



# Harmony Valley Farm

Producers of Fine Organic Produce & Beef

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

## Madison & Local Edition

### Garlic: A Labor of Love

by Andrea Yoder

You've seen green garlic, scapes, fresh garlic, and will be receiving dried garlic in your boxes for the rest of the season. One of the first crops I saw when I arrived at the farm was garlic, just starting its course. I guess I had never really stopped to think about the lifecycle of garlic, I just picked up the dried bulb in the grocery store, tossed it in my cart and went on my way to my next culinary adventure. In light of our recent garlic harvest, I thought it would be fitting to share some of the things I've learned about garlic with all of you. I definitely have a new level of respect for the amount of work that goes into producing a vegetable that I consider quite a staple item for cooking.

Garlic is a member of the allium family, a collection of vegetables that includes shallots, onions and leeks. It has been a staple ingredient in many cultures dating back to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Clay models of garlic were found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen, a testament to the importance garlic played in Egyptian culture where it was actually an object that was worshipped. There is even a reference in the Bible in Numbers 11:5 where the Israelites longed for the taste of garlic when they were journeying through the desert and only had manna to eat. Garlic spread throughout the world and can be found as an integral part of many different dishes in various cuisines. Mediterranean cuisine features garlic in things such as aioli, a mayonnaise based garlic sauce often used as an accompaniment for globe artichokes. The French feature garlic in the classical dish poulet a quarante et un gousses d'ail, chicken with forty cloves of garlic. The Spanish have their own form of mirepoix, a blend of aromatic vegetables used as a base for soups, sauces, and other dishes, that consists of garlic, onions, and tomatoes. Of course, what would Italian cuisine be without garlic?

There are two main types of garlic, hardneck and softneck. Hardneck garlic typically forms bulbs with fewer large cloves. It forms a stiff flowerstalk that grows up out of the middle of the plant and eventually forms a scape. This is actually a garlic flower and will form a bulbil which is a collection of little garlic cloves. We removed the scapes earlier so the plant would concentrate the



Juan running bedlifter with crew.

energy on growing larger bulbs instead of developing the scape. As you know, scapes are edible and can be used anywhere you might use clove garlic. If you open up the flower part on the scape, you can see the little cloves forming—I think this is the best tasting part of the scape. The varieties of hardneck garlic we grow are Italian Red and Porcelain. Softneck garlic does not form the flowerstalk or scapes, and if you had seen it in the field prior to harvest, you would understand why it's called softneck. As the top dries, it becomes limp and falls over. Bulbs of softneck garlic typically have more but smaller cloves than hardneck garlic. We grow Nooksa Rose, to make garlic braids that will be available to you later in the season.

Yielding a high quality crop of garlic is not a one year affair. Garlic is actually planted in the fall using the highest quality bulbs with the largest cloves from the previous crop. It's important to select good, healthy seed because this will be the clone for the next crop. Seed selection is vital to propagating a high quality, disease free crop. Richard has focused his efforts for the past 10 years on maintaining and developing his crops of just two varieties, the Italian Red and Porcelain garlic. His garlic crop has now become the envy of other organic farmers in the area! The cloves are usually planted in the fall and remain in the ground through the winter. During the fall, the garlic will set roots and may start to sprout. Another reason for the thick cover of mulch is to prevent the garlic sprouts from becoming exposed before spring comes. Planting garlic in the fall gives the crop a head start on growing, and allows us to take advantage of those first couple weeks in the spring after the ground thaws. This is a prime growing time for garlic, a cool weather crop. Once spring comes, you can start looking for the green garlic sprouts to start poking through

### This Week's Box

#### Brown Week

- ♥ **ARUGULA:** Add to a roast beef sandwich with blue cheese dressing
- ♥ **YELLOW & FRENCH PETITE BEANS:** Brush with sesame oil and roast
- ♥ **BROCCOLI & OR CAULIFLOWER:** Toss into stirfry with beef
- ♥ **GREEN TOP CARROTS:** Add to pot roast along with blue potatoes and scallions
- ♥ **PINK PASSION CHARD:** Try creamed chard topped with cheese
- ♥ **CUCUMBER:** See recipe on back
- ♥ **ITALIAN RED GARLIC:** See recipe on back
- ♥ **BLUE POTATOES:** Boil whole or roast to best retain color
- ♥ **RED CIPOLLINI ONIONS:** Toss into an omelet along with garlic, zucchini and basil.
- ♥ **ZUCCHINI, SUMMER, & SCALLOP SQUASH:** Saute with onion, garlic, white wine and lemon juice
- ♥ **CHOICE:**
  - FENNEL:** Toss with balsamic vinaigrette & grill

the ground. Green garlic looks like leeks in its immature stage. Early in the spring is when we harvest green garlic, which is just immature garlic that has not formed separate cloves yet. It has a mild garlic flavor and can be used just as clove garlic in cooking. Throughout the spring and early summer, the crop is maintained by irrigating if necessary, weed control by handweeding, removal of the scapes, and monitoring for pests or disease. One of the diseases we watch for is basal rot caused by an organism called fusarium oxysporum. Signs of basal rot can be found on the base of the root and by premature yellowing of the leaves. In early July, the leaves of the garlic will start to dry out and die, this is when you start to watch it closely for the right time to harvest. The bulbs have several sheaths of skin on them that will

start to tighten as the bulb matures. Watching the changes in the thickness of the skin, as well as changes to the leaves, in addition to many other factors, determines when it is time to harvest. When it's time to harvest, the first task is to mow off the top leaves on the stalks. This is done by attaching a mower, set very high, to the back of a tractor. Next, someone will go through with a tractor that has a piece of equipment called a bedlifter attached to it. The bedlifter goes underneath the bed of garlic, cuts the roots, and lifts the bed, loosening the soil. Others follow behind to make sure the garlic is being cut at the right depth. Then comes the job of gathering the garlic and bundling it according to size. It is then put into the greenhouses where it is left to dry. Once it has dried sufficiently, the outer dry layers of skin are peeled back and the garlic is put into storage. Back in the field, the empty beds are tilled under with compost to replenish the nutrients in the soil and prepare it for the next crop. As you can see, there really is a lot of labor involved in producing a crop of garlic!

Once the garlic is in your hands, what do you do with it? First, garlic can be stored in a cool, dry, dark place. I like to store garlic in a garlic keeper on the kitchen counter—a container with holes in it made specifically to store garlic and provide adequate ventilation. Do not store it in the refrigerator or it will become soft and mold. To make it easier to peel garlic, first separate the cloves. Place a single clove on

a cutting board and lay the blade of a chef's knife flat on it. Give it a little hit with the palm of your hand. This will loosen the skin and make it easier to peel. One of the benefits of using the Italian Red or Porcelain garlic is that the larger cloves are easier to peel than the Nooksa Rose variety. From here you can mince, slice, or use the cloves whole. Raw garlic has a stronger, bit more harsh flavor. As it is cooked, the flavor mellows out. Roasted garlic is a special addition to dips, vegetable dishes, sauces, etc. To roast garlic, simply cut the very top off the garlic bulb, just enough to expose the tops of the cloves. Place the bulb in a baking dish or on a piece of foil and drizzle with oil. If using foil, wrap the foil around the bulb. Place in a 350-375° F oven and roast until the cloves are soft. Allow to cool enough to handle, and then squeeze the roasted garlic out of the cloves.

Garlic adds flavor to food, but with regular consumption it can also really benefit your health. Research has shown that garlic has antimicrobial properties and has been used throughout history as an antiseptic and to strengthen and support the immune system. It has also been suggested to contribute to heart disease prevention by lowering cholesterol, decreasing blood pressure and preventing atherosclerosis. Additionally, it has been used to treat respiratory disorders including asthma and bronchitis. It can be made into a syrup and used as an expectorant. Researchers have identified several different sulfur containing compounds, allicin and diallyl disulphide, that are responsible for garlic's pungent flavor and

smell. These compounds are thought to activate sensory nerve endings in tissues causing muscle relaxation. This may contribute to relaxation of blood vessels and air passageways, thus helping to decrease blood pressure and helping to open airways. If these aren't good enough reasons to include garlic in your diet, then consider it's other nutritional benefits. It is a good source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, selenium, and manganese—all nutrients that function as antioxidants in the body to prevent damage to tissues. Don't be afraid to add it to everything, both for flavor and health!

The sulfur compounds that give garlic its characteristic aroma and flavor are metabolized into a compound that passes into the blood and is carried to the lungs and skin where it is excreted through breathing and skin pores. It's hard to keep it a secret when you've eaten a lot of garlic. One benefit of smelling like garlic is that it helps to repel mosquitos!

I hope you now have a better sense for the large investment that goes into producing garlic. Many hours of labor, piles of mulch and compost, as well as giving up the most valuable garlic from your harvest to use for seed (this has a value of several thousands of dollars) are all invested with hopes that we will have a successful crop. Despite all of this, we continue to grow garlic because we feel it is an important food to include in our diets for its tremendous health benefits and flavor. We hope you enjoy your garlic!

## Produce Plus

Available to order for next week:

3# Garlic—\$20.00  
(Italian Red in Net Bag)  
3# Basil—\$21.00  
10# Petite Green Beans—  
\$25.00

Place your order by next Monday evening.  
Call or email the farm at 608-483-2143 or [csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com).

Please send a check for payment the day you place your order. Your produce will be delivered to your site next week with your name on it.

## Gingered Cucumber Salad

Serves 4-6

2 cucumbers	1 1/2 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and minced
3/4 tsp salt	1/3 cup honey
1 tsp vegetable oil	1/3 cup white vinegar
2 tsp toasted sesame oil	
1-2 cloves garlic, minced	

-Peel cucumber and slice in half lengthwise. Remove seeds using a spoon. Slice cucumber into 1/4" slices. Sprinkle with salt and let rest for 30 minutes. Rinse cucumbers and drain.

-In a small saucepan, heat vegetable and sesame oils. Add garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, until aromatic, about 1 minute. Add honey and vinegar. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring, until the syrup is slightly thickened and reduced to about 1/2 cup--about 3 minutes. Pour syrup over cucumbers and refrigerate one hour before serving.

*\*\*Recipe adapted from The Best of Food & Wine-Vegetables Salads & Grains, edited by Mary Simons, 1993*

## Special Events

Thank you to Chef Justin Carlisle and the Harvest Restaurant in Madison for featuring HVF's garlic at their annual garlic dinner, on July 15, 2007. Here is the creative menu we enjoyed:

*Garlic Custard on Country Toast  
Fried Mussels, Garlic Panko, Lemon, Parsley  
Rainbow Trout, Garlic Tahini, Green Bean Salad  
Roasted Quail, Garlic Mousseline, Broccoli Salad  
Wisconsin Goat Cheese with a Fried Garlic Clove  
Brown Butter Cake, Roasted Garlic Ice Cream, Black Currant Jam*