



Harmony Valley Farm

Producers of Fine Organic Produce & Beef

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

Twin Cities Edition

Farm Update

by Richard DeWilde

Weather * We have had adequate to average rainfall, but lately it comes in 2" - 3" amounts at one time with almost two weeks of very hot weather in between. Not quite what we would order, but we try not to whine and complain, so we'll just say that we are thankful that the numerous tornados, high winds, and hail have missed us. Our irrigation has been mostly for the drip lines under the plastic covered beds. We have pumped about 500,000 gallons of water to keep these crops supplied!

Planting * Week after week of full CSA boxes with a nice variety takes careful planning, good time management and cooperative weather. We plant weekly from early April to mid September. We were happy to have an abundance of salad greens for the May boxes, but then we lost a couple consecutive plantings, first it was too hot and dry, then it flooded. We thought the hot weather had put an end to the flea beetles, so we did not cover the plantings, it cooled down, the flea beetles returned and ate the greens full of holes (poor management?). All of the above left us with several weeks without greens, but looks like they will be returning now for at least a couple weeks. We missed a corn/bean/edamame 4th planting last week; the early cucumbers will not be plentiful, but the late planting looks good. Sweet potatoes were planted late, on June 15, but could still make a decent crop. Carrots, beets and parsnips are all growing well. The next two weeks are critical for fall carrots, beets, turnips, etc. Fall cabbage, broccoli, and romanesco is already planted.

Pests * Flea Beetles, "Argh!" Cover, cover, cover! No other insect problems. The reflective mulch is doing it's job repelling thrips on onions and shallots, cucumber beetles on melons and potato



Richard with the Italian garlic drying in the greenhouse

beetles on eggplant.

Weeds * Many days of various cultivating tools on tractors and clean up by a Hmong Crew contracted to hoe and hand weed what the tractor misses have helped us keep ahead of them mostly. The Hmong crew got through 5 acres of parsnips and 4 acres of beets and carrots all in one critical week, thank you to Ya Lee and crew! (a crew that for a few days numbered as many as 17 people with their handmade hoes with razor sharp edges, wielded with speed and precision.)

Labor * We have had a large and hardworking crew this spring, some days totaling 40 or more. It is amazing what that many dedicated people can get done in a day, but yet there is always more to do the next day. We have been blessed with a steady stream of job applicants this spring. Some lasted only a day, many have become an important part of our crew. Various illnesses and random (not serious) injuries left us needing to take stock of who was here on a given day before we could implement our plan. Recently this has stabilized with a full crew here daily, just in time for the garlic harvest! The garlic is almost in, earlier than ever before, some 35,000 bulbs total! The biggest and best 8,000 will be selected for replanting in October. 17,500 bulbs will go into the next 20 CSA boxes.

Still to come * We have 3 plantings of sweet corn, beans and edamame, all looking good - corn fence goes up this week to protect from deer and raccoons! The first

This Week's Box

Green Week

- ♥ **BLACK CURRANTS:** Best cooked down into a syrup for pancakes.
- ♥ **BROCCOLI:** Use stalks to make a vegetable slaw
- ♥ **GREEN TOP CARROTS:** Slice and add to salad mix
- ♥ **CAULIFLOWER:** Toss with olive oil and spices and roast until golden
- ♥ **CUCUMBER:** Toss with sweet and sour vinaigrette, pickled ginger and sesame seeds for a salad to top fish
- ♥ **YELLOW AND/OR GREEN BEANS:** See feature on back
- ♥ **RED BEETS:** Use in a traditional Borscht soup
- ♥ **RED SCALLIONS:** Slice thin and add to salad mix
- ♥ **RED NORLAND POTATOES:** First potatoes of the season! Boil, toss with butter and fresh herbs and enjoy!
- ♥ **SALAD MIX:** After a little break, salad's back on your table!
- ♥ **ZUCCHINI OR SCALLOP SQUASH:** Toss into a summer chowder along with red potatoes, beans, and carrots.
- ♥ **FRESH GARLIC:** Delicious sauted with summer squash and basil.
- CHOICE**
- ♥ **BASIL:** Steep in green tea along with mint for an herbal tea

corn has tassels and baby ears with an abundance of delicate purple silks draped from their top. The cantaloupe and watermelon look fantastic, with thousands of 5" melons growing on healthy vines. Tomatoes and tomatillos are mulched, staked, tied and setting on fruit. When you open a tomatillo husk you see and smell the delicate, moist fruit protected inside. Peppers look

Vegetable of the Week - Green Beans

very good, with thousands of tiny peppers set on! Eggplant is blooming and setting fruit and we start digging potatoes this week! Our trial planting of okra is producing already. Look for this one next year. The second crop of broccoli is coming on strong and the fall raspberries are starting to bloom. We have been eating blueberries from an experimental planting, evaluating many varieties for size, flavor, and earliness with plans for a large spring planting of the best varieties.

You really should come out and see for yourself - tour begins at 2:30, Saturday July 14, weather forecast sounds good, a cool 78 degrees.

SUMMER BARN DANCE

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

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

BOX PICK -UP REMINDER

On the second page of your 2007 CSA calendar you will find a listing of all CSA delivery sites, site coordinators and their contact information, as well as the scheduled pick-up times. As a courtesy to your coordinator, we ask that you plan to pick up your box within the scheduled pick-up time. If you are unable to pick up at the scheduled time, please contact your coordinator in advance to arrange alternate plans. We are grateful to our coordinators who are a tremendous help to our CSA program and do a great job. We do not expect coordinators to give reminder phone calls to the owners of leftover boxes. Not wanting to let good vegetables go to waste, they will try to find a good home for your box if you do not pick it up and have not contacted them. If you have any issues related to pick-up, especially on the delivery day, please contact your site coordinator first instead of calling the farm. They are often a better resource for such issues and will be able to help you out.

You may not have known what orach or garlic scapes were, but I'd be surprised to find too many people who aren't familiar with the classic green bean. Of course there's the famous green bean casserole or a pack of frozen mixed vegetables, both foods which grew out of the period of history where convenience foods made their debut. Ask for vegetable choices in any Pennsylvania Dutch restaurant or interstate truckstop and chances are green beans will be on the list. They are definitely a vegetable that has stood the test of time.

Originating in South America, green beans spread to North America with migrating Indian tribes. They crossed the Atlantic with Spanish explorers in the 16th century and put down roots in Europe. You may hear them referred to as "stringbeans." This is because the early varieties had tough strings that needed to be removed before eating. Stringless varieties have since been created, but the name still sticks.

Green beans are actually just immature beans, which means both the pod and seeds are tender enough to eat. Although I say "green" bean, there are actually other colors of beans, such as yellow and purple. Beans are a crop that prefer warm weather for growing. There are many different varieties of beans, which allows us to select the varieties we want to best suit our growing conditions and needs. Did you know that bean seeds come in different colors from black to brown to white? The green beans in your box this week were grown from a black seed variety. Richard chose this bean for the first planting because it will germinate in cold, wet soil. Not knowing exactly what kind of weather you might get in the spring, you always plan for the extremes. Had we had cold, wet weather after the beans were planted, we could've still had a chance at a good crop of beans. If we had chosen a seed that does not germinate unless the soil is warmer, the seeds could've rotted before they germinated and we could've lost our first crop of beans. We ended up having hot weather in May, so the beans grew well regardless!

You will be seeing several different varieties of beans in your box this summer. Beans have differing fiber contents, which do not necessarily affect flavor or tenderness, they just have different cooking times to bring them to their desired texture. Beans with higher fiber require longer cooking times than lower fiber green beans. High fiber beans fare well for transport, and are also good varieties to can because they will hold their texture and not turn to mush. The beans you have this week are low fiber beans, so eat these fresh.

Beans will last about a week if stored in the refrigerator in a perforated or loosely wrapped plastic bag. Before cooking, snap off the stem end. They can be boiled, steamed, stir-fried, roasted or added to casseroles, soups, or salads. If you are using beans in a cold salad or want to freeze them to use later, you should first blanch them in boiling water until they are just tender. Remove from the hot water and shock them in a cold water bath to stop the cooking process and retain their bright color. If you are using them in a salad with vinegar or another form of an acid, add them just prior to serving. Acid causes green beans to change from a bright, green color to olive green. If you are freezing them, blanch and shock them, then spread them out on a cloth lined tray and put it in the freezer. Once the beans are frozen, you can loosen them from the tray and put into plastic bags to store. Using this method prevents the beans from freezing into one solid block.

In addition to being a classic in the vegetable world, beans are also good for your health. They provide good sources of vitamins A, B, C, K, calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals in addition to being high in fiber and low in calories.

Warm Potato Salad with Green Beans

Serves 4

1# new potatoes
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1 Tbsp spicy brown or whole grain mustard
3/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper

1/4 tsp sugar or honey
1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots or green onion
1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 # fresh beans
1 lemon, juice & zest

-Cook potatoes in boiling, salted water until tender. Drain and allow to cool. Once cool, cut into small-medium dice.

-Blanch green beans. In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook beans just until tender, but with a small amount of crunch still remaining. Shock in ice cold water and drain.

-Combine vinegar, mustard, salt, pepper, lemon and onions. Once combined, whisk in oil. Warm dressing over low heat. Lightly toss in potatoes and green beans. Cook just enough to warm it up a little bit.