



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

October 2-3, 2015

## Harvest Party Recap

by Beth Brown-Lucas

We could not have asked for better weather for our Harvest Party this past Sunday! It was a beautiful sunny day with temperatures in the upper 70s and there was not even a chance of rain. Our party kicked off at noon with a Mix & Mingle and snacks.

Folks started arriving right at noon, excited to tour the farm and meet their fellow CSA members. Captain Jack was ready, making sure he greeted everybody as they arrived. We had delicious light snacks prepared and everyone raved about the Caramelized Poblano Chile & Onion Dip and Roasted Beet & White Bean Dip made by Farmer Andrea. Everybody mingled & chatted while enjoying NessAlla Kombucha and cold press Kickapoo coffee. We had a few activities planned, and kids tried their best to guess the seeds in the "Name that Seed" game or ringing a pumpkin in the Pumpkin Ring Toss.

At about 1:00 Farmer Richard began loading the wagons for the farm tour. A few families were already on the wagons in anticipation of starting the tour! We loaded up 4 wagons and made our way down the road. Kids & adults were excited to catch a glimpse of the strawberry field and the rhubarb—we had a great view of the fields below. As we continued on our way to the sweet potatoes, we were also able to see the parsley, daikon and leeks.

When we arrived at the sweet potatoes, we were all anxious to get off the wagons and into the field! Richard & Andrea led groups of children in digging the first of the sweet potatoes. Before long everyone was pulling sweet potatoes out of the dirt, and there were plenty to go around. Farmer Richard explained how to tell when a sweet potato is ready to harvest, and how the crew has to cut the vines back by hand when harvesting them. Jose Ramon, Alvaro and Rogelio helped cut the vines & dig the potatoes while our guests helped pull up bunches of sweet potatoes. One party attendee found one of the biggest sweet potatoes anyone had ever seen! It was over 2 feet long!



## This Week's Box

**PETER WILCOX POTATOES:** These potatoes are perfect for a curry. Consider pairing with cauliflower and chickpeas, and don't forget the cumin and turmeric!

**BROCCOLI:** Put your broccoli to good use by treating it as the centerpiece of your next stir-fry, include beef or mushrooms as a complement. Track down any of Fuchsia Dunlop's cookbooks for a stellar reference on Chinese home cooking.

**YELLOW ONIONS:** Onion jam is pretty much the best thing ever. A perfect addition to beef or veggie burgers, The Kitchn has a simple guide for creating this simple but bold condiment.

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Making your own garlic paste is easier than you might think. Mince as finely as possible, then tilt your blade and scrape your knife across the garlic. Repeat this step until you've got a pulpy paste. Stash in the fridge for up to one week or in the freezer for several months.

**ORANGE CARROTS:** Slice on the diagonal and sear your carrots over high heat, adding diced shallots, ginger, garlic, thyme, sugar and salt for additional flavor.

**SUGAR DUMPLING OR HONEYNUT BUTTERNUT SQUASH:** Twice-baked squash? Yes, please! Bake squash and build your stuffing with quinoa, kale, onions, garlic and your choice of blue cheese. Head online to Dishing Up The Dirt for the full recipe—Twice Baked Honey Nut Squash—and rest assured you can use any squash for this dish.

**SPAGHETTI SQUASH:** Take advantage of the fact that these squash noodles are incredibly similar to vermicelli noodles and check out TheKitchn's recipe for Spaghetti Squash Pad Thai. Top with roasted peanuts and cilantro and you're set!

**MINI-SWEET PEPPERS:** Stash these sweet little peppers away for wintertime. Check out Harmony Valley Farm's recipe for Mini Sweet Pepper Jelly. And remember, we've got years' worth of delicious, seasonal recipes for you to reference!

**POBLANO PEPPERS:** Check out Saveur's take on Sopa de Chile Poblano—a warming soup for the chilly days ahead—or simply slice and sauté your peppers along with potatoes, onions and garlic. Don't forget these peppers do have some heat, so handle with care.

**SPINACH:** Feature your spinach in Green Kitchen Stories' Spinach and Quinoa Patties in a Bowl, adding any extra vegetables you'd like along the way. Find the full recipe online and be sure to check out their YouTube channel for a step-by-step guide to putting this recipe together.

**LEMONGRASS:** Use the leaves of your lemongrass to infuse rice or broth-based soups, or to make a warming tea—discarding before use. The bulb, which is entirely edible, is perfect for curries, soups or salads. Check out last week's newsletter for more information on this vegetable as well as recipes.

**BABY WHITE TURNIPS:** For a winning autumnal salad, pair these turnips with radishes, capers, parsley and kale and toss with olive oil and sherry vinegar. Head online to Food52 and search for Gardener's Delight for the full recipe.

**MIBUNA:** Include these greens in a savory pasta dish, tossed with anchovy butter and Parmesan, or feature them in your next egg scramble or frittata. They have a mild mustard flavor and are good eaten slightly cooked or raw.

**JICAMA:** See this week's vegetable feature for more information.

After we finished digging sweet potatoes, our wagon caravan made its way to the next stop- peppers, tomatoes, tomatillos and eggplants. Kids were so excited to pick the mini-sweet peppers and eat to their hearts' content. Everyone wandered through the rows picking Orange Ukraine peppers, tomatillos, eggplant and some tomatoes. We made sure to tell everyone which peppers were the hot peppers, although a few brave souls tried eating raw jalapeños and lived to tell the tale! We were asked lots of great

questions, like "How do you know when an eggplant is ready to harvest?", "Why are the peppers planted on that reflective stuff?" and "Do you have extra bags?" Our expert farmers and crew were happy to answer questions and help everyone pick and carry lots of great treats back to the wagons.

From there we headed to the main attraction—the pumpkin field! Andrea & Richard helped people find the Cinnamon Girl pie pumpkins and we see a lot of



pies and pumpkin soup being made soon. Others wanted the big pumpkins for carving and a few took armloads of pumpkins back from the field. Andrea searched high and low for her special pumpkin carved with her name until somebody called out that they found a pumpkin with “AJ” written on it. Captain Jack’s special pumpkin was never found even though Richard made it very easy this year and just carved “Dog” into the pumpkin. He wasn’t too disappointed that nobody brought his pumpkin back for him though. After everyone had picked

their pumpkins, we loaded up the wagons and prepared to head back for the pig roast. A few adventurous partygoers took a tour of the effigy mounds with Richard while the rest of us made our way back to enjoy the food.

Everyone worked up a good appetite with all the field work, and the pig roast was accompanied by an abundance of side

dishes, salads and desserts. So many people commented on how wonderful the food was and went back for second and third plates just so they could sample everything! It’s safe to say that nobody went home hungry.

At the end of the day, it was a very successful Harvest Party.



Many people commented that it was a perfect day to visit the farm and that they loved the chance to see where their food is grown and meet their farmers. It was wonderful to meet so many new people, and see long time friends of the farm. A big thank you to all the Harmony Valley crew who volunteered to help with set-up, drive tractors and clean up after the party ended. Thanks to all who attended the party and

made it such a fun day. We were so happy to be able to share the day with you and had so much fun showing you the farm and talking with you. We hope to see you next year!

### Vegetable Feature: Jicama

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

Before we kick off this week’s vegetable feature, let’s cover one thing right off the bat—pronunciation! Our delicious feature this week is jicama, which you can choose to pronounce one of two ways: HICK-uh-mah or HEE-kuh-mah. Also known as the Mexican yam or Mexican turnip, jicama is native to—you guessed it—Mexico! This vegetable is the edible tuberous root of a vine that can grow to be 20 feet in length. The largest recorded jicama weighed in at a whopping 50 pounds! At Harmony Valley Farm, we deal in much smaller versions of this vegetable, keeping them to less than 5 pounds each—a much more manageable amount to work with in your kitchen.

Apart from its brown papery skin, jicama is entirely edible. The creamy white flesh is firm, sweet and slightly starchy with a very distinct crunch. Thinking of jicama as a savory apple, as TheKitchn describes it, may help in classifying this unique food that many of us may have had limited exposure to.

Jicama is typically enjoyed raw, though it can be sautéed or stir-fried and still retain its crunch. To prepare, begin by peeling the skin. Using a chef’s knife, remove a thin slice from the top and bottom of your jicama in order to create a flat surface on each end. Working from top to bottom and following the curve, carefully slide your knife under the skin to remove it. Once peeled, you don’t need to worry about removing any seeds as the entire interior portion is edible. Jicama is often served in very simple preparations such as salads, slaws, salsas or just eaten raw on a vegetable tray. It pairs well with citrus fruits, peppers, avocado and cilantro.

Unlike apples and other fruits, jicama doesn’t oxidize (turn color) once its flesh has been exposed to air. Store half of your jicama in the fridge for later use and all you’ll need to do is remove the thin layer of exposed flesh that has become somewhat dry. In general, store your jicama loose in a cool, dry place at room temperature where it should keep for about 2 to 3 weeks. The storage for jicama is similar to sweet potatoes. They are actually subject to chill injury at temperatures less than about 50 degrees.

While it’s challenging to grow jicama in the Midwest, we’re continuing to learn about growing this crop in Wisconsin. One of our employees, Jose Antonio Cervantes Gutierrez, introduced us to this crop several years ago with a small handful of seeds he brought from home. After some experimentation, we’ve finally figured out how to pull off this crop with success. We use a combination of an early start in the greenhouse and the use of plastic mulch to trap heat and increase the soil temperature to create a microclimate more similar to the ideal growing conditions for this crop. We hope you enjoy this little taste of the tropics!

### Jicama Sticks with Chile & Lime (*Botana de Jicama con Chile y Limon*)

Servings: 6

- 1 pound jicama, peeled
- Juice of 2 limes (about ¼ cup)
- Juice of ½ bitter orange (about 1 Tbsp), optional
- 1 Tbsp distilled white vinegar
- ¼ tsp ground dried chile, cayenne or red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp salt
- ⅓ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp finely chopped cilantro, optional
- 1 tsp sugar, optional

1. Cut the jicama lengthwise into ½-inch thick slices, then cut the slices into ½-inch wide sticks.
2. Place the sticks in a medium bowl and toss with the rest of the ingredients. Arrange in small 2-ounce shot glasses, standing them up like breadsticks, and moisten with the juices of the marinade.

This is a traditional way to enjoy jicama in Mexico and is a common street food offering. This is Maricel Presilla’s interpretation of this method of preparation that is featured in her cookbook, *Gran Cocina Latina*.