



News
from

Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Kids on the Farm: A Harvest Party Report

We consider last Sunday's Harvest party and Pumpkin Pick to be a resounding success! Yes, it drizzled a bit, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the 80 or so folks who showed up to enjoy great potluck food and tour the farm. The two harvest wagons were full, but not dangerously so, until we loaded them with pumpkins. But that's getting ahead of the story! First we stopped in the sweet potatoes. Not many Midwesterners have seen sweet potatoes growing, much less have experienced pulling them right out of the soil. But, before you can pull, you have to cut and remove the tropical-looking vines. Then tear away the plastic covering the bed and carefully dig with a garden fork, keeping it well away from where you can see the tips of the potatoes poking up through the soil. As I pry gently, exposing the bunch of tubers, oohs and aahs can be heard all around from the kids. The striking similarity between a bunch of bananas and a bunch of sweet potatoes is commented on. Indeed, in banana-like fashion, they grow in a cluster, down into the soil under the main stem of the vine. They come in all sizes and even some wierd shapes, but every one gets snatched out of the moist soil by eager little hands. When every child, and several adults, have a couple to take home, we move on to the carrots.

Carrots generally can't be wrestled out of the ground without the aid of a garden fork, but the broad shouldered, stubby yellow ones with the thick thatch of lacy tops cooperated! Kids were pulling them right and left, surprised at the new color and mild sweet flavor. That's right, what's a little dirt when you can pick and enjoy right on the spot. More than one child was spotted with a smudge of dirt by their lips, munching happily away!

It was here in the carrot field that the kids captured my attention. In our mod-

ern world of electronic video games, fast-paced TV and general sensory overload, how amazing to see pure joy and a sense of accomplishment come over the young faces when a carrot lets go its grip on the earth, revealing its shape and size. How can a simple carrot become a prized jewel, a bringer of joy? I like to think it is some ancient bond with the earth and growing things that has awakened in the children.

The tour continues. On we go to the beets-- gold beets, chioggia beets, red beets--more jewels, and even easier to pull. Before we board the wagons someone mentions the lemongrass. Now that's a challenge. Even though it grows above ground, it is more likely to release its heavenly aroma than release its roots. After a wrestling match, a few lucky souls tote lush, fragrant bundles back to the wagon.

Aboard the covered harvest wagons, out of the misty air, we wind our way past fields of broccoli, kale and parsley, and stop in the tomato patch. Now, after weeks of picking, the tidy aisles of straw are littered with tomatoes that will never become a BLT or a rich sauce. A little sunburn, a water-induced crack or some other blemish relegated them to eventually become compost. Nevertheless, there are lots of delicious tomatoes still left on the newest vines. Green zebras, Georgia streaks, grape tomatoes and even a row of cape gooseberries are hits. Though we never plant much, and they never produce many fruits, we keep growing cape gooseberries, which resemble overgrown ground cherries. Maybe we grow them just for the fun of seeing folks peel back their papery "capes" and taste their tropical, citrusy tang for the first time!

Finally we trek to the pumpkin/pepper patch. There are hundreds of pumpkins to pick from. One after another they are chosen, cut from the vine and set next to the road. As the wagon passes, the pumpkins are handed up. Soon the wag-

This Week's Box
<p>Lots of Cool Stuff: All -Red Potatoes Yellow Carrots Eggplant Broccoli Romanesco Winter Squash (2 of the following: Amber Cup -orange with drier flesh; Festival-multicolored skin over an Acorn type; Acorn-the familiar green hard squash commonly available in stores) Salad Mix Bunched Red Beets Lemongrass Cucumbers Italian Garlic Yellow and Red Onions Red Apple Sweet Peppers Ruth's Orange bells Cayenne Pepper-Long, red Banana Peppers Grape Tomatoes Bag of Mixed Tomatoes Choice at some sites: Celeriac</p>

ons can hold no more and the supply boxes on the front of the tractors and the back of the wagons are heaping, as well.

We trundle home to the greenhouse where all hoses are employed to wash the pumpkins clean. Hoses are nearly as much fun as picking vegetables. Though there were some very wet kids, the washing didn't stop until all the future jack o' lanterns were shiny and beautiful.

Cars and families head out, loaded with various veggies and, of course, the perfect pumpkins. Little Vivian, however, wasn't quite ready. She wanted to see the horses. We conducted a windfall apple hunt, nearly as much fun as an Easter Egg hunt, and went to feed the

Lemongrass

by Paige Haringa, CIA extern

You have become quite familiar with Asian ingredients this past CSA season through Lee's recipes. One of the most notable and primary ingredients in Thai and Vietnamese and Indian cooking is lemongrass. A tropical plant by nature, Richard and Linda have been able to grow this wonderful herb by planting seed, first in the greenhouse, then transplanted into raised, covered beds that retain heat. With its subtle lemony undertone, lemongrass is never overpowering and is so versatile that it goes with anything including fish, chicken, beef, and soy. Add lemongrass to dressings, vegetables, and to water for teas, broths, soups, or steaming. Although it pairs nicely with Asian cuisine ingredients, don't limit yourself to these. Widely recognized for its medicinal uses, this grass is said to aid in digestion as well as to relieve muscle spasms, muscle cramps, and headaches, so it can't hurt to try adding a bit of lemongrass to any recipe and see what results.

While most of the lemongrass flavor resides in the stalk of the grass, the blades can be thinly sliced and added to soups. To prepare the stalk, peel off the outer leaves and use only the more tender center four to six inches up to where the leaves branch out. To impart lemon essence to water, broths or soups the stalk can be coarsely chopped or simply bruised by pounding and added whole, then removed at the end much like a bay leaf. If you intend to leave the lemongrass in a recipe as in a dressing, the stalk must be finely minced or pounded into a paste as it tends to be quite woody. Fresh lemongrass dries out after 2 weeks in the refrigerator, but freezes without flavor loss for up to 6 months.

LEMONGRASS VINEGAR

3 stalks lemongrass
2 c rice vinegar

Prepare lemongrass and bruise the stalk well with a blunt object. Place stalks in a clean quart jar. Add the vinegar and allow the mixture to steep, covered with a lid, in a cool dark place for at least 4 days and up to 2 weeks, depending on strength desired. Strain the vinegar and discard lemongrass. Pour into a pint container with lid.

LEMONGRASS MARINADE FOR FISH, CHICKEN, MEAT, OR TOFU

4-6 stalks lemongrass
3 cloves garlic minced
2 to 3 shallots minced
2 spicy chilis (Serrano, jalapeno, or 1 of the long cayennes in your box) minced
2 tsp brown sugar
3 tb soy sauce (or fish sauce)
3 tb lime juice
1 tsp hot sauce

Cut off the top two-thirds of each lemongrass stalk, trim outside leaves, and rough chop. Puree in a food processor the lemongrass, garlic, shallots, chilies, and brown sugar to a fine paste. Work in the soy sauce, lime juice and hot sauce. Marinate fish, thinly sliced meat, or tofu for 1 hour (makes enough for 1 ½ to 2 pounds)

WINTER SQUASH-LEMONGRASS SOUP (THE VOLUPTUOUS VEGAN)

1 2 ½ to 3 pound sweet winter squash (3 cups cooked)
3tb extra virgin olive oil
1 large shallot small dice
1c chopped leeks
2 garlic cloves, minced
2tb minced lemongrass
1 small sweet potato peeled and diced (or substitute ½ C. extra squash)
1 14oz can coconut milk
4c stock or water
salt and pepper
2 tb lime juice
¼ c basil chiffonade

Preheat oven 400 degree. Cut squash in half, discard seeds and rub it with 2tb of oil. Bake it cut side down about 45 minutes until squash is tender. When squash is cool enough to handle, scrape the flesh from the skin and set aside. Heat remaining tablespoon of oil in a medium saucepan and sauté shallots and leeks over medium heat until the leeks are softened but not brown. Add garlic and lemongrass and sauté until aromatic. Add squash, sweet potato, coconut milk and stock. Bring to a boil, lower heat, add a bit of salt and simmer partially covered until sweet potato is soft, about 15 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender or with a immersion blender. Add black pepper to taste and the lime juice. Adjust salt. Garnish with basil.

TOMATO SALAD WITH LEMONGRASS

8 stalks lemongrass minced
4 shallots minced
2 tb lemon juice, or more to taste
1 clove garlic minced
¼ tsp grated lemon zest
¼ tsp ground coriander seeds
cayenne to taste
½ c salad oil
6 medium tomatoes sliced
cherry tomatoes for garnish

In a bowl whisk together the lemongrass, shallots, lemon juice, garlic, zest, coriander, cayenne. Slowly add the oil, whisking continuously. Salt to taste. Lay tomato slices out on a platter, spoon dressing over them and allow to stand at room temperature for at least 30 minutes, up to an hour. Garnish with smaller whole tomatoes

From Front

greedy beasts. Tiny hands, held flat and balancing an apples, stretched up to the giant, soft noses and lips. Just as the horse reaches out, the hand pulls back! Kinda scary! Try again and this time don't flinch. Eventually, the kids got so good at it the horses were drooling apple cider. Neither the kids, nor the horses, wanted to quit!

So, when we flop into chairs at the end of the long, visitor-filled Sunday, are we wondering why we take our 1 day off in an 80 hour week to hold the Harvest Party? Not at all! It's the kids! (and the adult kids, too.) We like to think that eating out of the box, seeing it grow in the field, pulling it out of the ground or off the vine, forever changes how a person thinks about food. CSA kids eat healthier foods, maybe, we believe, with habits ingrained for a lifetime. -- Richard

Notes of Interest

We have almost finalized our new, updated Grazier's Organic Beef brochure and order form. Look for it at your sites beginning next week or on line at our website.

Also, garlic braid and storage vegetable boxes will be available again this year. Brochures for these options will be available at your sites. Look for them in October.

Celeriac in the choice box? Yes, for you celeriac lovers, it is a sad year! The 1.5 acre crop was nearly a complete failure due to a ravaging disease compounded by weather conditions. We saved a few heads, but not enough for each CSA box.

No Produce Plus this week.

For a great member recommended eggplant recipe check your e-group message. If you do not receive e-group messages, you can sign up any time. HarmonyValleyCSA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com (type exactly with upper case as shown.)