



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

May 20-21, 2011

## My Culinary Adventures By Brigitte

Hello! My name is Brigitte! I jumped the pond from Grand Rapids, Michigan in April and took up residency at Harmony Valley Farm! I will be spending the season here cooking, preserving and writing!

My culinary adventure starts out like many others. After high school, I studied graphic design, but quickly discovered I could not sit in front of a computer all day! But it wasn't until I spent a summer in France that I decided to go to culinary school.

In 2006, I moved to Grand Rapids and attended the Secchia Institute for Culinary Education. Once enrolled, I took all the classes I could. From food production and service to cake decorating and pastries, ice carving to wine, ceramics to weight lifting! When I started school, I wanted to go into cake decorating. Over the next three years, my career goals evolved slowly. I knew I didn't want to open or own my own restaurant, but I wasn't sure what else was out there. I waded through the possibilities, half-heartedly committing to an idea here and there, until I heard the phrase 'farm-to-table'. At last I had found my niche.

I grew up in small towns and farming communities across mid-Michigan, so naturally I took little interest in farming. It wasn't until my final year of culinary school that where and how our food grows got my attention. I wanted to learn more about the effort that goes into growing food and as it turned out, I wasn't alone. A few others from school had the same interest. In 2009, we formed a community-based group called Tilling to Table. Aiming to bridge the gap between farmer and consumer, we volunteered on local farms, started community gardens, hosted farm sourced dinners and put on food demos. We frequented our local farmer's market and supported local business whenever possible.

This year, I decided to fully immerse myself in both sides of the industry. At the prompting of a former HVF Chef, Matt Overdeest, whom I worked for last year, I applied for the farm chef position. In addition to working here on the farm, I will be spending the weekends in Madison working at L'Etoile Restaurant (also at the prompting of Matt and Andrea). These two opportunities are a perfect fit for my culinary interests! I am excited to continue learning about sustainable agriculture and how food arrives in our kitchen and also answering the

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**BABY ARUGULA OR SAUTÉ MIX:** See feature on back of newsletter

**CHIVES:** Chives have a pleasant, fresh onion flavor. Keep them wrapped in a damp paper towel in your crisper drawer. To preserve them, you can finely chop and freeze to add in soups, mashed potatoes or quiche.

**NETTLES:** Wear gloves or use tongs when handling! This week, try steeping the leaves for immune boosting tea! You can steep them fresh, or dry them first. Or, use them in place of spinach in white lasagna.

**SUNCHOKES:** They are native to N. America and are a very versatile ingredient. They can be steamed, boiled, roasted, sautéed, or eaten raw. They may be used in any manner you would use a potato; in soups, salads or mashed. Keep a watchful eye on them while cooking, they go from tender to mush quickly!

**RHUBARB OR ASPARAGUS\*:** Keep rhubarb wrapped in plastic in your fridge or chop and freeze. Enjoy the first of the fresh, tart flavor by roasting with orange zest and a generous drizzle of honey. Serve with crème fraiche for breakfast or meringue for dessert. Store asparagus upright in the fridge in an inch of water.

**RAMPS:** Last taste of this spring delicacy! To enjoy later in the season, pickle the bulbs and stems and use the leaves to make pesto.

**OVERWINTERED SPINACH:** Add some of this sweet spinach to a power packed green smoothie! Puree with banana, kiwi, mango, avocado and orange juice. Add your favorite mix in (spirulina, bee pollen, flax seed, wheatgrass) for an extra boost!

**BURDOCK:** Burdock is...yes, the root of the plant that spreads its burs by sticking to dogs, socks and anything else that comes near it. We grow burdock because it is a unique, tasty vegetable with a lot of very healthy benefits. The thin skin does not need to be peeled for use, simply chop or shred it for your use. Burdock has an 'earthy' flavor, but not the flavor of dirt! It goes well with mushrooms, onions, garlic, beef, barley, rice, etc. It is often used in tea and tonics for its medicinal properties. From a culinary standpoint, a classic preparation is Kinpira, a stir-fried burdock dish (see our website for recipe). It stores very well, just keep it in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer.

**GARDEN HERB PACKS:** One for each VEGGIE share on the list this week. Sharing households should share one pack. Great for the garden or containers!

Rosemary	Thyme	Savory
Oregano	Sage	Italian Parsley
Basil	Basil	Curly Parsley

**Planting tip:** Spring is taking it's time rolling in this year, and we still may have some chilly nights ahead of us. If you plant your herbs in an outside garden or in a pot that you are keeping outside, be aware that chilly nights may cause damage to your herb plants. Basil in particular is susceptible to chill injury at temperatures less than 50°F. If you do have herb plants outside, be sure to cover them with a lightweight sheet or other cover to prevent chill injury.

### **\*Speaking of a slow spring, isn't it time for Asparagus & Rhubarb?**

We are fully two weeks behind "normal" for temperatures this spring. We have still been having chilly nights with temperatures in the low 30's. Daytime temperatures have been cooler than normal as well. Plants grow more slowly in cool weather, and they really need both heat and sunshine to grow. We have started to do small harvests of asparagus and rhubarb from our fields, but it will be a little while before we are able to meet all of our needs from our fields alone.

We don't want you to miss out on asparagus and rhubarb, so we decided to collaborate with our Amish vegetable grower friends until our fields start producing more. Quantities of asparagus and rhubarb are limited right now, so we ask that you please be patient as Mother Nature slowly ushers in spring.

age old question, 'Now what do I do with it?'

As for the future, I plan on starting a personal chef business next year. I will provide my clients with customized, healthful meals with an emphasis on sustainable and organic ingredients. In an effort to eliminate the popular myth that food comes only from the shelves at the grocery store, I also want to work with my clients to grow a garden at their home. Whether a small potted herb garden or outdoor vegetable garden, I feel that it is fulfilling to gain understanding of what it takes to grow the food on your plate.

In the more distance future, I would like to be involved in urban gardening programs and creating community programs for city farm markets. Although I can't deny my roots or the charm of rural areas, I feel myself drawn to large cities and the many opportunities they present.

When I'm not in the kitchen, I enjoy quilting (a hobby I picked up from my mom and grandmothers), reading (Rowling can claim me as an eternal Harry Potter fan), photography (I never leave home without a camera) and staying fit (in March, I ran the Paris half marathon and just signed up for the Chicago half in September). My bucket list includes owning a blue merle border collie, cooking with Jamie Oliver, sky diving, and traveling to Prague!

I look forward to the coming season and meeting you at this year's farm events!

## Evergreen Salad in Sunflower Thyme Marinade

### SUNFLOWER THYME MARINADE

2 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves  
1 clove garlic  
1 cup extra virgin olive oil  
½ cup sunflower seeds  
1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar  
1 tsp sea salt

### SALAD

You can use any mix of greens that you enjoy and have available, including Sauté or Salad Mix, Spinach, Watercress, Arugula, Kale, Mustard Greens, etc. Tear the leaves into bite sized pieces, and figure about 1 cup per serving, if used as a side dish.

-For salad, put your choice of greens in a large salad bowl. Chop leftover stems and add to salad.

-To make the marinade, blend all marinade ingredients until smooth.

-To serve, toss salad with enough marinade to lightly coat the greens and let it sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving. The longer the greens marinate, the softer they become.

-Marinade will keep for three to four days when stored in the fridge in a closed container.

Recipe from *ani's raw food kitchen*, cookbook by Ani Phyo

## Vegetable Feature: Arugula and Spring Greens

It is mid-May and last year at this time arugula and lettuce greens were prolific and ready for delicious salads, but not this year. This year, Mother Nature has determined that the leafy vegetable shall grow slower. We had the first planting in the ground on April 8, but the cool temperatures this spring, combined with the cooler nights, have kept them from growing very quickly even though they were covered with a thin polyester cover that traps 4° of extra heat, night and day. So we lovingly wait for the ground to warm and the sun to work its magic. In the meantime, we have an assortment of greens to fill your box for the next several weeks including baby arugula, Sauté mix (including Red Russian kale, tat soi, pac Choi, purple and green mizuna and spinach), watercress and spinach. All of these greens are versatile and can be used in raw preparations but also respond well to a quick sauté in a bit of olive oil.

If you don't receive arugula in your box this week, don't despair. This week we are cutting our first planting...but there is more to come. Arugula is a beautiful leafy salad green also known as Italian Cress. Although it has been extremely popular with Italians, American palates have come to appreciate the peppery mustard flavor of arugula and it is actually very similar to the watercress that we started harvesting last week. In the Middle Ages, arugula was esteemed not only as a diuretic and a digestive, but also as a culinary herb. Salads, soups, and sautéed vegetable dishes all benefit from, not only arugula, but the other greens in your box as well.

If you like a traditional basil pesto, try making other types of pesto using arugula, spinach, or other greens. Make as you would basil pesto, just use the arugula or other greens in place of the basil leaves. You can also use arugula leaves or other greens to finish your favorite pasta dish. Sprinkle the fresh greens on top of your hot sauce and allow them to wilt slightly. It not only makes a lovely garnish but adds a pleasant peppery taste.

The recipes that follow include not only the arugula, but the other spring greens in your box as well. As the weeks go by, you'll have plenty of opportunities to enjoy arugula, Sauté mix, Salad mix, and more spinach. Keep the recipes in this newsletter handy; the greens in boxes to come can be used interchangeably, in those recipes.

## Burdock & Mixed Greens Stir-Fry

Serves 2-3 as a side dish OR 3-4 as a main dish (if using pork)

*This dish can be made vegetarian style, or it can be made with ground pork. Any variety of greens will work with this recipe including spinach, arugula or sauté mix. Keep this recipe handy for the weeks to come and include other cooking greens as well including hon tsai tai, yukina savoy, baby bok choy, etc.*

½-1 Tbsp vegetable oil  
½ pound ground pork (optional)  
2 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced  
½ cup chives, cut into ½" pieces OR ¾ cup green onions, sliced thin  
1 piece green garlic or 3-4 ramp bulbs, sliced thin  
1 cup mushrooms, sliced  
1 cup burdock, sliced thin  
¼ cup white wine  
2 Tbsp rice vinegar  
2 Tbsp soy sauce  
¼- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (can use dried Super Chiles)  
4-6 ounces (2-3 cups) assorted greens (spinach, sauté mix, arugula, or other greens)  
Ground white pepper, to taste  
Salt, to taste

--Heat a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add vegetable oil and ground pork. Cook until pork is browned. If you are not using pork, simply heat oil in pan and move on to the next step.

--Add ginger, chives or onions and garlic or ramps. Stir-fry for 1-2 minutes until ingredients are starting to soften and are aromatic.

--Add mushrooms and cook for another 2 minutes. Add burdock and continue to stir-fry for 1 minute.

--Add wine, vinegar, soy sauce, and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine, then add greens. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan and allow the greens to wilt down for about 2 minutes.

--Remove the cover and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

--Serve on its own or with a side of rice.