



News from

Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Drink Your Vegetables

When juicing came up as a newsletter topic, Linda knew just who to call... Ann Doody, a seven year HVF CSA member and new juicing zealot. As a young mom moving around the very rural Midwest, Ohio, Ann was always interested in organics and food co-ops. Initially this meant some humble sharing of food (e.g. buying a hunk of cheese to divvy up among friends in a church basement), but when she moved to Madison, she stepped up to the job as the General Manager at Willy Street Co-op. She says that it wasn't until arriving in Wisconsin, land of CSA's, that she discovered the joy of belonging to one.

"Then I got cancer" she says, and became downright vigilant about eating organic. "I'm not a fast-food eater, but it was still a big deal to change my diet to all-organic and now to add juicing. Now when I think about eating produce that isn't organic, say, a conventional apple, I don't even want to try - it just doesn't taste good to me. The more I think and read and learn, I wonder why I got cancer ... I am a very healthy, active, strong person; a poster-child for the can-do gal, so when they found this volley-ball-sized tumor in me, I had to wonder. I believe stressful living and a toxic environment play a role. I have to question the overdose of chemicals coming from everywhere, but especially in what we eat as it goes so directly into our system."

After going through conventional treatment for her cancer, Ann went to the alternative healthcare medical facility, Sanoviv, on the Baja coast of Mexico. There they place a strong emphasis on eating fresh, organic whole foods, raw juices, enzymes, sprouts, and pre-digested foods. Ann also discovered that she had allergies to eggs, milk, and soy, another factor in her decision to start juicing regularly.

When asked her if the switch to juicing was hard, Ann said it was an adjustment, but it didn't take too long. The biggest adjustment was buying a good machine - it's an investment. (If you're not sure what kind to get, Champion juicers have been getting unsolicited recommendations from people in the know). Now, she says, she's "doin' wheatgrass" as much as she can. The reason juicing is so good for you is that "It's raw - all the enzymes are intact... as far as I have learned, it's the BEST way to get the most nutrition." In addition to the highly available nutrition, you get a lot of it. As Ann puts it, "Juicing requires a quantity of vegetable. It takes a ton. That's the point: you could never eat that many otherwise - it's like drinking a huge salad!" This might be a great idea for those of you who regularly find it hard to use up all the veggies in your box. Compost less by juicing! It's a great season to start; all farms and gardens in full production and such a bounty available.

For those of you in or near Madison who are interested but have never juiced before, Ann recommends visiting the Willy Street Coop juice bar, where they'll make you anything you like and have lots of experience and suggestions to offer, to boot. They also have VERY fresh premade juices in their cold case, ready to go. (Ann's favorites are green zinger and carrot, beet, spinach).

You can juice most vegetables, but it's best to start with some mild veggies like carrots, celery, parsnips and cucumber just to be safe. Apples are the one fruit recommended for combining with vegetable juice, and they're an easy way to add flavor and sweetness. After you have some experience, you can slowly experiment with adding new vegetables. Be especially careful with green veggies as they tend to have more powerful effects on the digestive system. When making a major diet change, it's always a good idea to follow the guidance of a good juicing book, someone with more experience, or a professional nutritionist. There is good, basic information to be found on several websites, including: <http://www.juicingbook.com/vegetables>.

On Tuesday Chef Kyle did a little experimenting with the farm's Champion juicer (Champion seems to be the brand of choice - three people have given it unsolicited recommendations!) and five selected vegetables (OK, four - number five was an apple): carrot, cucumber, beet, and tomato. He juiced them individually to get a taste of their raw flavor, and wound up with about a cup of each. The beets posed the largest problem as he used the whole thing, root and tops. Kyle says to make sure you're working with very clean vegetables, and be aware that beet stems are very fibrous. After trying each of the five juices alone he made different mixes and had the folks working down in the packing shed try them out. The winner was one with the most apple juice; guess we got a bunch of sweet tooths here.

- Mia, Ann and Kyle

This Week's Box

- Cilantro**
- Cucumbers**
- Edamame - Delicious fresh soybean! See Aug 6 newsletter.**
- Eggplant OR Cauliflower OR Colored Bell Pepper**
- Jalapenos**
- Melons - one of the last!**
- Onion - mix of Red Cipollini, Sweet Spanish, Red Wing**
- Peppers - Green, Pimiento, Ukraine, maybe Apple**
- Potatoes - Red-Gold**
- Salad Mix**
- Tomatoes - a mix, see page 2!**
- Watermelon - yellow**

Produce Plus for 9/3

The Produce Plus program allows members to order extra amounts of produce from our farm for preserving.

Place the order by **Tuesday evening**. E-mail or phone the farm.

Pick up your produce at our market stand (we cannot deliver to your site) and pay upon pick up. Park your car ACROSS the street from our truck, in the bus stop or walk to our stand. Ask Richard, Linda or one of our great helpers when you get to the stand.

- EDAMAME - 10# for \$25**
- RED BEETS - 25# FOR \$20**
- BABY RED BEETS - 10# FOR \$12**
- ROMA TOMATOES (slightly blemished) 25# for \$20**

Tomato Time

Here at HVF we've tried perhaps a hundred of the thousands of tomato varieties available worldwide. While we like the different flavors and textures, we especially want to provide you with several colors of tomatoes so you can enjoy the beauty of a combination of bright slices on a plate. This season we're growing 3 paste (a.k.a. Roma) tomatoes, 2 standard reds, 4 small cherry (a.k.a. grape), 2 gold, and 4 heirlooms out in the field, plus Sungolds in the greenhouse.

Each tomato plant was started in the greenhouse back on the last day of March or first of April, and then transplanted to raised beds in mid-May. The beds are covered with plastic to retain heat, mulch was laid between the rows to keep weeds down, and the plants themselves were covered for protection from frost, cold, and wind. Just a few weeks later, they were uncovered and pruned (as with the greenhouse Sungolds, we want just two main stems per plant) and 5 foot stakes were driven in for support. Once a week, a small crew of very experienced workers walked the rows with balls of twine on their belts, threaded the twine through a special 2' smooth piece of wood (for extra reach out and over the stakes) and expertly wove and tied up each plant. All this artistic tying really is worth the time and effort; not only is air movement increased, which reduces disease problems, but the tomatoes are less likely to have bad spots than if they were to touch the ground and they are at a nice height for picking.

There are two types of tomato plants: determinate varieties grow up to about 4 feet and then stop; they put their remaining energy into ripening fruit, while indeterminates will just keep growing upward. Indeterminates tend to produce longer than determinates, but they need their tops pruned off once they reach the top of the stakes. We try to prune on sunny days, as the cuts dry and heal more quickly with less chance for molding or disease. We also apply foliar (leaf) sprays to combat disease, usually an effective combination of copper sulfate, approved for organic use as a disease control, and Serenade, a beneficial bacteria that fights pathogenic bacteria. These need to be reapplied if rain washes them off, but we only use them until the tomatoes start to ripen. We don't wash our tomatoes before we send them to you because it would increase breakdown, so we recommend that you wash them before eating them.



Hector harvests another perfect Paragon.

Most tomatoes you find in the stores are picked totally green and then ripened with ethylene gas - even the "vine ripened" tomatoes you find in the stores are picked very green. While ethylene is a natural part of ripening, we prefer to pick our tomatoes as ripe as possible but still green enough to handle and transport without cracking. If you'd like them to ripen more, just leave them out on the counter.

This year we're growing a couple kinds of paste (also known as plum) tomatoes, which are suitable for salads and excellent for cooking and making sauces and salsas with, as they are drier than other tomatoes. We like our heirloom **Speckled Roman** (covered with jagged streaks of yellow and orange but red inside) which has a reputation as the best flavored paste.

We're growing **Sun Sugar** out in the field, a gold cherry that is a sister to our greenhouse Sungolds, but can handle greater fluctuations in moisture without cracking. **Golden Sweet** is a yellow grape

tomato we're trying for the first time this year, while **Sweet Olive** and **Red Grape** are also strongly crack resistant; both are short determinates with red, oval shaped fruit.

Then of course there are our larger heirloom varieties. While they do tend to have better flavor than conventional hybrids, there is a price to pay. They are much more susceptible to diseases, especially the foliar diseases which thrive here in our moist valley, where heavy dews and mists persist long into the morning. In addition, heirlooms tend to produce far fewer tomatoes per plant while requiring the same amount of care as hybrids. Orange/yellow with a red blush, **Striped German** is relatively disease resistant and Richard's favorite in terms of flavor - it has the perfect ratio of sweetness to acid. Orange tomatoes are generally higher in sugar and lower in acid than reds. **Black Prince** is actually more tri-colored than black; a beauty of red and mahogany with greenish shoulders. It has good flavor but is delicate and soft, and harder to store and ship than most modern hybrids. **Ruth's Perfect** red is a variety brought from Germany by Ruth Zinniker, with good disease resistance, production, and flavor.

Just in case our heirlooms fail, we grow a few trusty hybrids, **Paragon** (a red) and **Carolina Gold**, which produces huge and perfect gold fruit but doesn't have the mild flavor of **Orange Blossom**, an early, nice-sized, but oddly shaped orange variety which Richard says might be a keeper. We're always open to suggestions... if you have an opinion on the varieties we grow or others to try, let us know!



This week we had a special visitor to the farm, Amanda Cash, the Executive Chef from the Story Inn Restaurant (Indiana's oldest country inn). Amanda won the 2005 Women's Chefs and Restaurateurs Organic Internship, an opportunity to study seasonal cooking with Odessa Piper at L'Etoile Restaurant in Madison. She said it was fabulous to see how everything goes from seed to being planted and grown, cared for, and harvested, washed, packed and then onto the truck. She was wowed by how precisely everything runs here on the farm, "like a tight, tight ship".

When asked to contribute a tomato recipe for the newsletter, she instantly jotted down her "Tomato Soup of Love":

AMANDA'S TOMATO SOUP OF LOVE

- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 stick celery, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 8 tomatoes, chopped (a mixture of heirlooms works nicely)
- 4 c tomato juice or V-8.
- 2 c heavy cream
- Salt and pepper

Cook slowly over low heat in olive oil with salt & pepper for a few minutes; add garlic and cook until onions are translucent.

Add chopped tomatoes; cook for 5 minutes. Add tomato juice or V-8. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Puree in small batches until mostly smooth. Put back on stove. Add 2 cups heavy cream and heat through. Swirl in basil pesto and adjust salt and pepper. Serve in a pretty bowl topped with parmesan crostini (Italian version of croutons), a dollop of pesto, and a cherry tomato cut in half.