



# Harmony Valley Farm

Producers of Fine Organic Produce & Beef

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

## Madison and Local Edition

### Deliberations from the Kitchen Sink....Thoughts of the HVF Chef

*Seasonal Cooking...What Do You Mean That's All?* by Andrea Yoder

Preparing food for 30 people five days a week generates quite an abundance of dirty dishes, which means I spend a great deal of time at the kitchen sink. My hands slip into autopilot and my mind often escapes to thoughts beyond baked-on rice or the stack of 30 plates left to wash. When I came to the farm, I was just excited to have the opportunity to work with fresh, organic produce and experiment in the kitchen. I was aware of issues surrounding eating locally and with the seasons. Being a dietitian, I never escape thoughts of health and nutrition. I had shopped at the farmer's market where I lived in Virginia and was all for supporting local farmers and businesses. I am concerned about the environment and have been known to pilfer the trash can to pull out my roommate's pizza box from the night before that really belonged in the recycling bin. What I've realized over the past 12 weeks of generating dirty dishes is that while I was aware, I hadn't owned my awareness or committed to any of these principals with any kind of passion. The more I have become connected with my food supply and aware of the issues surrounding the food I eat, where it comes from, and how my food choices affect the environment as well as other people, the more I want to know. Thus begins a series of articles from my kitchen sink to share with you how my own evolution is having an effect on the food choices I make when providing meals for the crew.

As I plan the menus, my challenge is to work with what is available to me—both with fruits and vegetables as well as what is available from the co-op or natural foods buying club where I purchase staple ingredients not grown on the farm. Every week I make a list of produce



*Chef Andrea Yoder at the sink*

currently being harvested, then set myself to the task of creating a menu for the upcoming week. My menus are definitely based on the seasons and subject to availability. I am learning that sometimes you have to yield to the weather, harvest limitations, flea beetles, poor seed, and a whole list of factors that have an impact on growing vegetables. When I first started cooking in the spring, my list was fairly limited. I admit I was a bit irritated at Mother Nature for sending snow in April to set back the growing season and damage the first overwintered spinach cutting. My list of available produce was short that month as I set my sights on trying to figure out what to do with burdock root, sunchokes, and black radishes. What had I gotten myself into? This was my first taste of truly cooking with the seasons, which sometimes means relying on storage crops and preserved foods to augment the meager crops that might be available. I was thrilled to find a couple bags of peppers, rhubarb, and some strawberry jam in the freezer.

After I got over my initial "freak out" period where I tried to figure out what to make with nettles, watercress, and ramps, I started to ease into the seasonal approach to cooking and eating. Now I find myself looking forward to what I know is coming. Every Sunday I tour the fields with Richard to make plans for the upcoming week. It is exciting to watch the stages of growth -- from digging up little seeds just starting to sprout, to blossoms, and finally little starts of vegetables. I am always excited to see the little, tiny vegetables -- peas a quarter inch long and melons the size of a golf ball. First there is the gasp of excitement when I realize there is hope at the end of the

### This Week's Box

#### Brown Week

- ♥ **CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI:** Toss in a chicken and rice casserole
- ♥ **GREEN TOP CARROTS:** Add to stir-fry dishes or cabbage slaws
- ♥ **FENNEL:** Saute in butter until golden brown and toss with pasta
- ♥ **FRESH GARLIC:** Use fresh cloves, or put on your kitchen counter and dry for later use
- ♥ **GOLD BEETS:** Glaze with reduced orange juice and honey
- ♥ **MAGENTA SUNRISE CHARD :** See feature on back
- ♥ **RED SCALLIONS:** Add to a vegetable platter with a herbed veggie dip
- ♥ **SUGAR SNAP OR SNOW PEAS:** Blanch, cool and add to vegetable salads
- ♥ **RED OR GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE:** Add to casseroles
- ♥ **WHITE TURNIPS:** Try a creamy turnip soup
- ♥ **ZUCCHINI, SCALLOP OR SUMMER SQUASH:** Build a pita sandwich with grilled squash, hummus, feta and chicken

#### CHOICE:

- ♥ **CILANTRO**

tunnel, then comes the impatient questioning of "How much longer?"

Now that we have entered the period of the summer plenty, I've shifted to sometimes feeling overwhelmed with all I have available. I also find myself feeling sad knowing it will be an entire year before I can enjoy some things again. I was mortified (ok, that's a bit dramatic) when I realized there were only 5 pints of gooseberries for me to work with...for the entire year! I am now guarding those 5 pints with my life

and contemplating the perfect way to use or preserve them. I suppose a dose of appreciation added to any food will make it a bit more sacred and enjoyable.

Eating with the seasons means eating what's fresh now, but I also think it means planning for the future months. While there are storage crops available during the winter months, it would be nice to enjoy some of those other wonderful foods in the midst of the long winter. Corn Chowder and rhubarb pie in January do sound good. I have already frozen strawberries, rhubarb, spinach and basil. I have dehydrated strawberries and have a nice supply of strawberry preserves. I have plans to freeze corn and peppers, and I'm hoping to can pickles, tomato sauce and salsa. Thus far, I've had to resort to buying some of these canned items, which seems silly to me when we have such an abundance during harvest. Taking advantage of the summer plenty by putting some food away for the winter is a great way to avoid wasting food and allows you to stretch out your food supply—a wise choice for your palate as well as your pocketbook. If you aren't the home preserving type, something as simple as making a double recipe of soup and freezing half of it for another month is a good idea as well.

Well, it's off to cook another week's worth of meals for the crew. Stay tuned for more thoughts from the kitchen sink on topics including eating locally and "You Are What You Eat."

### Summer Barn Dance

Mark your calendars to come to our farm on Saturday, July 14th for the Summer Barn Dance! Come for dancing, music, and lots of tasty food!

#### Schedule:

2:00 - Arrive & settle in, visit the animals  
 2:30 - Farm Tours Start  
 5:00 - Potluck (Bring a dish to share & table service for your family)  
 6:30 - 7:30 - Square dancing  
 8:00 - 11:00 - Whistle Pigs Bluegrass Band

\* Please RSVP if you will be camping on the farm this weekend. The campground is available for all members. For area lodging, visit: [www.explorewisconsin.com/southwestcounties/vernon.asp](http://www.explorewisconsin.com/southwestcounties/vernon.asp)

## VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: SWISS CHARD

While we have enjoyed the delicate spring greens—spinach, salad mix, arugula, and sauté mix, the heat makes them more difficult to grow without becoming bitter or falling prey to pesky bugs. During the summer lull we are fortunate to have other greens to fill this void and add a bit of variety to our table. While unfamiliar greens may be intimidating at first, they all follow similar principles for preparation, and they aren't as unfamiliar to you as you might think. In your box this week, you will find Red Orach. This green has been in your box before in its immature stage as part of salad and sauté mixes. Greens, whatever they may be (beet or turnip tops, swiss chard, red Russian kale, orach, collards, etc), are a very nutrient dense food and a valuable addition to your diet, both for health and flavor variety. Greens are the photosynthesis machines of the plant responsible for capturing energy from the sun and transforming it into energy for the plant and subsequently you when you eat it! Greens are high in vitamins A, C, K and potassium as well as iron, calcium and folic acid. They are also low in fat and high in fiber. You will be seeing more greens to come as the season progresses.

Chard, often referred to as swiss chard, is a beautiful green grown in varieties with white stems to colors including red, yellow, orange, and pink. The later are often referred to collectively as "rainbow chard." The varieties we grow are Magenta Sunrise and Pink Passion. Thought to have originated in France, chard is now used in the cuisines of other cultures including Greece and the Middle East. In its smaller stages, it is tender enough to use in salad mixes. As the leaves get bigger, the stem, while still edible and very flavorful, becomes tougher and will require cooking. That said, the large leaves do make nice wrappers for chicken or egg salad. When cooking chard, first remove the leafy part from the stem. The stem will require longer cooking time, so start that first, then add the leaves near the end of cooking. Chard is best cooked using either steaming or braising methods. It can be incorporated into soups or creams or incorporated into quiches, savory pies and pasta dishes. It pairs well with chiles, garlic, lemon, tomatoes, anchovies, raisins, olives, and vinegar.

### Creamy Penne Pasta with Greens and Parmesan Serves 4

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ½ # Whole wheat penne pasta   | 1 pint cream                  |
| 2 qts boiling, salted water   | Salt, to taste                |
| 1 Tbsp olive oil  | Ground black pepper, to taste |
| 1 clove garlic, minced  | Pinch of ground nutmeg        |
| 2 cups greens, (swiss chard, orach or kale) chopped into bite size pieces | 1 cup parmesan cheese, grated |

-Cook pasta in boiling water. Drain, reserving 1 cup pasta water.  
 -In a large sauté pan, heat olive oil. Add garlic and sauté 30 seconds. Toss in greens with 1/2 cup pasta water and wilt down. Add cream, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Simmer until orach leaves are tender and the cream has reduced by about 1/3. Add parmesan and stir to combine. Add pasta and toss.

### Sausage and White Bean Soup with Greens Serves 4

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 tsp oil                                    | 2 cups greens, (swiss chard, orach or kale) cut into 1/2" strips |
| 1/2# sausage                                 | 4 cups vegetable or chicken stock                                |
| 4 scallions, sliced thin                     | Salt, to taste   |
| 1 clove garlic, minced                       | Ground Black Pepper, to taste                                    |
| 2 cups cooked cannellini or white navy beans | 3 Tbsp Fresh savory  |
|  | 1 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped                                       |

-In a medium saucepot, brown sausage. Drain off excess grease. Add scallions and garlic and sauté until softened.  
 -Add beans, greens, and stock. Cover and simmer until greens are tender. Season with salt and pepper and stir in fresh herbs.