

Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Customers - Since 1993
Local and Madison Edition -Green Week Delivery



Strawberry 101

by Andrea Yoder & Richard de Wilde

Strawberry Day is upon us and we hope you are making plans to visit our valley to celebrate this year's strawberry harvest. We are now in our second week of picking and the picking is plentiful! We invite you to visit the farm on Sunday, June 22 from Noon to 6 pm for a potluck lunch, tour of the farm and fields, strawberry picking and just a general day of fun on the farm. While there won't be a quiz when you arrive for Strawberry Day, we thought you might find it interesting to learn a little more about what it takes to grow and produce strawberries.

At Harmony Valley Farm, we use the Matted Bed system of strawberry production. This means we plant bare root dormant strawberry plants in early spring. We space them about 16-18" apart. We just planted our new field this year, so you'll have a chance to see what a strawberry field looks like in its first year. The

THIS WEEK'S BOX

GARLIC SCAPES: Looks like a wreath! As scapes grow they curl upward, ultimately straighten, and then grow little seed-like bulbs. When garlic scapes are still in full curl, they are tender and delicious and provide a subtle garlic flavor and crunchiness if added to salads and soups. They cook well in stir-fries, and can be processed in vinegars, as pickles, or into a green "pesto" sauce. Try fried scapes: cut scapes to green bean size and saute them in butter and salt for six to eight minutes. During the last minute of cooking, add about 1 tsp. of balsamic vinegar. Store raw scapes in a plastic bag in the refrigerator; they will keep for weeks.

POTATO ONIONS: They are a good addition to soups, noodles and Asian dishes. Slice them thin and on a bias for a gourmet garnish.

KOHLRABI: As my mom says.. "What is that?" A peculiar looking and fun veggie that is guaranteed to make you smile! Kohlrabi is widely used in Central Europe and Asia. The name kohlrabi comes from the German "kohl", meaning cabbage, and "rabi," or turnip. It can be intimidating, but to handle simply trim the leaves and store separately. The leaves, firm and green, can be cooked but will need to be used within a couple of days. The bulbs should be stored, unwashed, in a plastic bag. They will hold for about a week in the refrigerator. Smaller kohlrabi are the sweetest and most tender. Tender, young kohlrabi is delicious eaten raw. Peel the outer skin with a paring knife. Slice, dice, or grate, and add to salads. Use on raw vegetable platters or serve with a creamy dip. Substitute in recipes calling for radishes. Grated kohlrabi can be added to slaw, but lightly salt it first and let stand for several minutes. Kohlrabi can also be steamed or boiled with the skin unpeeled and removed after cooking. Steam or boil until bulbs are tender, peel skin, and season with butter, salt, and pepper. See recipes on back.

STRAWBERRIES: Enjoy as a simple elegant dessert. Toss with honey, orange juice and garnish with fresh mint. We pick them when they are ripe, so enjoy soon or freeze for using later!

HEAD LETTUCE: We grow several varieties here at the farm including the red leaf and red Boston in your box this week. Trim the end off, submerge the greens in a sink of cold water and turn leaves in a salad spinner to dry. Great as a salad with a light vinaigrette, or on your favorite sandwich. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

BROCCOLI: Steam, serve raw, toss with noodles or make a broccoli sauce. Broccoli is an anti-cancer food that when cooked releases a sulfur smelling compound. Refrigerate fresh broccoli in a plastic bag right when you get home. Use broccoli within 3 days of pick up, since the vitamin content will decrease the longer it is stored.

NAPA CABBAGE: Sometimes referred to as "celery cabbage" due to its crispy, fibrous leaves and mild, sweet flavor, similar to a cross between cabbage, iceberg lettuce, and celery. It has an oblong head with pale green to white crinkled leaves. It is a versatile cabbage, which can be eaten raw, or cooked and used in stir-fry and soups. It is also enjoyed pickled with salt and chiles to make Kim Chee, a traditional Korean side dish. Napa will keep a week or more. Rinse in cold water and drain well for maximum freshness.

RED KOMATSUNA: An Asian vegetable green with beautiful deep red, rounded, tender leaves. It is slender, fleshy, rounded with green stems and makes an attractive addition to any baby salad mix. The leaves are rich in calcium and are versatile for use in soups, stir-fries, or boiling. Store loosely in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.

FIRST SUMMER FRUIT SHARE DELIVERY THIS WEEK:

Flame Seedless Grapes, June Crest Peaches, Gold Pineapple, Bing Cherries,
Apricots, Pluots, Navel Oranges

The fruit share is a separate purchase. Contact Terri at the farm if you'd like to add it to your shares.

first year we do not harvest fruit from these plants. While they will produce blossoms, we will snip off the blossoms to shunt the energy in the plant towards producing runners for daughter plants instead of producing fruit. Generally the amount of fruit a first-year plant would produce is not that great, thus it is more productive to forego the fruit. The main strawberry plant will send off new growth called runners. These runners will produce daughter plants that will set their roots into the soil thus propagating our strawberry crop.

Over the course of the first year, we will control weeds with mechanical cultivation and hand weeding and observe and treat the plants for disease or nutrient deficiency. In the fall, the plants will start to produce the embryos or buds in the crown or base of the plant for the following year. We will cover the plants heavily with mulch to protect this new growth from freezing and thawing over the course of the winter. In the spring, the plants will be uncovered and the mulch will fill in between the plants to help choke out any weeds and to provide a clean bed for the strawberries. The mulch isn't removed too soon though or the plants will start blossoming and are at greater risk of being damaged by frost. We cover the field with large row covers, basically a huge blanket to keep the strawberries warm and protected on nights when we anticipate freezing temperatures.

This year we planted 10 different varieties of strawberries. We select the varieties based on their ripening season, flavor, color, disease resistance and production. Every year we evaluate the plants and the characteristics of their fruit to decide which varieties we like best and want to plant again. In California and Florida, two major strawberry producing states, the varieties they plant are "ever-bearing." These varieties have longer ripening seasons and have been bred to be a firmer berry with a longer shelf life

ROASTED KOHLRABI

SERVES 4

2 kohlrabi, leaves and stems removed
3 garlic scapes, sliced on bias
olive oil, to toss
salt and pepper, to taste

--Remove skin from kohlrabi and chop into medium bite- sized pieces.
--Slice garlic scapes into a rough bias
--Toss garlic scapes and kohlrabi in oil and season with salt and pepper.
--Place on a roasting pan and put in a 350°F oven for 30-40 minutes or until golden and tender.

KOHLRABI WITH CREAMY COLESLAW DRESSING

MAKES 4 CUPS

1 pound fresh kohlrabi, trimmed, peeled, grated or cut into strips
Add any other crunchy veggie of your choice: broccoli, bok choy, garlic scapes, radishes, carrots
Fresh mint, chopped

DRESSING

1/4 cup cream
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/2 tablespoon mustard
Pinch celery salt, to taste
1/2 teaspoon sugar
Salt & pepper to taste - go easy here

Whisk cream into light pillows - this takes a minute or so, no need to get out a mixer. Stir in remaining dressing ingredients, the kohlrabi and other crunchy veggies. Serve immediately.

to hold up to shipping. While these strawberries often look pretty, their flavor is no comparison to any local berry you will get in early summer. The berries we plant are "June-bearing." While our season is shorter in comparison, we select varieties that ripen at different times so we can extend our season as long as we can. We have some early berries, (Earliglow is a favorite—judge for yourself at Strawberry Day) some mid-season, and some late ripening varieties.

After the harvest is done, we will renovate the field. This means we will destroy some of the plants to promote more runners and daughter plant production for the next year. We only harvest off our field for 2 years before it is destroyed and we move to the new field. Why do we do this when the field is still producing? Well, we like to keep our patch as clean as we can and free from perennial weeds. The older the patch, the greater

the chance that weed seeds such as dandelion and thistle will make their way into the patch. A young, clean patch will usually have greater production and yields.

The best way to eat a strawberry is while standing in the patch with the sun overhead and a gentle breeze blowing across your face. While I hope you have the chance to do this, the second best option is to eat locally grown berries in season. Sliced berries are a great topper for a bowl of cereal, ice cream, pancakes, waffles, or added to a spinach salad. You can also preserve them to eat later in the year in the form of frozen berries, strawberry jam or syrup. Other popular ways to enjoy strawberries include strawberry shortcake, pie, or chocolate covered berries!

Enjoy your strawberries this season and we look forward to seeing you at Strawberry Day!

Strawberry Day!

Sunday June 22 Noon-6pm at the Farm

Potluck, Wagon Tour, U-Pick Strawberries!