



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

October 26-27, 2012

Fall: The Crack Between Two Worlds

By Farmer Richard deWilde

Fall has settled in and I have to admit, this is a challenging, yet special time of year. On one hand the beautiful, cool fall days produce wonderful, intense colors. We have seen it in the fall colors of the tree leaves and we have seen it in the intense and vibrant colors of our fall leafy greens. You can taste the difference in the thick, sweet leaves of the spinach, bok choy and kales. Even the mustards and arugula are mildly hot, yet sweet at the same time. Every year we gamble on fall greens. We plant late crops knowing that only a climate change induced fall would bring them to maturity. We take care to cover them when temperatures are expected to dip below freezing and we uncover them when temperatures rise high enough, knowing that powdery mildew would thrive under a warm moist cover.

Despite our attempts to preserve the greens as long as possible, it is the plants themselves that are truly amazing. While we cover them during cold nights, these are carefully chosen, cold-tolerant plants that have the unique ability to change their shape to preserve themselves during temperature changes. When temperatures are low, they spread out flat to the ground, hugging it for the warmth that the black soil absorbs during the day. They draw out the water from their leaves to reduce the risk of the water freezing in their cells causing them to expand and cause cell damage. This causes them to look wilted on a frosty morning, leaving you wondering if this morning marks the end of the crop. Once the plant thaws, however, the leaves recover and the plant perks up. They also convert starch to sugar because sugars freeze at temperatures that are lower than water. The storage crops, such as carrots, Brussels sprouts, kale, broccoli and cauliflower, all become sweeter, more intensely colored and full of flavor. For the plants it is all done for the sake of survival; for us, our efforts are done for the great flavor and nutrition of these last greens of fall and for the storage crops for winter.

The challenge of this otherwise beautiful season is to anticipate the weather. We want to leave these greens in the field as long as possible, yet harvest before damage from freezing temperatures occurs. These amazing fall plants can survive, thaw out and grow again after nighttime temperatures of 25°F; however, an unexpected dip to 15-20°F can cause permanent damage. For this reason we check the 'Final Harvest' list and weather forecast on a daily basis, prioritize and harvest when weather permits. We cannot harvest anything that is frosty or frozen.

This Week's Box

SPINACH: We've noticed the color and flavor of this spinach intensify with the onset of colder temperatures this fall. This makes a delicious raw salad tossed with balsamic vinaigrette, toasted walnuts, apples and blue cheese.

LACINATO KALE: This is my favorite kale to eat as a raw salad. Because the leaves are thicker than spinach or salad, you'll want to "marinate" the kale in a vinaigrette for 1-2 hours before serving to soften the leaves.

BABY GINGER: We're learning how to grow ginger in Wisconsin! We hope you enjoy the fresh, bright flavor of this freshly harvested, tender ginger. The skin is pretty thin right now and sometimes you can just rub it off, otherwise thinly peel the skin and use the inner flesh in teas, mince and add to stir-fry or vinaigrettes, or pickle it!

BROCCOLI ROMANESCO: What a gorgeous vegetable! This makes for an attractive presentation when included in a stir-fry along with daikon radish, carrots, garlic and red onions.

BROCCOLI: Saute with garlic & onions and season with a sprinkling of toasted sesame seeds

DAIKON RADISH: See vegetable feature

CARROTS: Sometimes just a simple shredded carrot salad is in order. Try tossing shredded carrots with a light ginger vinaigrette made with minced fresh ginger, rice vinegar, honey, white pepper and sunflower oil. Toss the carrots with the vinaigrette and garnish with chopped peanuts and/or cilantro.

RED & YELLOW ONIONS: Slice very thinly and toss into a raw vegetable salad. If the slices are thin, the onion will meld well with the other flavors to add a well-balanced flavor without too much pungency.

RED RUSSIAN GARLIC: Take a moment to notice the floral undertones in the aroma and flavor of this garlic. This variety is a full-flavored garlic that adds a nice background flavor to any dish and holds its flavor well in both raw and cooked preparations.

SUGAR DUMPLING SQUASH: This is one of our favorite varieties of squash this year—sweet & flavorful! They really don't need much more than a little salt & pepper and a pat of butter.

SWEET POTATOES: One of Captain Jack's favorite fall sweet potato preparations is sweet potato French fries! He doesn't like to get grease on his paws, so we brush slices or sticks of sweet potato lightly with oil and then bake them in the oven on a rack placed on a cookie sheet. You'll need to turn them once during baking so both sides get crispy.

PURPLE VIKING POTATOES: The flesh on this potato is silky smooth and creamy white. It makes for a stunning presentation when prepared as a "smashed potato" to preserve the beautiful purple skin. Kick it up a notch by doing roasted garlic smashed potatoes!

ITALIAN PARSLEY: Use this to make parsleyed potatoes with butter - simple and satisfying!

It must thaw slowly in order for the plant to recover. While we harvest greens in the morning all summer long, now we can only harvest underground roots on frosty mornings and have to save our greens for after they recover from those frosty nights. There is more than a little nervousness with fall harvest for all farmers. Will it rain too much to harvest dry crops or root crops? Will it turn suddenly frigid with not enough time to get the harvest in? We wake up in the night from harvesting dreams thinking of these kinds of things. We wake in the morning to check the thermometer before we can plan our day based on weather forecasts. We cross off crops on the list as harvest is completed. We really do play quite a game with the weather. Remember the 3 feet of snow on October 29th, 1990? I do! We would not be ready for that this year, but we are getting close. We had a total of 36 bins of carrots

at the end of one of our days this week and also managed to miss a 70-100% chance of rain! Fall really is a crack between the two worlds of summer and winter. Just give us another two weeks and we will be ready for that snow! Well, maybe we won't be, but our fields will!

Have You Liked Us On Facebook Yet?

'Like' Harmony Valley Farm on Facebook to keep up on happenings around the farm, the contents of our CSA boxes, trivia (with occasional chances to win a gift certificate to HVF) and to share and interact with us and other HVF fans!



www.facebook.com/harmonyvalleyfarm

Vegetable Feature: Daikon Radishes

by Chef Chelsea Brannan

Daikon, from the Japanese words dai (meaning large) and kon (meaning root) is a long vegetable and is actually an Asian radish with a sweeter, mild fresh flavor than most types of radishes. Daikon is a white-fleshed winter radish, crunchy and juicy. In my research I've found that it is also known as "Japanese" or "Chinese" Radish and lastly "winter" radish. This is the first radish in a group of winter storage radishes we grow and will deliver over the remainder of the season. Winter storage radishes are different in that they generally have a thicker skin and a much longer storage potential. Daikon radishes have the thinnest skin and will store for several weeks before the quality starts to diminish. Beauty heart radishes are another Asian radish known for their great storage potential through the winter months. Finally, our third winter radish is the Black Spanish radish. This radish is actually thought to have originated in Northern Europe where winters are more severe. Black radishes are very solid and will store for months.

Our daikons, coming fresh from the fields, are a gorgeous, creamy white. Its shape is long and cylindrical, similar to a large parsnip or carrot. But some grow

widely into huge shapes! This lovely vegetable is loaded with vitamin C and is a good source of potassium. In its past, Daikon was used as an antiseptic, diuretic, aperitif and in tonics. We enjoy eating daikon most after a few frosty nights when the flavor mellows and it gets a sweetness to it as well.

For storing your daikon, it can be placed in a loosely closed or in a perforated plastic bag for one to two weeks for best quality. Daikon can be stored for a few months in a cold "cellar" type environment.

You can serve daikon in a wide variety of ways! It's wonderful eaten raw, in hors d'oeuvres, with dips, in salads, and sandwiches. Try grating daikon and serve with a simple citrus vinaigrette for an easy accompaniment to poultry, seafood or fish. Cooking Daikon is easy! Just cut it to your needs and add it to soups or stir fries. Daikon flavor will mellow more when cooked, and I find it delicious in soups. I've enjoyed daikon in a kim-chi (fermented cabbage) variation, pickled with carrots in Vietnamese Bahn Mi sandwiches (of which Chef Abbey and I are big fans of) and in an amazing Japanese soup call Oden. I believe that you'll really enjoy our daikon and hope that you have fun trying my recipes with daikon this week.

Oden - Japanese Daikon Winter Soup

by Chef Chelsea Brannan

Serves 4

Tofu Fritters

- 1 - 12 oz. package of firm tofu
- 2 Tbsp shredded carrot
- 2 Tbsp shredded onion, squeeze juice out
- 2 Tbsp shredded potato, squeeze water out
- 2 porcini mushrooms, minced
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp flour
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp salt
- Oil, for frying



Fritters:

1. To remove excess water from tofu in order to help bind, wrap tofu block in a tea towel, or cotton napkin and place between two plates. Place a heavy can or other weight on top to weight it down and slowly press out liquid. Press for 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile place enough oil in frying pan to cover bottom. Heat oil to 350° F and prepare a plate with paper towels for draining fritters after frying.
3. After pressing tofu, crumble it up so it resembles small pieces like cottage cheese. Mix with all other ingredients and drop by large spoonfuls into hot oil. Frying on each side until golden brown. Set aside to drain on prepared plate.

Soup:

1. Bring water to a boil, add dulse and bonito flakes. Simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Add daikon slices, simmer for 10 minutes, and then add carrot, ginger and potato.
3. When veggies are fork tender, add eggs and bok choy. Heat for a few minutes to warm through.
4. Season soup with soy sauce and vinegar.
5. Divide soup among four bowls with 3 slices of Daikon and 1 egg in each. Place a few tofu fritters in each bowl and serve piping hot!

For the Soup

- 6 cups water
- ½ cup loosely packed dulse or other dried seaweed*
- ½ cup loosely packed dried bonito flakes*
- 12 - ½" slices of daikon radish
- 2 small potatoes cut into 1" pieces (about ¾ cup)
- ½ cup carrot bias cut 1/4" thick
- 1 ½" piece of ginger, peeled and cut into match sticks or diced fine.
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
- 1 baby bok choy - slice into 1" strips
- 2 Tbsp reduced sodium soy sauce
- 2 tsp mirin (seasoned rice wine vinegar)

* Available at natural foods stores or specialty grocery stores

Vietnamese Pork Banh Mi Sandwiches

By Chef Chelsea Brannan

Serves 4

Start by pickling your Daikon and carrots at least four hours before serving or the night before.

- 1 large Daikon, cut lengthwise into 3 inch long strips about ¼ inch square (like French fries)
- 3 large carrots (cut the same as daikon)
- 1 cup + 4 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 qt sized glass canning jar

1. Toss daikon and carrot with 4 tsp sugar and 2 tsp salt. Set aside for 3 minutes. Daikon should be able to bend in half without breaking. At this point rinse well under cold water, rubbing veggies together to remove salt and sugar. Do this several times, about 5 minutes.
2. Combine 1 cup sugar with vinegar and water. Stir until sugar is dissolved.
3. Pack rinsed veggies into jar, then pour vinegar solution into glass jar. Seal tightly and place in coldest part of refrigerator for at least four hours before serving.

Coconut Braised Pork & Fillings for Sandwich

- 1 lb pork shoulder
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp Soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 inch piece ginger, minced
- ½ tsp sesame oil
- 1 small red onion sliced
- ½ cup cilantro leaves
- 1 sliced jalapeño (optional)
- 1 French baguette cut into four servings or use 4 Mexican Bolillo rolls

1. Combine pork and coconut milk in small pot. Cover with lid and bring to a boil. Lower heat to simmer and braise slowly over low heat for about 2 hours or until pork is falling off the bone.
2. When tender, remove from heat. Remove pork from liquid and set aside to cool and shred. Reserve coconut milk.
3. In same pot that has coconut milk, combine next 5 ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and reduce by half. Remove from heat and strain. Reserve liquid to mix with shredded pork.
4. Shred pork and add about ½ cup of reserved liquid. If needed, add more so that the shredded meat is very moist. Set aside.
5. Slice bread in half lengthwise. Fill with meat, pickled daikon and carrots, onion, cilantro and jalapeño. Serve and enjoy these tasty sandwiches!