



# Harmony Valley Farm

Producers of Fine Organic Produce & Beef

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

Vol. 16 Issue 6  
May, 2007  
Week 19

## Madison & Local Edition

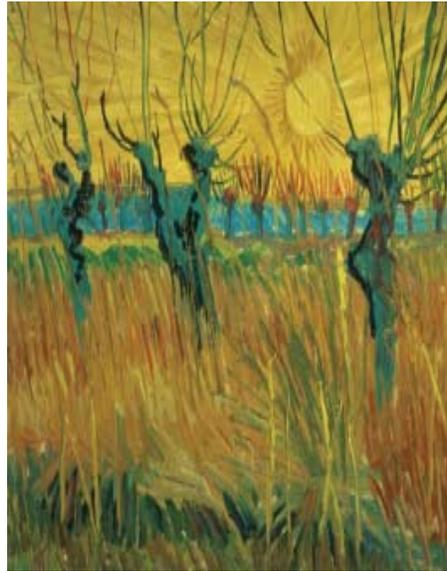
### Willow and Dogwood- Beautiful Habitat

-by Richard de Wilde

At Harmony Valley we have 100 acres in vegetable production, 25 head of beef cattle, and grow only the edible kinds 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. The pussy willow allows them an early spring source of nourishment. 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.



Our curly willow is host to a myriad of critters that work together to help control 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. The black aphid isn't a pest in our garden and confines itself to the willow branches. This aphid consumes the protein available as sap, and exudes from its 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

### This Week's Box

Brown Week

#### Vegetables

- ♥ **Sorrel:** Use in soups or sauces for fish, seafood.
- ♥ **Asparagus:** Perfect sautéed lightly with olive oil.
- ♥ **Spinach:** Add to lasagna or manicotti.
- ♥ **Ramps:** Add to scrambled eggs or omelets.
- ♥ **Chives:** Chop finely and mix into biscuits along with cheese.
- ♥ **Parsnips:** Try them mashed with sunchokes or potatoes.
- ♥ **Black Radish:** Shred and add to veggie slaws.
- ♥ **Salad Mix:** First of the season and fresh from the field!
- ♥ **Sunchokes:** Recipes on back!

#### Choice

- ♥ **Herb Packs:** Time to plant your garden or patio herb patch. Read upcoming newsletters for more info on ways to cook with your herbs. (*see herb map on back*)
- ♥ **Willow:** Cut shorter pieces and add to a spring flower arrangement for Mother's Day!

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.

## Herb Map

A quick guide to your herb pack.



Rosemary	Summer Thyme	Summer Savoy
Greek Oregano	Sage	Italian Parsley
Basil	Basil	Curly Parsley

## Summer Events

Be sure to mark your calendars for our upcoming Summer Events. Our gatherings on the farm are a great way to meet the crew that brings you your great produce every week, and to see the farm where it is all grown!

### ♥ Strawberry Festival

June 17th, 2007 12:00 - 6:00 PM

Potluck, farm tours and lots of strawberries!!!

### ♥ Barn Dance

July 14th, 2007 2:00 PM - ???

Dance, potluck and pigroast!

### ♥ Harvest Festival

Sept. 23rd, 2007 12:00 - 6:00 PM

Potluck & you pick-um harvest!

## Vegetable of the Week - Sunchokes

Sunchokes, Jerusalem artichokes, topinambur—call it what you will, just don't pass it by. With a nutty flavor all their own, sunchokes are very versatile and can be eaten raw or cooked. In their raw form, they have a crisp, crunchy texture and a nutty, fresh taste similar to jicama or water chestnuts. They are delicious eaten in salads, or enjoy them as you would a carrot stick with a veggie dip. You have the choice to roast, boil, fry, or stir-fry when you cook them. As they are cooked, the texture becomes soft and fluffy with a flavor similar to a potato except with a nutty edge.

Not only are they tasty, but Sunchokes are also good sources of iron, potassium and niacin as well as being low in fat and high in fiber. Sunchokes contain inulin, an indigestible dietary fiber. Inulin is beneficial to the body in helping to lower cholesterol and promotes healthy bacteria flora in the intestines and colon. Some people do experience gas and flatulence when they eat sunchokes—a side effect of the good work the little bacteria are doing. Eat them in moderation initially to see how your body will respond.

## Chili-Roasted Sunchokes - Serves 3 - 4

1# sunchokes, unpeeled	1/4 tsp cayenne
2 Tbsp olive oil	1 tsp salt
1 tsp chili powder	1/8 tsp ground black pepper
1/2 tsp cumin	1 Tbsp lime juice

### Method:

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Cut sunchokes into 1" pieces. In a medium bowl, combine oil, chili powder, cumin, cayenne, salt and pepper. Toss sunchokes in oil mixture until well coated.

- Transfer sunchokes to a baking dish or sheet tray and roast until tender, about 30 - 35 minutes. Remove from oven and toss with lime juice.

## Sunchoke Chive Soup - Serves 4

1# sunchokes, unpeeled	6 slices bacon (optional)
2 1/2 cups vegetable stock	4 Tbsp sour cream (optional)
1/2 bunch chives	3/4 tsp salt
1cup milk	1/4 plus 1/8 tsp white pepper

### Method:

- Cut Sunchokes into 1" chunks. Put into a medium saucepot and add vegetable stock. Cover and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer gently until the sunchokes are tender. Remove from heat and drain off liquid into a separate container. Reserve the cooking liquid to add back to the soup to adjust the consistency.

- In a blender, puree sunchokes, adding cooking liquid as needed to get a fine puree. Cut chives into 1" pieces and blend into sunchokes along with milk, salt and pepper.

-Pour the soup back into the saucepot and bring back to a simmer. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.

- Slice bacon into small strips and cook over medium heat in a sauté pan until crisp. Drain and reserve.

- To serve, ladle hot soup into bowls and garnish with bacon and a dollop of sour cream if desired.

*"The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses."*  
~Hanna Rion