



News from

Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Harvest Party 2005



See you Sunday at Noon!

Winter Squash and Pumpkins

We've selected a few favorite varieties of squash for their color, productivity, storage, and of course, good flavor. Most were planted in the greenhouse during the first week of May and were transplanted to the field around Memorial Day. This head start gives them an advantage over weeds and bugs, as does the crop rotation we practice. The usual suspects, cucumber beetles and squash bugs, haven't been too much trouble this year, and so far the deer and mice have only sampled a few of the sweeter squash. The final challenge to a good harvest is to beat the first real frost, which might be hard for plants that were direct-seeded instead of transplanted and are late to ripen due to the dry weather earlier.

We grow a dark green skinned **Acorn** squash, which is dependable and early – really early this year, the second week of August! **Sweet Dump-**lings are quite small, single-serving sized and are sweet and moist. They tend to have a lower yield and aren't the best keepers, so are



acorn squash



Sweet Dumpling

rarely found outside a farmer's market or CSA box. But never fear – there are several new crosses between Acorns and Sweet Dumplings which combine the best of both.

We grow **Festival**, a productive, nice keeper with pretty darn good flavor. It's a

little moister than Sweet Dumpling and has multicolored patches and flecks outside and light orange flesh.

The new **Cornell's Bush Delicata** was developed to be resistant to powdery mildew, and it is. The folks who developed it call it a "lush, tasty squash" and we agree!



DELICATA SQUASH



BUTTERNUT

Butternuts are many people's favorite, but not Richard's – he says they're very susceptible to rust where they touch the ground in the field. Almost all the Butternuts you'll see this year will have some rust on them and hence won't keep as well, but they're still good eating.

Scarlet Kabocha are small enough to fit in CSA boxes, have a reasonably good yield, are sweet with dry flesh, and are good keepers. You'll be seeing them towards the end of the squash delivery. They are a deep reddish orange outside and bright orange inside, and are great for using in pies and other baking. Just about any squash will make a delicious "pumpkin" pie, for that matter.

We do grow some pie pumpkins and have a goodly amount of Halloween pumpkins this year, although not a record crop. You'll find several decorative gourds spread throughout the pumpkin patch for you to come and pick this Sunday.

At harvest time we look for ripeness indicators: a bright orange patch where they sit on the ground, hardening stems, and deep overall color without a green cast. Then we clip them from the vine with very

This Week's Box
<p>Arugula - see recipes on bag Gold Beets - bulk or with tops Broccoli - a beautiful fall crop! Carrots - purple and yellow Edamame - the last! Peppers - pimiento and/or apple, Ukraine & colored bells Onion - yellow and red Potatoes - yellow or red skinned Raspberries - peaking! Tomatoes - Striped German, Striped Roman, Roma & Black Prince Winter Squash and/or Orange or WhiteCauliflower CHOICE: Chard OR Kale</p>

short stems so they don't poke their neighbors and send them along a conveyor belt to the harvest wagon. In past years we tried different methods like wiping off the dirt or running them through a brush washer, but by far the best technique is the one we use now. We dunk each squash in a tank of water with peracetic acid added, then set them gently into large wooden bins. Peracetic acid is a safe but aggressive sanitizer made of hydrogen peroxide stabilized with vinegar. It kills detrimental bacteria which might cause squash to rot.

Next the squash are cured in the greenhouse to sweeten them and harden their skin so they store longer. In many of the fall boxes we'll deliver more squash than you can use in a week or two. Fortunately, if you handle them with care to avoid bruising, and store in a dry location, they'll keep well. Look them over each time you use one, checking for spots or blemishes. Use blemished ones first, cutting out any problem spots. Hopefully you'll be enjoying your Kabocha for the Holidays!

REMINDER: Next week is the LAST DELIVERY for PEAK SEASON MEMBERS!
Regular season deliveries continue through December.

Crew Profile: Brian Axelsen

When I first met Brian he was standing in the back of a long tool shop in a welding apron. Heavy metal music was playing on the radio and, with his big stature, huge hands, and pointy goatee salted with grey, Brian seemed an intimidating presence. In the first few days of working with him I didn't actually talk to him much. I would only ask to use a certain tool and he would bark, "Bring it back!" and laugh a little. It didn't take long before I realized that under all of the strength and determination to keep his tool chest in order was a big, gentle giant. Every once in a while Brian points out that his forearms are twice the size of most everybody else's biceps. This is fairly apparent from looking at him. What is not so readily apparent is the fact that his heart may also be twice as big.

Brian is pretty much a local boy. He was born and raised around Rockland, Wisconsin, a town thirty miles north of Harmony Valley. His parents ran a beef cow and horse operation through most of his childhood. When he graduated from high school his folks went on the road driving truck for a living and Brian stayed on the farm. For eight years he worked full time off the farm just to get up early or stay up late finishing the farm work in his off time. At 28 years old Brian decided to take a big leap and bought a farm with a friend of his. For eight years they ran a 50 head dairy farm that shipped upwards of 900,000 lbs. of milk a year. For 6 of those years their farm was conventional, but in the last few years Brian helped turn the farm towards Organic certification. In fact he always jokes, "The day of my farm auction was the day my organic certification came through."

Since selling his own farm four years ago, Brian has been working for Harmony Valley. Richard and Linda have relied on him for much of the field work from the very beginning. Brian has been the operator of the new vacuum seeder, which plants beets, parsnips, carrots and other small seeded crops with great precision. Richard admires Brian's ability to fabricate the tools we need but that aren't easy to find. Brian designed and built markers for our bed "lister" and now makes perfectly straight beds, which do more than just look pretty - they make planting and cultivating on the beds so much easier.

I asked him what the hardest part of transitioning from a dairy farm to a veg-



etable farm was and he gave me two answers. First, he said that growing vegetables was not new to him because while growing up his family grew three huge gardens full of food for themselves. His grandmother even grew a lot of kohlrabi! Thinking about my question a little more he said, "Well actually, farming vegetables did take some time to get used to. Farming organic vegetables, compared to being a dairy farmer, is like the difference between using 40 grit sandpaper for a job compared to 200 grit. With vegetables there is a lot more detail work and you need to pay more attention."

The wonderful thing about Brian is his ability to understand and fix most any mechanical problem on the farm. He is also a great sounding board on how to do something in the first place as he has a great eye for the potential problems one might encounter during a project. Those of us who work with him closely affectionately call him, "the shop teacher" because he is always there with a word of advice and a little bit of old fashioned humor and wisdom. Brian is a nice mix of many things; a man who can drive a tractor, fix an engine, talk to cows in a voice that brings them comfort, and who makes his own kraut and pickles and killer chocolate cake! We all admire Brian.

By crew member Aaron Blythe

Produce Plus for 10/1

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.

ROMA TOMATOES (slightly blemished)

25# for \$20

RED SLICER TOMATOES (slightly blemished) - 20# for \$18

May be the last week if it frosts.

A frost could come any night!

KYLE'S POTATO AND VEGGIE CURRY

5 Potatoes, large chunks

Olive oil

1 Tbsp ginger, minced

2 Tbsp garlic, minced

1 Hot pepper, minced

2 Onions, diced

*Be creative: add bell peppers, carrots, or any veggies of your choice!

4 Roma tomatoes, chopped

1 Tbsp tomato paste

1-2 tsp of each of the following:

Curry, cumin, paprika, and chili powder

Salt & pepper

1 C heavy cream or 1 can coconut milk
Butter

Cilantro, chopped

Boil potatoes to just fork tender, drain, set aside. In a large sauce pan heat a little oil and sauté first 4 ingredients to soften, then add veggies of your choice. Add tomato paste and simmer for about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook on low till soft, add seasonings and cream. Finish with cilantro and butter. Combine potatoes; let simmer for a few min. to allow flavors to absorb. Serve atop rice with pita bread.

BUTTERNUT PIE

From Chef Kyle Johan

1 winter squash, peeled and chopped

2 onions, diced

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 hot pepper, finely chopped

2 red bell peppers, diced

Parmesan cheese

¼ C butter

Sage

Thyme

Olive oil

Salt & pepper

1-9" pie crust



In large pot heat oil and butter and add squash. Cover and allow to soften; then add onions, garlic, and hot pepper. Simmer and stir until mush-like. Add bell peppers and seasonings to taste.

Fill pie crust, sprinkle with parmesan and bake at 350 deg. for about 30 minutes.