



News  
from

# Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

MADISON AND LOCAL EDITION

Harmony Valley Farm, S. 3442 Wire Hollow Rd., Viroqua, WI 54665  
608-483-2143 harmony@mwt.net www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

Vol. 15 Issue 7  
June 2 & 3, 2006  
Week 22

**Don't Take An Extra Bag Of Salad Unless You Ordered It!**  
Please don't confuse the Salad Shares with the Choice Item. The Salad Shares are labeled with a sign that says "Salad Shares, For Those Who Paid Extra". The Choice Item, labeled "Choice" is for everyone to take...if they wish. Please, please read the section in your calendar/manual that further explains the choice item and salad share. Thank you!

## Farm Report

by Richard de Wilde

When I was a teenager growing-up on a farm in very rural NE South Dakota, it seemed like all anybody ever talked about was the weather. I wanted so badly to get away from there, and go to the city where there was culture and sophistication and people talked about anything but the weather.



I did leave that South Dakota backwater and went to the big city. First I lived in Rapid City, South Dakota and then the Twin Cities in Minnesota. I thoroughly enjoyed the Shakespeare plays, the music scene, the Renaissance fairs, and the culture. Everybody was so hip and could not care less about the weather, unless we were planning a canoe trip.

But now after 30 years of farming I understand much better why farmers talk about the weather.

The farm work all revolves around the weather. Hot, cold, and rain all influence whether things grow fast or just stand still. Planting can happen only after a dry period, and harvesting is slow and muddy when it is raining. We listen to weather forecasts and look at weather maps morning, noon and night. We plan our week around the forecast, and change our plans as the actual weather

invariably changes. We have lots of amateur forecasters; we share our perceptions each morning. We learn to read between the lines.

So how have we fared with this wet, cool spring suddenly

turned into summer? We started planting salad, spinach, and cilantro on April 10<sup>th</sup> and continued planting every week since. We made up acres of raised beds whenever it was barely dry enough. One good dry day without rain and we can loosen and weed the top of the bed with our rolling basket and plant. Early plantings have grown ever so slowly in the cool, cloudy weather. The first half

This Week's Box
<b>GREEN WEEK</b>
<b>Asparagus</b> - Everyone's Spring favorite.
<b>Green Garlic</b> - Use the tender area from the white through the light green.
<b>Pea Vine or Swiss Chard</b> - Pea vine- gourmet pea-flavored salad and saute green. Use leaves and stems. Swiss chard- in the beet family. Great in quiche with Swiss cheese!
<b>Hon Tsai Tai</b> - A mild Asian cooking green in the mustard family. Use the whole plant...stems, leaves and flowers. Try our recipe on back!
<b>Lemon Balm</b> - A wonderful lemon flavored herb. Use in iced tea, as a bed for fish or make a lemon balm pesto (recipe on back)!
<b>Potato Onions</b> - Use as you would scallions.
<b>Spinach - Try an omelette!</b>
<b>Salad Mix</b> - With edible violas or chive blossoms for color! Break up the chive blossoms into individual florets and sprinkle over the salad. They are spicy!
<b>Choice</b> - Burdock

of May was too wet to plant much and the greenhouses overflowed with tall plants, ready for the fields that were too wet to plant. We kept busy with our spring projects. We built storage lofts in the packing shed and shop. We cleaned and washed the harvest containers. We seized every opportunity, we gambled. We planted untreated corn and beans and peas in cold,

**THIS IS THE LAST WEEK TO SIGN UP FOR SUMMER FRUIT BOXES.**  
SUMMER FRUIT DELIVERY BEGINS JUNE 15TH! IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A FRUIT BOX, CONTACT THE FARM IMMEDIATELY.  
608-483-2143 OR EMAIL BRIAN: bookkeeper@harmonyvalleyfarm.com

wet ground, but they were planted shallow and the first two crops are up. We planted beets and carrot early and now they are 4" tall. We made it a priority to cultivate and the early weeds are under control.

I like to think it is the excellent management that makes the difference, but the truth is it also takes a skilled and dedicated crew. Elihu worked late into the evening to flame the parsnips before a rain, and then they came up over that weekend- 5 acres that are beautifully clean. Many of our crew worked on Saturdays when the weather was right. Brian and Elihu came in and cultivated the spinach, salad and burdock. And now the weather has changed. With 2 planting crews, everybody else had to work extra hard to get the harvest done with minimal hands, but all the warm weather crops are planted, the greenhouses are empty except for later melon, tomato, cauliflower and cabbage crops. Spring planting is done. We are in great shape, prepared for a good year! But don't forget we still plan our harvest, later plantings and cultivation around the weather.

High winds, hard rain, floods and the dreaded hail stones are still a concern. We'll continue to watch the weather, and talk about the weather. Farming, it's all about the weather.

## BURDOCK

By Chef Kyle Cross

I'm fortunate that in my short cooking career I have had the opportunity to work with many different products (ingredients): hundred-dollar an ounce caviar, fifteen or so different specialty mushrooms, two hundred dollar a pound seasonal truffles. Product to me has always been a funny noun, where a well

### Burdock Soup with Hon Tsai Tai and Potato Onions

Use these three ingredients in this week's box for a delicious soup.

Harmony Valley Farm Burdock (scrubbed and cut into 1/2 in slices)

Harmony Valley Farm Hon Tsai Tai (rinsed and rough chopped. Use stems, leaves and flowers)

Harmony Valley Farm Potato onions (thinly sliced white to light green parts only)

1 Package Soba noodles (buckwheat noodles)

1 small knob ginger root (sliced)

3 stalks green garlic (minced, use white to light green parts only)

1 C Soy Sauce (try buying organic)

10 C low sodium chicken stock (try buying organic)

5 Tbsp. granulated sugar

1 tsp. sesame oil

Method: In a Large pot of simmering water cook soba noodles until *al dente* and drain into a colander. Let cool, and rough chop. In a medium size soup pot on low heat, sauté the ginger and green garlic in the sesame oil for two to three minutes, do not allow to brown. Add soy sauce and sugar and simmer for ten minutes. Add chicken stock, all of the vegetables, chopped soba noodles and continue to simmer for an additional ten minutes. Serves (4-6)

### Lemon Balm Pesto

This fragrant lemony pesto is great on fish or chicken. Also, add it to your pastas with a little whole butter for a great sauce.

Harmony Valley Farm Lemon balm (leaves only)

1 C grated parmesan cheese

1/4 C olive oil

juice of 1 lemon

1 C sliced almonds (substitute a low fat nut, such as pine or peanut)

salt & fresh ground pepper to taste

Method: In a food processor combine all ingredients and process until smooth.

Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Use as needed for up to one week.

placed adjective should be. All the fish, meats, herbs, spices, vegetables and fruits utilized at their peak of freshness in professional kitchens deserve a better descriptor. If you think of the word product, an assembly line comes to mind. Hard lines, cold steel, a conveyer belt world manned by blue collar drones, complete with a lunch-time whistle. The great thing about food and cooking unlike life, a career, that perfect date, or your favorite dinner, is that food is never ending. There are always new foods to try, ingredients to work with, and techniques to master. Hardly widgets, it's these ingredients that ultimately make us better cooks. A deeper understanding of all things food is what I'm after, an infinite quest for knowledge. How what we consume daily is grown, harvested, milked, hooked or slaughtered.

Burdock, a new ingredient, unfamiliar to me, sounds more like native water fowl than a vegetable. Originating in northern China and Siberia, it is most commonly grown in Japan where the Japanese refer to the root as gobo. Burdock has medicinal purposes as an antioxidant and a blood purifier, as well as strong cancer-fighting properties. Averaging two feet in length, and a quarter in diameter, with its rusty color Burdock really looks like an ugly stick. No beauty pageants for this tap root, but looks are always deceiving. Sweet and nutty, Burdock has a similar flavor profile to that of salsify or artichoke hearts, and can be cooked similarly. Shave it thin with a vegetable peeler for chips, cook it gently adding sweetness and depth to your soups and stews, blanch it first and it's great tempura fried.

Today Burdock is widely available in the United States in Asian markets and organic specialty stores, its curious looks are worth a second glance, and it is for sure menu worthy.

