



News from

# Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

MADISON & LOCAL EDITION

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## Willow and Dogwood-Beautiful Habitat

by Annake Witkop

At Harmony Valley we have 100 acres in vegetable production, 25 head of beef cattle, and grow only the edible kind of flowers. We are definitely a food production farm; decorative plants and flowers require different equipment and management systems than food crops. Even so, growing willow has become a very important part of the health and vitality of our vegetable production system.

Organic systems require much more complicated production techniques than simply spraying chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Creating habitat on the farm for bats, birds and beneficial insects is an important part of managing pest insects and pollinating our vegetable crops. We have planted hedgerows of pussy willow, curly willow, and dogwood through our vegetable fields as habitat for these beneficials.



This spring the pussy willow catkins were buzzing with bees and wasps. The pussy willows are planted through our strawberry patch; these bees will be important pollinators for the strawberries later in the season. Beneficial parasitic or predacious wasps and flies help to control pest insects by attacking the larval or immature stages of whiteflies, moths, leaf beetles, cabbageworms, slugs, and other pest insects. The pussy willow allows them an early spring source of nourishment.

Our curly willow is host to a myriad of critters that work together to help control

## There's still time!

Do you have friends and relatives who would appreciate fresh organic produce? Hungry for fruit after all? The CSA season is rolling and boxes are on their way... but there's still a chance to sign up for **Peak Season Shares**, the **Flex Plan**, and **Fruit Shares**. Find out more by checking out our website or calling the farm.

\* **Salad Shares begin May 20th.**  
\* **We still need help with CSA deliveries! Volunteer and receive a lovely HVF tote bag! Contact Mary Gallagher: marygal@tds.net or 608-274-2769.**

garden pests. The beneficial wasps like to nest in the curly willow, as do songbirds that also help with pest insect control. The willow produces a protein-rich sap from its branches. There is a black aphid that likes to feed on the sap. This aphid isn't a pest in our garden and confines itself to the willow branches. The aphids consume the protein available as sap, and exude from their back sugary 'honeydew'. The large and small beneficial wasps in turn, love to feed on the honeydew on the backs of the aphids. These wasps help us to control our cabbageworm populations. The large predatory wasps can be seen carrying cabbageworms out of the fields to feed to their young larvae. The small parasitic wasps also control the worms by injecting their eggs into the cabbageworms. The cabbageworm then is host to the young wasp larvae that when hatched feed on the body of the cabbageworm.

Our red and cardinal dogwood hedgerows are a favorite nesting area of many birds. The spring flowers produce nectar for bees and later berries that are loved by many birds and mammals.

We harvest the willow and dogwood in the winter, before the birds have built their nests or the aphids have come out. We leave some branches behind for spring nests. Use the willow or dogwood in dried arrangements. You may add it for a short time to a vase of flowers with water, but it eventually will sprout and produce roots. Dried, the willow and dogwood will last for months to come.

This Week's Box

### GREEN WEEK

- Asparagus** - The first of the year.
- Chives** - Great on salad.
- Parsnips** - Overwintered and as sweet as can be.
- Ramps** - Wild-harvested, delicate white bulbs with a garlic zing.
- Rhubarb** - Make a pie or crisp!
- Spinach** - Sweet and savoy.
- Sorrel**
- White Sunchokes** - Check out the great recipe on back.
- Choice:** Dogwood

## Introducing Kyle Cross!!



by Kyle Cross

Happy Spring to all the CSA members. I would personally like to introduce myself as the Chef of Harmony Valley farm for the 2006 growing season. I am originally from Wisconsin and that is where I got my start in the culinary industry. I attended Fox Valley Technical college in Appleton WI in pursuit of an associate degree in culinary arts. While in culinary school I worked at local fine dining restaurants gaining as much knowledge as possible building my culinary repertoire. First up, a line cook at the popular and long

## Introducing Kyle! (con't.)

running Seasons restaurant, next a Sous Chef at the now defunct Willow American Bistro & Wine Bar, and finally Sous Chef at the quirky downtown Appleton eatery, Peggy's Café. In search of new culinary horizons I headed west to Napa Valley the famed wine growing region in northern California. Wine country opened my eyes to a new world of organic produce, local specialties, and of course the valley's best known export, wine. My adventure to Napa also introduced me to a whole new level of culinary artistry that at the time could not be found in north east Wisconsin. For my next culinary adventure I traveled south to sunny Florida and to the tourist trap that is Orlando. For two years I worked at Roy's, a Hawaiian fusion restaurant created

by celebrity Chef Roy Yammaguchi. Roy's specializes in fresh fish, Pacific Rim ingredients, and combines them with classic French sauces. Working at Roy's was another great culinary experience, and now after two years I have come home to Wisconsin in search of a new one. I am thrilled to be this season's Chef at Harmony Valley Farm; it's an opportunity that this culinarian just could not pass up. I look forward to working with all the amazing produce that the farm has to offer, and to coming up with new recipes to share with you that I create down on the farm. I also love to talk about food, and would be more than happy to share my ideas and philosophy, cooking techniques, and answer any questions about myself, the farm, or food. Feel free to email me at [Chef@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:Chef@harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

## Leeks Gone Wild!

By KyleCross

Spring is here and for a few short weeks so are the Ramps (wild baby leeks). I first worked with ramps in a professional kitchen a few years ago. They had some flavor but little substance. Harmony Valley Farm is a great place to be reintroduced to the succulent little guys, full of flavor, young but hardy, every part edible including the feather shaped leaves. At the farm there are over ninety acres of tillable soil, nutrient rich cultivated beds already producing this seasons shares. Just on the fringe of these carefully groomed rows lay patches of thick forest teeming with ramps. For a few short weeks a year they come out in force, literally thousands of wild baby leeks. Ramps are very versatile vegetables; treat them like a green onion only with a little more sophistication. Sautéed, tempura fried, tear the leaves irregularly and toss in a spinach salad, and they are exceptional on the grill. Ramps have been growing in popularity over the past few years. Questionable looks have turned into wide eyed excitement, which is evident by the few servings we took home from the Dane County Farmers Market, after arriving with a harvest of just a little over three hundred pounds.

## Sorrel - a refreshing spring treat

Sorrel is a perennial herb that at Harmony Valley Farm is grown as a leafy green. For cooking purposes Sorrel seems to be best when cooked, although for many foodies, sorrel's peppery citrus flavor makes for a refreshing spring salad. When cooked, sorrel's astringent bite tends to soften, lessening it's shock to the palate. This makes it perfect for adding depth to your soups or sauces, a light sauté and it pairs well with a fatty round fish such as Wild Salmon or Brook Trout.

**Balsamic Glazed Ramps**, spring is here and for a few short weeks so are Ramps (wild baby leeks), here is a quick and easy recipe for delicious sautéed ramps.

1/2 # Harmony Valley Farm Ramps  
2 tsp canola or vegetable oil for sautéing  
1 Tbls quality Balsamic vinegar  
salt & pepper to taste

Method: using a paring knife trim the root ends from the ramps and discard. Separate the leaves from the white ends by cutting across the vegetable. In a medium size sauté pan heat the canola oil, sauté the white ends first for two minutes until brown add the leaves and sauté for an additional minute, deglaze with balsamic vinegar, season with salt and pepper.

Serves 2-3

**Sunchoke American Fries**, A new twist on an old favorite, using the two-hundred year old predecessor to the potato.

1 lb Harmony Valley Farm Sunchoke (red or white)  
2 Tbls canola or vegetable oil for sautéing  
1 Tbls minced chives  
½ bunch or ¼ C chopped fresh parsley  
salt & pepper to taste

Method: place sunchoke in a medium sized sauce pot and cover with lightly salted water. Simmer sunchoke for forty-five minutes to one hour until tender, strain into a colander and let cool. Cut the sunchoke in half, and then quarters and set aside. In a medium size sauté pan heat the oil on medium-high heat, add the sunchoke and allow to brown for two minutes, add minced chives stir and continue to brown for one more minute. Toss with fresh chopped parsley and salt and pepper to taste.

Serves 4

**Whipped Parsnips**, Harmony Valley farm's over wintered parsnips have a high sugar content which is a great match for a perfectly grilled steak, or a hardy game fish.

3/4 # Harmony Valley Farm's Parsnips (cut into 1 inch uniform pieces)  
1 1/2 Tbls unsalted butter  
1/2 C heavy cream  
salt & pepper to taste

Method: place parsnips in a medium sized sauce pot and cover with lightly salted water. Simmer parsnips for forty-five minutes until tender, strain into a colander and set aside.

Using a small sauce pan melt the butter into the cream on low heat. In a food processor puree parsnips with butter and cream, season with salt and pepper.

Serves 4