



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

August 22-23, 2014

## Salad Planting, Team Effort

by Kelly Kuester

Let me start out by saying that we may call Manuel Morales Peralta (aka Caliman) and Juan Pablo Cervantes Correa (aka Pablito) our salad planters, but they plant a lot more than just salad greens. Their almost weekly plantings consist of radishes, cilantro, baby bok choy, baby kale, arugula and more! They have been the salad planting team for the past two years, and they have done a great job! They understand and participate in the entire process from preparing the beds for planting to irrigating and putting on row covers after planting and finally the harvest.

They are very conscientious about each planting and pay attention to all the fine details. If we have a new lot of seed, they calibrate the salad planting machine to make sure we put out the right amount of seed. Machines aren't always right though. They follow up in the field to make sure everything is planting at the correct rate. There is a lot to keep track of: seed depth, seeds per foot, rows per bed, planter settings, etc. They execute this process every week, complete with a full set of records and maps for our files.

So far this year they have done 17 plantings with a few more to go. There are a lot of steps in the process to get to the final product – a bag of washed salad mix packed into your CSA box. There are many people involved in making that happen, but we wanted to focus on these two gentlemen this week so you can get to know them better. They not only share a bond here at Harmony Valley Farm, but also at home in Mexico!

So what is the deal with Manuel and Juan Pablo anyway? We have written a little about Manuel in a previous newsletter that included his brothers who also work on the farm. You can find that newsletter in October 17-19, 2011. At that time there were only 3 brothers here. However, we are happy to say there are now four Morales brothers working with us. That is it for the Morales brothers, there are no more, but there are a few sisters. One of which is a girlfriend to Juan Pablo! I will talk more about her in a moment. Manuel is married to a beautiful woman named Veronica with three boys at home. Eric is the oldest at 15, Manuel is 10 and Alexander is 5. Of course I asked the question, "Are you planning a child every 5 years? Maybe a new baby this year?" So, both Manuel and Alvaro (one of Manuel's brothers helping to translate) shook their head and laughed a pretty straight forward no.

Manuel lives near his entire family in the San Miguel area in Mexico. When back home he likes to go to the park and out to eat with his family and even dancing with Veronica. They have almost weekly meals at their parents' house with his siblings and their families. I picture the Christmas chaos at my house and admire this family all the more. The genuine love and caring for not only their family, but the entire crew is admirable. They even invite Juan Pablo over for most of these dinners and he will go a lot of places as a member of the family.

## This Weeks' Box

**SWEET SPANISH ONIONS:** Top off your lunch-time sandwich with thin slices of onion, arugula, tomato, bacon and a nice stinky cheese like Gorgonzola.

**ZUCCHINI:** Make as many loaves of chocolate chip zucchini bread as will fit in your freezer!

**GREEN OR WHITE CUCUMBERS:** Did you know that cucumbers are highly sensitive to ethylene? To keep them in good shape for longer, keep them away from food items like bananas, melons, and tomatoes, in particular.

**BROCCOLI:** Just like with basil, you can make a pesto with your broccoli! Try it over angel hair pasta with a little bit of cream and Parmesan. Check out Deb Perelman's blog at [www.smittenkitchen.com](http://www.smittenkitchen.com) for the recipe.

**ASSORTED MELONS:** For a delicious summer salad, cube cantaloupe and combine with diced cucumber for a nice crunch. Toss with basil, feta, olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

**RED OR YELLOW WATERMELON:** Cubed watermelon pairs well with crumbled feta, thinly sliced onions and basil. Dress with a light vinaigrette and try not to eat it all in one sitting!

**JALAPEÑOS:** Slice jalapeños in half, scrape out the seeds, and stuff with cream cheese, crumbled bacon and shredded cheddar cheese. Bake at 300°F for 20-30 minutes. Be careful not to touch your eyes after handling these peppers!

**EDAMAME:** These are fresh soybeans and are best when cooked. Boil the edamame in their pods for 3-5 minutes in heavily salted water. Remove the edamame from the water and run them under cold water. Squeeze the pods to pop the beans out of the pod. Eat the bean and discard the pod—it is not edible.

**ASSORTED TOMATOES:** Your box may contain Black Velvet tomatoes. You can identify them as the small, round, firm dark tomatoes. They are ripe and ready to eat when about ¾ of the tomato is maroon. It is best to ripen tomatoes at room temperature.

**SWEET CORN:** Boil corn for about 3 minutes, then cut from cob and add to black beans and diced tomatoes. Toss in chopped cilantro, minced jalapeños and garlic, and add a splash of lime juice. This salad is so tasty that chips are optional!

**TOMATILLOS:** See vegetable feature & recipes in this week's newsletter.

**CARROTS:** Try a classic Moroccan carrot salad with Harissa, preserved lemon, garlic, cilantro, white vinegar and olive oil. This salad is even better the next day!

**GOLDEN AND PURPLE POTATOES:** Check out the recipe—Spanish Roasted Potato Salad—at [www.food52.com](http://www.food52.com) for a tasty take on Spanish Patatas Bravas.

**GREEN BELL PEPPER:** Cut into a medium dice and saute along with onions, fresh corn kernels and zucchini. Season with salt & pepper and add diced tomatoes just before serving.

**GRAPE OR SUNGOLD TOMATOES:** Put these one-bite beauties on a skewer with chunks of onion & zucchini. Brush with olive oil and season with salt & pepper. Grill until veggies are tender.

**CHOICE: EGGPLANT**—See last week's newsletter for more information about the different varieties of eggplant and their uses.

This brings me to, who is Juan Pablo?

So Juan Pablo is a single guy with his eye on Araceli Morales, a sister to Manuel. They have been 'dating' a few years now and Juan Pablo has been building a house in Mexico for when they get married, and no wedding before it is completed. Before you get too excited, there is no date planned yet, although I have been pushing for one. I was asked to go and of course I would love to attend that wedding. We will see when they actually set a date. I hear that the house is almost complete, just a few more windows and smaller framing work to finish it up. I started going through Juan Pablo's family and found that each brother or sister has a whole story so I think I have them all with 7 siblings' total. One of which, Alfredo, started working with us last year and is also 'dating' another Morales sister. The two families do like each other! One of Juan Pablo's older brothers, Francisco, was killed in an accident last year at the age of 26. That was a hard story to hear, and for him to tell. His entire family is, in Alvaro's words, 'very religious'. They attend church together weekly and both Juan Pablo and Alfredo were helpers in their Catholic church in Mexico. Two of their sisters, Maria

Carla and Alicia, still play piano, guitars and other instruments for their church at least once a week. Juan Pablo said they are actually there most nights. When in Mexico and not working on his house, Juan Pablo helps his father, Juan, with his business fixing tires in his tire shop.

I could go on and on about these two and their families, but I only have so much space in a newsletter. I (and Richard) took some pictures of the guys and we will include those with the blog post this week, so make sure you check out these handsome men at work here: [www.harmonyvalleyfarm.blogspot.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.blogspot.com).



Juan Pablo and Manuel

## Featured Vegetable this Week: Tomatillos

By Chef Caleb Crets

Tomatillos resemble a green tomato, except they are covered by a paper-like husk. They are thought to have originated in South America. When you cut one open, you'll see that they have a dense flesh with a lot of tiny seeds which allows them to spread like a weed if the fruit drops off the plant and is left behind. They are a plant of the nightshade family and have many names such as husk tomato or green tomato.

We start tomatillos in the green house before transplanting them to the field about 4 weeks later. In the field, we put stakes in between the plants to support them as they grow. Each week the crew "ties" the growing tomatillo plants to keep the plant growing upward and keep the plants off the ground. Each week they grow about a foot (That's about 2 inches a day!) until they get to be massive plants over 6 feet tall with a mess of stems and leaves that make it feel like a tomatillo jungle when you walk through the field. They aren't bothered by too many insects, but they do attract a big black and tan bumble bee which likes to collect pollen from the abundance of yellow blossoms. When it's time to harvest, the crew picks by feel, looking for the tomatillos that have filled their husks.

Tomatillos are commonly used to make salsa verde, but they can also be used in other types of sauces, moles, soups, stews, marinades and salads. They can be eaten raw or cooked. You'll find they have a tangy, fruity flavor and a soft, smooth texture when cooked. You may also notice they have a lot of natural pectin that helps to thicken the sauce. Tomatillos are best stored at about 50°F, but can be stored on your counter for several days or in a paper bag in the refrigerator. Remove the husk before using and wash to remove the sticky film on the fruit. If you aren't ready to use your tomatillos this week, you can remove the husk and pop them in the freezer in their raw form.

### Fried Tomatillo Frittata

Recipe adapted from Deborah Madison's book *Vegetable Literacy*.

#### Serves 4

3 medium to large or 6 small tomatillos, sliced ¼-inch thick  
½ cup fine corn meal or flour seasoned with salt & pepper  
3-4 Tbsp olive oil  
6 eggs  
2 Tbsp chopped parsley  
2 Tbsp sweet onion, minced  
2 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese  
Salt & pepper, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. On the stove-top, preheat an oven-proof skillet over medium heat and add 2 Tbsp oil. Dredge the tomatillo slices in the cornmeal or flour and pan-fry until golden brown on one side. Flip the slices over and brown the other side. You want them golden, but not mushy. Remove them from the pan and put them on a plate lined with paper towels or a rack.
2. Wipe out the pan to remove the oil you used to fry the tomatillos in. Add the remaining 1-2 Tbsp oil and return the pan to the stove. Decrease the heat of the burner to low.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs until they are a little foamy on top. Add the parsley, onions and cheese. Pour the eggs into the skillet, season with a little salt and pepper. Place the fried tomatillo slices on top. Shake the pan gently a few times to settle the eggs. Cook on the stove top for a few minutes until you start to see the eggs set around the edges. Put the pan into the oven and continue to bake until the top of the frittata is lightly brown and the eggs are completely set.
4. Cut into wedges and serve as is or top with fresh corn relish or tomato slices.

### Corn & Tomatillo Pizza with Fresh Tomatoes & Basil

by Andrea Yoder

#### Yield: 4 servings

15 ounces pizza dough (enough to make a 12-14 inch pizza)  
1½ cups fresh corn kernels (from about 2 ears)  
1½ cups tomatillos, large dice (husks removed)  
3-4 Tbsp olive oil, divided  
½ + ¼ tsp salt  
¼ cup finely grated Parmesan or sharp cheddar cheese  
1 tsp garlic, minced  
2 tsp sunflower or vegetable oil  
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms  
1 medium onion, sliced thinly  
¼ tsp salt  
8 oz mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese, shredded  
2 small or 1 medium tomato, sliced thinly  
½ cup fresh basil leaves, chiffonade (sliced thinly)

1. Bring dough to room temperature if it has been frozen or refrigerated. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a food processor, combine fresh corn kernels, diced tomatillo, 2 Tbsp olive oil and ½ tsp salt. Pulse several times to roughly chop the vegetables and combine the mixture. The mixture should still be chunky. Do not puree it to a smooth consistency. Put the corn mixture in a strainer placed over a bowl and let set for about 10 minutes to drain off excess moisture. Once the corn has been drained, place the mixture into a bowl and stir in the garlic and Parmesan or sharp cheddar cheese. Set aside.
3. Heat a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add 2 tsp sunflower or vegetable oil. Once the oil is hot, add the mushrooms, onions, and ¼ tsp salt. Sauté vegetables until they are tender. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Oil a pizza pan or stone with olive oil. Press the dough out evenly on the pan to about 12-14 inches in diameter. If you like a thin, crispy crust, press the dough a little thinner. Put the pizza crust in the preheated oven and par bake for about 10-12 minutes. Remove the crust from the oven and spread half of the shredded mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese on the crust. Next, spread the corn & tomatillo mixture on the crust, taking it all the way to the edges. Top with sautéed onions & mushrooms and spread the remaining shredded cheese on top.
5. Return the pizza to the oven and bake until the crust is golden, and the cheese is melted and lightly browned. Remove from the oven and top with thin slices of tomato and basil. Cut and serve.



#### Produce Plus

Roma Tomatoes, 25 pounds - \$38  
Sweet Onions, 10 pounds - \$24  
Baby Red Beets, 10 pounds - \$25  
Jalapeño Peppers, 5 pounds - \$18

Order by 5pm on Wednesday, August 27th for delivery on **August 29th and 30th**. Madison CSA members will pick up at Dane County Farmers' Market Stand on Mifflin Street on Saturday and should pay at the market.

To order, please call 608-483-2143 x2 or email [csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com](mailto:csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

Please be sure to include your name, telephone number and pick-up location with your order!

### SAVE THE DATE!

HARVEST PARTY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2014

Watch for more details coming soon.