firm, dense and full of radish flavor. They were harvested late last fall and have held exceptionally well in cold storage. The skin is supposed to be black and when you cut into these radishes you'll find dense, white flesh with a pungent radish flavor when eaten raw. If you prefer a more mild radish flavor, consider cooking them. Refer to **last week's newsletter** for a recipe using roasted black Spanish radishes.

CHIVES: The chives really shot up over the past week! Some may be starting to form a purple flower bud. This is totally normal and the bud and flower are edible. Wrap your chives in a damp towel and store them in the refrigerator.

ASPARAGUS: This is our first week of harvest and it looks like some of our newest plantings are going to yield pretty well this year! Store asparagus in the refrigerator. Stand the spears upright in a glass of water to keep the spears crisp and fresh.

CHOICE: WILLOW - This week we have sent decorative willow bunches for our Every Other Week Brown Week vegetable members as well as customers signed up for the flex plan whodid not receive any willow last week.

the people, creatures and environments where they are being used. Sarah Janes Ugoretz authored these articles and fearlessly attacked these difficult topics. She reviewed the research and eloquently presented her findings in a way that we were all able to understand. We encourage you to take a moment to go back and read this series of articles as the information contained in them is very important to understand for our own health as well as the health of our environment, etc.

Links to each of these articles, the rest of this article and pictures and descriptions of the plants in the packs can be found on our **blog**!

Cooking With This Week's Box!

We have a few new items in this week's box including one of our spring favorites, Nettles! Don't be intimidated by nettles, it's just another vegetable that requires a bit of careful handling. The benefits you'll reap from them far outweigh the little bit of time you'll invest in preparing them. I'm excited to share two delicious nettle recipes with you this week. **The Nettle & Mushroom Pizza with Ramp Cream** (see below) and **Chicken & Chickpea Curry with Nettles** (online newsletter & on our blog) recipes are adaptations of recipes shared by members in our *Facebook Group*. Both recipes have several components, but neither recipe is complicated and once you have the different parts prepared the final product comes together pretty quickly. The pizza recipe is a bit on the rich side, so it would pair well with a simple, light spinach salad on the side. The **Chicken & Chickpea Curry with Nettles** is a great dish to prepare in advance and stick in the refrigerator. It reheats well, so gives you a good, quick option for dinner on a busy night.

We're fortunate to have a late spring which means we get to enjoy ramps again this week! I am going to make a batch of **Ramp Chimichurri** this week. This is great to have in the refrigerator as it has many uses. I like to eat this with grilled flank steak and then use the leftovers in scrambled eggs or as a sandwich spread. With the remaining bunch of ramps, I am going to make Chef Bri's **Spring Confetti Salad**. This is a very light, simple salad that gets its flavor from ramps. It also includes black Spanish radishes and you could add a little carrot as well. This is a nice light salad to serve as a side dish or add some beans to it and turn it into a main dish.

(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & Chef Andrea's suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)

Featured Vegetable: Nettles (yes, the stinging kind...please read this feature for more information)

We look forward to nettles every spring as they are one of our "Wisconsin Super Foods!" They are one of the most nutrient-dense spring greens we have available early in the season. Please be forewarned that these nettles are the "stinging nettles" many might consider a weed. They have little fibers on the stems that contain formic acid which will give you a "stinging" sensation if you brush up against them before they've been washed or try to harvest them with bare hands. Washing the nettles will remove most of the stinging fibers and there is no sting remaining after they are cooked. We have vigorously washed the nettles in your box and put them in a bag to make handling easier for you. Even though we've washed them, I would still recommend you handle them carefully and avoid touching them with your bare hands prior to cooking them. With a flavor similar to spinach, they contain a whole host of nutrients including protein, calcium, magnesium, potassium, boron, carotenoids and iron. They are also reported to relieve eczema and seasonal allergies.

Nettle leaves are perishable, so it is best to cook them shortly after you receive them. Even if you don't want to eat them right away, it is better to store them in their cooked form for a few days until you are ready to use them. The cooking water actually makes a beautiful tea, so don't discard it.

(See our **blog** for the rest of this vegetable feature article including details and pictures to guide you in comfortably handling nettles!)

Nettle & Mushroom Pizza with Ramp Cream

Yield: One 12-14 inch pizza

½ bu ramps*

2 Tbsp unsalted butter

1 Tbsp dry white wine

½ cup heavy cream

Pizza dough for one 12-14 inch pizza

1 bunch nettles

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided

4 oz fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

5 oz mozzarella, shredded or thinly sliced

Parmesan cheese, for serving

**If ramps are not available, substitute 2-4 stalks of green garlic or 2-4 spring scallions*

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Clean ramps and separate the greens from the white bulbs. Thinly slice the leaves and set aside. Finely mince the bulbs.
3. In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add the minced ramp bulbs and cook for 3-4 minutes. Add the white wine and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the heavy cream and ½ tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper. Simmer over low heat until the mixture is reduced to about half the volume and has thickened. The sauce should coat the back of a spoon. Remove the cream mixture from the heat and stir in the ramp greens. You should have about ½ cup of cream sauce. Set aside.
4. Prepare the nettles by first washing them in a sink of cold water. Then, using a kitchen shears, trim the leaves from the stems and collect them in a bowl. Discard the stems.
5. In a medium saute pan, heat 1 Tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and sauté just until softened. Add an additional ½ to 1 full tablespoon of oil to the pan and then add the nettle leaves. Season lightly with salt and pepper and stir to combine. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan for 2-3 minutes or just until the nettle leaves are wilted. Remove from the heat.
6. Prepare the pizza dough. Roll or press the dough into a 12-14 inch circle and place on a pizza stone or baking sheet dusted with cornmeal or semolina to keep it from sticking. Prebake the pizza crust for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven. Spread the ramp cream evenly on the crust, being sure to take it all the way to the edges. Next, spread the mozzarella cheese on top of the cream. Evenly spread the nettle and mushroom mixture on top of the cheese.
7. Put the pizza back in the oven and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes or until the crust is golden brown, the cheese is melted and the cream is bubbling.
8. Remove the pizza from the oven and grate Parmesan cheese over the top. Cut and serve.

Note from Chef Andrea: This is my adaptation of a recipe entitled "Pizza with Garlic Cream and Nettles" which may be found at foodandwine.com. My version has more cream sauce and toppings than the original recipe and is rich, but balanced. If you prefer a drier, lighter pizza, refer to the original recipe.

Coconut Chicken & Chickpea Curry with Nettles

Yield: 4 servings

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs
2 ½ tsp mild curry powder
1 tsp salt, plus more to taste
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
1 can (14 oz) coconut milk
1 (2 ½ inch) piece ginger, peeled
4 garlic cloves or 2-3 pieces green garlic, ramps or scallions, lower white portion only
2 Tbsp plus 2 tsp coconut or vegetable oil, divided
½ cup sunchokes, small dice*
½ cup black Spanish radish, small dice*
1 can (15 oz) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 bunch nettles
¼ cup raw cashews, chopped
1 ½ tsp yellow and/or black mustard seeds
1 cup finely minced chives
Cooked rice, for serving

**You may substitute other root vegetables (such as carrots or parsnips) if sunchokes and black Spanish radishes are not available.*

1. Slice chicken into 1-inch pieces and place in a medium bowl. Add curry powder, 1 tsp salt and ¼ tsp black pepper. Mix the spices with the chicken and set aside.
2. Place coconut milk, ginger and garlic (or green garlic, ramps or scallions if using) in a blender and process until the mixture is very smooth. Set aside.
3. In a large skillet, heat 2 Tbsp oil over medium-high heat. Add the sunchokes and radishes and cook, stirring periodically, until the vegetables are tender and starting to brown. Add the chicken and cook for 3-4 minutes or just until the chicken starts to brown just a bit. Add the chickpeas and the coconut milk mixture to the pan and bring it to a simmer. Simmer for 7-10 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the sauce has thickened.
4. While the curry is simmering, prepare the nettles. First wash the nettles in a sink of cold water. Then, using a kitchen shears, trim the leaves off the stem and collect them in a bowl. Discard the stems. Once the sauce is thickened, add the nettles to the pan and cover just until the leaves have wilted. Remove the lid from the pan and stir to combine. Taste the sauce and season to your liking with salt and pepper as needed.
5. Lastly, heat 2 tsp oil in a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add the chopped cashews and mustard seeds. Cook, stirring, until the mixture is fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Immediately transfer mixture to a small bowl.
6. Serve the curry mixture over rice and garnish each portion with some of the cashew & mustard seed mixture as well as 3-4 tablespoons of minced chives.

Note from Chef Andrea: This spring curry recipe was adapted from a recipe entitled “Coconut Chicken Curry in a Hurry” which may be found at epicurious.com. While there are several components to this recipe, it actually comes together pretty quickly. This is a good recipe to make in advance and then refrigerate the components individually. When you are ready to eat, simply reheat the rice and curry mixture and add the garnishes before serving. The fresh chives and the cashew/mustard seed garnish are a nice touch on the final dish.