



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

September 27-28, 2013

Changing of the Seasons: Featuring Celeriac and Leeks

by: Richard and Andrea

It comes every year, it sneaks up on us, it hides and then suddenly appears. Cool mornings of 42 degrees beckon the down vests and an extra layer of clothing feels good...and thus marks the change of our focus from summer to fall. Yes, we're still harvesting the peppers, eggplant and tomatoes twice a week or more. The greens are still coming in full force--beautiful with their dark, vibrant fall colors. Mustards, salad greens, chard, spinach and kales are still within our reach. Yet at the same time a new focus is upon us, an urgent need to plan the last fall harvests and take advantage of each cool, but sunny day. We're just finishing up the winter squash harvest....all safely stored in the greenhouse before the first frost. Sweet potatoes....shall we harvest now or wait for a little more growth and size? What about all of those carrots, beets, celeriac, turnips, beauty heart radishes and parsnips? What if we get heavy rain and have to wrestle them from the muddy ground? Burdock with its 24-inch deep roots, still dry down to 12 inches, a result of a summer of drought. Should we wait or harvest now? Where are we going to store all these things? Time to get creative. The beans are drying, but are they dry enough to harvest? We've carefully chosen our peppers to save seed for next year's crop. The stakes in the first tomato crop have been pulled and we're starting to lift and remove the plastic mulch from the tomato field as well as the melons and watermelons. Cover crops are being planted and fields are being tucked away for the winter. Ramp up to wind down.

We are very much aware of this seasonal transition on our end, but you'll start to see and make this transition to fall along with us as well as the contents of your box start to shift to fall vegetables. At the farmers' market the past several weeks, we've started hearing members and customers asking with anticipation, "When will we get celeriac and leeks?" These are the first two vegetables this season in your boxes that mark the

transition into fall. We've decided to feature these two vegetables together because they naturally appear together in many recipes and pair with other similar ingredients.

Let's tackle celeriac first. Celeriac (or celery root) is related to celery, as you might notice by its green top that resembles celery stalks. The difference is that celeriac is grown for the root and celery is grown for the stalk. Don't be intimidated by its unusual appearance, it really is quite manageable if you understand how to work with it. First, cut the green top off. The green stalks are more tough than regular celery, but they are full of flavor. Use the stalks to flavor soups, stews and stocks. You can just stick the stalk in the pot to extract the flavor while you are preparing your soup or stock. If you leave the stalk whole,

it's easy to fish out when you're done with it. It will flavor the cooking liquid with a subtle celery flavor in the background. Now back to the root portion. Cut the other gnarly end off of the celery root. Cut off just enough so you have a flat end. At this point I like to cut the root into quarters so the pieces are more manageable to hold. Use a paring knife, trim off the outside knobby skin. You can save the trimmings to use in stock as well, or discard them. Now you should be left with a creamy white root that can be used raw in salads and slaws or cooked into soups, stews, gratins, root mashes and other warm casserole type dishes.

Leeks are another interesting fall crop that deserve a bit of explanation. First, leeks are in the allium family, but they are not just another onion.

This Week's Box

UKRAINE PEPPERS: Sauté these red or orange peppers with a pointed end with onions and top it over a citrus marinated chicken breast and herb pilaf.

MINI SWEETS PEPPERS: These small and sweet peppers can be added to a kabob with onion and steak for a sweet and savory dinner.

RED OR YELLOW PIMENTO PEPPERS: Mix these sweet red/yellow peppers with cooked quinoa, lentils, chopped basil, chives, spinach, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper, and top with crumbled goat cheese.

CARROTS: For a tasty alternative to the classic burger, mix mashed carrot with chopped dried apricot, diced onion, mint, dill, parsley, and egg, roll into patties and fry in oil. Top with a juicy ripe tomato slice and mixed greens.

TOMATOES: Make a simple pasta dish with garlic, chunks of fresh tomatoes, olive oil and herbs of your choosing. Sauté briefly and toss with pasta

CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO: Toss either of these items with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast the cauliflower until golden brown. Next, puree with cream cheese, sour cream, fresh thyme, and white cheddar. Pour the mixture into a baking dish, and bake until lightly golden. Use this dip with crusty toasted baguette or crisp crackers.

PURPLE VIKING POTATOES: These potatoes are not as waxy, so they are great for mashed potatoes and soups due to their smooth, velvety texture.

RAINBOW CHARD: Chard is great sautéed in a garlic lemon butter sauce and tossed with whole wheat spaghetti pasta. Sprinkle with aged Parmesan cheese and top with grilled shrimp or scallops. You can also use the chard stems, they just require a little longer cooking time.

BABY WHITE TURNIPS: Use the turnips in a smoked turkey and white bean soup, wilt the greens in the soup just before serving and top with crisp croutons and fried pieces of leek.

GREEN TOP CELERIAC: Thinly slice celeriac and toss with sliced apples, onions, broccoli, and mix with a lemon poppy seed dressing.

LEEKs: Looking to get in the fall spirit? Spiced carrot and leek creamy soup is a great side to a gooey grilled cheese sandwich on a cool day.

GREEN ROMAINE OR RED BOSTON LETTUCE: Use the lettuce chopped and placed atop fresh tortilla chips, seasoned beef, melted cheese, diced tomato, onion, jalapeno, and salsa for an easy football party snack.

ITALIAN OR PORCELAIN GARLIC: Marinate chicken overnight in a roasted garlic oil marinade with Dijon mustard, fresh rosemary, lemon juice, pepper, and salt.

Leeks have a long tall shank with a root end and long, flag-like “leaves” on the top. Much of their top portion is trimmed and left in the field....mostly because this is the only way we can fit them into your box! The lower portion of the leek is blanched white because dirt is hilled up on the leeks periodically throughout the growing season. When you start working with the leeks, you’ll notice they have many thin layers of tissue. Because the dirt is hilled up on the leeks, it will sometimes get down between these layers. No harm done, you just need to make sure you wash them well to remove any grit. Cut the leeks into slices or pieces, depending on what your recipe calls for. Rinse well with cold water prior to use. You can do this in a colander as well. Their flavor is present, but more subtle and sophisticated. They do well when cooked for a longer time over low heat. When cooked like this the leeks will become soft and silky. Leeks don’t caramelize quite as well as onions or shallots, but they will melt in your mouth if you are patient when cooking them. Leeks are often poached and drizzled with a mustard vinaigrette as well as being used in tarts, quiches, gratins and soups.

Both celeriac and leeks pair well with other roots and tubers such as potatoes, parsnips, turnips, and rutabagas as well as other earthy vegetables such as fennel, carrots, and mushrooms. They are also a natural match for Dijon mustard, cream, milk, butter, cheese and herbs such as parsley and thyme. Both vegetables pair well with wild rice, hazelnuts, walnuts and lemons. Celeriac also pairs well with apples, pears, and cranberries.

Celeriac and leeks can both be stored for several weeks in your refrigerator. Keep them in a plastic bag or container to keep them from drying out. We hope you’ll find your favorite way to enjoy these fall vegetables and mark the transition to a new season.

Harvest Party Recap

It’s hard to believe that another Harvest Party has come and gone! We couldn’t have asked for a more beautiful day. The sun was out, clouds were sparse and the temperature was a comfortable 70°F. Everyone started to arrive around noon and we had some light snacks, delicious Kickapoo coffee and Captain Jack to greet them all. Members mixed and mingled and enjoyed some of the activities that we offered before loading onto the wagons. Adults and kids alike challenged themselves to “Name That Seed” by not only looking at the seeds, but also with the assistance of some helpful hints. They further challenged themselves to identify “What’s in the Box.” Members placed their hands in the familiar CSA boxes, but without being able to see the contents, had to rely on texture to identify what was inside.

Before loading onto the wagons, kids collected their scavenger hunt bag for the wagon tours. Around 1pm we were off to the fields! First we stopped at the tomatoes and Swiss chard where members enjoyed a fresh tomato from the vine and collected items for their scavenger hunt. Next stop was the field of peppers, tomatillos and jicama. It was quite fun to see members of all ages picking handfuls of mini-sweets and enjoying them fresh off the plant. After loading back onto the wagons, it was onto the pumpkin field. Everyone was able to pick a pumpkin or two (or three!) to take home with them. Some chose the warty ones and some chose the smooth ones; some big, some little, and some green.

Pumpkin picking stirred everyone’s appetites, so we headed back to the farm to enjoy the pig roast and potluck. Delicious food, warm Kickapoo coffee, and wonderful music from Sonic Love Child made for an enjoyable, pleasant afternoon. Kids collected activity books full of fun coloring pages and games to enjoy as they ate their food and to keep them busy on their journey home. We couldn’t be happier with the beautiful day, wonderful tours and guests we had at this year’s Harvest Party. It’s always a pleasure to see the faces and hear the stories of those that support Harmony Valley Farm. If you made it to this year’s party, thank you for taking part in the special day, and if you couldn’t be here, we hope you will have the opportunity to join us next year for one of our fun farm events!

Leek and Mushroom Sauce with Thyme over Pasta

Recipe borrowed from our friends at Angelic Organics. This recipe was featured in their book *Farmer John’s Cookbook...The Real Dirt On Vegetables*.

Serves 2-4

½ pound fresh mushrooms
 ½ pound linguine or other thin pasta
 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
 ¾ cup thinly sliced leeks
 ½ tsp salt
 ⅛ tsp black pepper
 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
 ⅓ cup dry white wine
 2 tsp fresh thyme, chopped finely
 Parmesan Cheese, freshly grated

1. Brush or briefly wash the mushrooms and cut them into thick slices, including the stems.
2. Cook the pasta according to the package directions, drain well.
3. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large pan over medium heat. Add the leeks, salt, and pepper; sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic. Cover; cook until the leeks are tender, about 5 more minutes.
4. Add the mushrooms and wine; gently simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
5. Add the pasta and thyme to the mushroom mixture; toss well. Top with grated Parmesan cheese.

Mashed Potatoes & Celeriac with Leeks

by Chef Andrea Yoder

This is a simple variation for basic mashed potatoes, but it is easy to make and very tasty.

Serves 4

2 medium potatoes (Purple Viking or Russet Potatoes are best)
 1 small or ½ of a medium Celeriac
 ½-¾ cup warm milk
 3 Tbsp butter
 2 cups thinly sliced leeks
 Salt and ground black pepper, to taste

1. Peel potatoes and celeriac and cut into quarters. Put in a medium saucepot and cover with cold water. Generously salt the water. Warm the pan over medium-high heat until it reaches a rapid simmer. Cover and simmer the vegetables until they are tender. Once they are tender, drain the water off and set the pan aside for about 10 minutes, off the burner and uncovered, to allow the steam and excess moisture to dissipate.
2. While the potatoes and celeriac are cooking, heat a medium sauté pan over medium-low heat. Melt the butter in the pan, then stir in the leeks. Sweat the leeks over low heat until they are very soft, 15-20 minutes. Do not let them brown. Once they are done cooking, set aside off the heat.
3. Once the potatoes and celeriac have cooled a bit, pour half of the warm milk over them and mash with a potato masher. Add milk as needed to get a creamy consistency. Once the potatoes and celeriac are mashed, fold in the leeks and re-heat the mixture over low heat. Season to your liking with salt and black pepper.