



Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members

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This Week's Box

Salad Mix
Celeriac
All-Red and All-Blue Potatoes
Red and Yellow Onions
Porcelain Garlic
Green or Red Savoy Cabbage
Pie Pumpkins
Butternut Winter Squash
Carrots
Beauty Heart (Mild and Pink inside) Winter Radish
The farm's last peppers
Cauliflower or broccoflower or purple cauliflower
Parsley or Sage or Sorrel

Surviving to become a "Veteran Member."

For quite a few years now Richard and I have realized that there is a learning curve to understanding how to "eat out of the box." There is a transition that you go through to get comfortable with the process of accepting what produce comes in the box and using that as your base for meals for a week. Not only is it new to have your produce chosen for you, it's new to have the "seasons" do the choosing. Seasonal eating disappeared with the modern advent of refrigeration and interstate transportation. In other words, non of us grew with it unless our family was the exception that raised a very extensive garden.

So, new members, don't despair if you haven't mastered the art to using up everything in the box each week. It is a transition, a process and it takes some time and effort. But, we argue it is very worth it. Who wouldn't be pleased to find that after a couple

of years as a CSA member that their diet routinely consisted of twice as many vegetables and a 10 fold increase in variety! That's the case with many a veteran member.

We are told over and over again that the first year the boxes seemed overwhelmingly large, the second year the members managed to use much more of the boxes' contents. And, by season number 3, and beyond, they easily found uses for all that the box held and enjoyed it all more! They found themselves looking forward to vegetables that they'd never even heard of before joining the CSA.

So, since the boxes have been so generous the past few weeks – we thought you new members (and old ones, too) could use a few tips that some veteran CSA members use. These come from David Griffeath.

1. *Early in the season there is never a glut, but whatever is left from the box on Friday I tend to throw into a fritata. That could be ramps, scapes, watercress, herbs, spinach, saute mix, ... Yum, I'm getting hungry.*
2. *By mid-summer boxes are more generous, but as my wife wrote in a fan letter last month, "David has a weekly Saturday morning ritual of making outstanding soups with whatever we haven't managed to consume during the week, finishing all the cutting and chopping just in time to go pick up the next week's box. We eat these wonderful soups for a meal or two but put away the lion's share in the freezer, to be brought out and savored during the long winter of vegetable deprivation.*
3. *At the end of the summer a big challenge seems to be all those peppers. One can only stuff so many. There's always gumbo and etoufee, my favorite foods on earth, which start with the holy trinity of peppers, onions and celery. But the real key is learning how to efficiently roast peppers, after which they can be put up in mason jars and used for countless exquisite applications from rellenos to antipasto to Greek salads. There was a method in one of the newsletters this year, but I prefer doing several at a time in a wire vegetable (or fish) basket on top of the stove directly over a gas burner. I think the flavor is better, and they are easier to skin that way.*
4. *The early fall issue seems to be broccoli, cauliflower and the like. These make great cream soups, but also freeze easily for the winter months when they are more appreciated. Just blanch, break up as needed, and pop into ziploc bags. Green beans and edamame freeze in the same way very nicely. So would sweet corn in theory, but there*

never seems to be any left.

5. *Once the winter squash start rolling in, find a cool place and start a collection. We use a cardboard box in our entry hall closet, which fills with squash around the end of October and then lasts us until New Year's or later. As for all the weird radishes and daikon, get a Japanese mandoline called a Benriner at an Asian food store for about \$20 and make elegant threads of all shapes and sizes for soups, egg rolls, spring rolls, and cole-slaw. (Avoid self-mutilation, if possible.)*

Thank you David. I have solicited more tips and as they roll in we'll include them in upcoming newsletters. If you have 1 or more CSA lifesaving tips to share with others, just e-mail them to the farm, or jot us a note. -- Linda

SAUTÉED PUMPKIN SLICES WITH CRACKED PEPPERCORNS

Serves 4 as a side

1 2-3 pound pie pumpkin or Ambercup
¼ cup whole black or pink peppercorns
Coarse sea salt

About 1/3 cup olive oil.

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees.

Halve the pumpkin and remove the strings and seeds. Following the squash's natural segment lines, slice into ¾ inch wedges. Cut off the peel. Crush the whole peppercorns on a cutting board in a rolling motion with the bottom of a heavy pan, or use the coarsest setting on a pepper grinder. Put the crushed pepper onto a large flat plate. Press the slices in the peppercorns on both sides so that they are well covered, then sprinkle with salt.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over a medium heat. Lay several pumpkin slices in the pan, side by side so that they do not overlap, lower the heat to medium-low, and cook until each side has browned slightly and the tip of a knife passes easily through the flesh, about 8 minutes on each side. Remove the pumpkin slices to an ovenproof platter and keep warm in the oven. Repeat until all pumpkin is cooked. Serve warm.



Matt on Winter Squash & Pie Pumpkins

Its funny that a majority of all the pumpkins grown end-up as front porch decoration rather than food, but cooking pumpkin and winter squash is actually easier and safer than carving them. As long as you have some of the basics down, it is fool proof. To make you fool proof, I will go over some of the distinctions associated with winter squash and pie pumpkins.

Winter squash and pumpkins generally are the same and depending on where in the world you are the names will swap. For the sake of this article, I will refer to all as squash. Squash come in all sizes ranging from large (Rouge Vif d'Etampes 15-30#/ Butternut 3-5#) to medium and small (Kabocha types 2-3#/ Sweet Dumpling ½-1#). The flavor profile is as varied as the weights with characteristics of fruit, roasted chestnuts, corn, vanilla, citrus rind, honey, sweet potato, and green veg-

etables. Another pleasing quality of squash is the shelf life; you can literally store them on a shelf for weeks. I would actually recommend storing them ideally around 55 to 60 degrees (dry), but on the dinner table or hutch at room temperature they will do just fine. The leftovers can be frozen or kept in your fridge for a week.

We have grown several different squash for you this year. The varieties are Butternut, Acorn, Festival, Sweet Dumpling, Ambercup, Delicata, and Pie Pumpkins. The Butternut is a great all-purpose squash. It tends to be the most popular variety due to the large amount of fruity flesh and an easy peeling skin. Butternut is also the squash most commonly used by processors to produce canned pumpkin. Sweet Dumpling was developed in Japan, producing a cream colored skin with green striping and a flesh that is starchy with light corn flavor and fresh sweetness. With its beautiful coloring and length, the Delicata is a favorite with many. Delicata has several possible presentations like slicing lengthwise and hollowing out like a canoe, or sliced into rings. The flavor suggests corn and sweet potato. The Ambercup is a Kabocha (Japanese) type of squash with deep flavors and honey like sweetness. They are also well liked for their custard like creaminess when cooked. The most common squash, Acorn, is also the most mediocre. However, it is well-liked by many, mostly for its familiarity, (and well-liked by many farmers for its productivity.) Festival was bred to be an improved Acorn, and looks like the cross it is -- Sweet Dumpling/Acorn.

All squash can be cooked in the same manner. The most common methods are steaming, roasting, sautéing, and the microwave. My preference is for the first three, but the microwave is good in a pinch. To use the microwave method, poke your knife through the top a few times and place it in the microwave. Heat on high for minutes until the outside has some give. This is also a good method to soften a squash that is too hard to cut raw. To steam squash, cut into same size pieces and steam as you would anything else for about 10-15 minutes until soft. My favorite method to cook squash is by roasting it. In a 350 degree preheated oven place the squash, halved and seeded, on a sheet tray flesh down with a little water for steam. To cook the squash seasoned, place the squash halves flesh side up and sprinkled with salt, pepper, herbs (sage or thyme), and a nub of butter. Sautéing squash is easy, but you need to use a thin walled, easily sliced squash like a Delicata. Heat some oil on medium-high and place the slices of squash in the pan. With all squash it is better to cook it till soft than to have a partially done flesh, the full flavor doesn't come out until its fully cooked. No matter which method you rive at to cook your squash, the meat can be used in any recipe that calls for squash. If the skin is thin it tends to be edible and some are quite tasty, but most recipes call for the skin to be peeled. To do this use a swiveled vegetable peeler or very sharp knife. For a nice pie filling, try roasting the squash with the spices, and when you add extra sugar use brown sugar or maple syrup to maintain that roasted flavor. After cooking all the squashes we grow and tasting them side by side, I think the ambercup makes the most flavorful pie filling with the pie pumpkin coming in close second. Have fun with your squash!

About the Potatoes: Apologies for making assumptions -- we should have warned you to remove your potatoes from their plastic bag. Potatoes should always be stored in a relatively dry place, and plastic without vents is never dry. We packed the freshly washed potatoes in plastic so that they wouldn't wet a paper bag to the point of bursting it. If you still have potatoes from last week, remove them from the plastic and either store in a bowl in a dark, dry place. We don't recommend the refrigerator as it is really too cold -- over time converting starches to sugars and changing the texture.

Also, we listened to the "All About Food Show" on WPR this week and heard chef Deborah Madison's recommendation for keeping the blue potatoes blue, when cooked. She recommended steaming, whole. They do lose some color, but today our potato salad was a very pleasant blue and red, not grey and brown. Try it! -- Linda

PUMPKIN PIE

Crust

1 ¼ cups all purpose flour
 ½ cup powdered sugar
 1 stick chilled butter, cut into pieces
 2 tablespoons heavy cream
 1 egg yolk

Filling

2 cups pumpkin puree
 1 cup heavy cream
 ¾ cup pure maple syrup
 3 large eggs
 1 tablespoon all purpose flour
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
 ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 ¼ teaspoon salt

Optional: 3 tablespoons brandy or cognac

For Crust: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Blend the first three ingredients in a food processor until they resemble coarse meal. Add the cream and yolk processing until it comes together. Gather the dough into a ball and flatten into a disk between plastic wrap. Chill for 30 minutes.

Roll out the dough on a floured surface to 1/8th inch thick and about 14 inches around. Transfer dough to a 9" glass pie dish by rolling the dough onto your rolling pin and unrolling it into the dish. Trim and form a decorative edge. Chill for 30 minutes.

Pierce the bottom of the pie with a toothpick in several places. Line the crust with aluminum foil and fill with rice or pie weights, being sure to cover the edges. Bake until sides are set, about 10 minutes. Remove the foil and continue baking till pale brown, about 10 minutes. Cool completely

For Filling: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Whisk all ingredients together till smooth. Pour the filling into the crust and bake for about 55 minutes, checking at 45 minutes. Cover the edges with foil if it starts to get too brown. You will be looking for the filling to be mostly set, but may have slight give or movement in the center that will continue to cook once removed from the oven to cool. Cool completely and serve slices with whipped cream.