



Harmony Valley Farm

Producers of Fine Organic Produce & Beef

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

Madison & Local Edition

A Year in the Life of a Locavore

by Andrea Yoder

The “Eat Local” movement is sweeping the nation, challenging consumers to choose their food from local sources. “Easy, no problem” you might think, but perhaps not when you consider some of the foods that are part of your daily repertoire such as coffee, chocolate, spices, flours, and the like. Over time, our society has become more advanced and industrialized with technologies affording us the ability to grow food with big machines, haul it in semi-trucks to mechanized factories that turn it into a “food product” for a civilized and advanced society. It is packaged in petroleum-based materials, loaded back onto a similar semi-truck, and shipped anywhere we want it to go. Thankfully, people no longer have to toil all day in the dirt just to put food on their tables. But are we really so lucky to eat food from thousands of miles away that has taken the shape of a plastic container while any trace of its original identity or integrity has been erased?

Well-known author Barbara Kingsolver chronicles the experiences she and her family had when they moved from Tucson, Arizona to the Appalachians of Virginia. They left their lives in the Southwest in search of a life lived in a place that would “feed us: where rain falls, crops grow, and drinking water bubbles right up out of the ground.” In her book Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Kingsolver, her husband Steven, and her daughters Camille and Lily write about their experiences and how they changed their perspectives on the food supply. They take you with them through a year in which they challenged themselves to eat locally. They share their personal accounts of raising vegetables, preserving food, and tending to the chickens that were Lily’s personal



Your farm, growing vegetables organically and sustainably

project turned business. Throughout the book they entertain, educate, and lay out their experience for all that it was—dirt, hard work, sacrifice, discovery, satisfaction, and relationships formed with people and nature.

Kingsolver writes about the lack of awareness most Americans have with both how their food is grown and the cycles of nature. For the majority of people, this lack of awareness means no food culture around which they form an identity. Food culture includes the customs, traditions, rituals, and recipes that bring us comfort and nourishment, plus fond memories triggered by even the faintest aromas. Kingsolver describes the many ways she and her family form a food culture through their experiences, many of which revolved around cooking, an important part of their family experience. “Cooking lets you guard the door, controlling not only what goes into your food, but what stays out.”

Camille offers a thoughtful perspective of her experience through her 19 year old eyes. It’s evident she has a knack for cooking through the many seasonal recipes she includes throughout the book. She also lends an ear to the nutritional benefits you reap when you eat locally and seasonally. But wait, healthy eating is boring isn’t it? Not so, according to Camille. “The key to consuming enough produce and reaping maximum nutritional benefits is planning meals around whatever you have. This presents

This Week’s Box

Green & Brown Week

- ♥ **RED & YELLOW ONIONS:** See feature on back
- ♥ **RED &/OR GOLD BEETS:** Go to www.epicurious.com for roasted beet salad recipes
- ♥ **DAIKON RADISH:** Delicious addition to miso soup
- ♥ **PARSNIPS:** Try the Apple, Sausage, and Parsnip Stuffing with Fresh Sage at www.epicurious.com
- ♥ **WHITE SUNCHOKES:** Refer to newsletter feature from May 12
- ♥ **GOLD TURNIPS:** Try a pureed turnip and pear soup, garnished with daikon or black radish
- ♥ **SORREL OR SPINACH:** Use in recipe on back
- ♥ **SWEET POTATOES:** Try out Camille’s Quesadilla recipe on back
- ♥ **SAGE:** Go to www.realsimple.com for a Ravioli with Sage and Brown Butter recipe
- ♥ **BLACK RADISH:** Makes a delicious pickled salad, see the newsletter from May 5 for ideas

opportunities to get inventive in the kitchen and try new things...How many spinach dishes can you have in one week without getting sick of it? When working with fresh ingredients, the answer is, a lot! The variety comes automatically, as you eat loads of leafy greens in April, but find them petering out soon... You won’t have time to get too tired of any one food, and your nutrient needs will be met.” “Most of us agree to put away our sandals and bikinis when the leaves start to turn... we can learn to apply similar practicality to our foods.”

Steven contributes short essays on many topics related to our food supply. He confronts issues such as the invasion of GMO’s, concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO’s), the inflated use of pesticides, the

childhood obesity epidemic, petroleum consumption associated with food production, and issues surrounding the Farm Bill. His essays are filled with interesting and sometimes shocking facts. For instance, 98% of chickens in the US are produced in CAFO's. Did you know that when pesticides were first used in 1948, farmers applied about 50 million pounds and had a 7% crop loss. In 2000, farmers used 1 billion pounds of pesticides...with a 13% crop loss! "If every U.S. citizen ate just one meal a week composed of locally and organically raised meats and produce, we would reduce our country's oil consumption by over 1.1 million barrels of oil every week."

It's easy to eat fresh, seasonal, local foods when food is being grown, but may I remind you we live in a cold climate with little to no fresh produce harvested during the winter? "In our first year of conscious locavory we encountered a lot of things we hadn't expected: the truth about turkey sex life; the recidivism rate of raccoon corn burglars; the size attained by a zucchini left unattended for twenty-four hours. But our biggest surprise was January: it wasn't all that hard." So what did they eat? "Everything...For several full-steam-ahead weeks last summer, in countless different ways, we'd made dinner ahead" by preserving the fruits and vegetables they were harvesting. "Eating locally in winter is easy. But the time to think about that would be in August."

While neither Kingsolver, nor I, expect you to uproot your family, buy a farm, grow all your food and raise animals to support the local food movement and make earth-friendly food choices, you will be able to appreciate the experiences she shares. If you are looking for a book to curl up with this winter, consider [Animal, Vegetable, Miracle](#). You'll find it to be an easy read, but each chapter will leave you thinking more about the food you eat.

VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: ONIONS

Although you've been receiving onions all season, whether spring scallions, Sweet Spanish, or the most recent red & yellow storage onions, I thought it might be interesting to give them a little attention this week. Onions are one of those kitchen staple ingredients used ubiquitously to add aroma and flavor—either as a background accent or as a central flavor ingredient. They are the base for many culinary preparations including the French mirepoix (onions, carrots, and celery), Spanish sofrito (tomatoes, garlic, onions), or the Creole Trinity (onions, peppers, and celery). They are often the starting ingredient for soups, stews, dried beans, etc., or can be the final ingredient added to garnish salads, sandwiches, tacos, hot dogs, chili and much more.

We start onions early in the spring in the greenhouse and then transplant them in the field. Early on, they can be harvested in their immature stage as green onions or scallions. Once matured, the tops will start to die off and it is time to harvest them, usually early August. They are pulled and left to dry in the field for a short period, then moved into the greenhouse where they continue to dry and cure until the skins are dry and papery. They are then trimmed and put into cool storage where they can be kept for many months.

Although they are nothing to cry over, you often will find yourself with tears streaming down your face when you cut into them. This is caused by the sulfur compounds in the onion that are released when you cut into the flesh. When the sulfur combines with your tears it forms sulfuric acid. There are many methods thought to prevent this including chilling onions, cutting them near running water, or rinsing them after you cut them open. Personally, I'm asking Santa for a pair of stylish onion goggles I saw advertised in a magazine recently.

You've seen recommendations throughout the year to "caramelize" onions. This is a cooking process that develops and concentrates the natural sugars in onions making them sweet and delectable. Some onions caramelize better than others based on their sugar content—right now, I'd recommend caramelizing the red onions. Caramelized onions are delicious as a pizza topping, added to sandwiches, quesadillas, and eggs. If you go to www.allrecipes.com and search for "caramelized onions" in the Tips & Advice section, you will find step-by-step instructions on this process, as well as recipe ideas.

Sweet Potato Quesadillas

Serves 2-4

2 medium sweet potatoes
 ½ onion
 1 clove garlic
 1 ½ tsp dried oregano
 1 ½ tsp dried basil
 1 tsp cumin

Chile powder to taste
 Olive oil to sauté
 4 flour tortillas
 4 oz Brie or other medium soft cheese
 2-3 leaves swiss chard, sorrel, or a handful of spinach

—Preheat oven to 400° F.

—Cut sweet potatoes into chunks, cook in steamer basket until soft, and then mash. Chop garlic and onion and sauté in a large skillet. Add spices and sweet potato and mix well, adding a little water if it's too sticky. Turn burner very low to keep warm without burning.

—Oil a large baking sheet, spread tortillas on it to lightly oil one side, then spread filling on half of each. Top with slices of cheese and shredded greens, then fold tortillas to close (oiled side out). Bake until browned and crisp (about 15 minutes); cut into wedges for serving.

This is one of Camille Kingsolver's recipes borrowed from [Animal, Vegetable, Miracle](#). You can download all other recipes in the book at www.AnimalVegetableMiracle.com.

Winter Delivery Schedule

- There is one more regular season vegetable delivery! The very last delivery will be December 14/15.
- BEEF, PORK & POULTRY will be delivered December 7/8. There is also a BEEF & PORK delivery on January 18/19.
- Winter fruit will be delivered December 14/15 and January 4/5 & 18/19.
- Holiday orders will be delivered December 14/15.
- Extended season vegetable boxes will be delivered January 4/5 & 18/19.
- 2008 sign up forms are now available on our website! The first deliveries next spring are May 9 & 10.

Grazier's Organic Beef

We are still taking orders for 2007-2008 beef deliveries. If you are planning on ordering beef this winter, please consider placing your order for the December 7/8 delivery. We still have lots of beef for this delivery!! Brochures and order forms are available at your CSA pick up site, or on the "Beef" page of our website.