



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

July 13 - 14, 2018

Summer Farm Update

By Farmer Richard

Wow, how time flies when you're having fun, or too busy to notice! What happened to "Summertime, and the livin' is easy, Fish are jumpin' and the cotton is high...." Seems like we just started the season with late spring plantings and now here we are planting our late fall crops! We're nearly done with transplant production and the greenhouses are being prepared for drying the garlic & onions we'll be harvesting soon. It's hard to believe we're already nearing the halfway point in July, but that means tomatoes are just around the corner and we still have a lot of good summer eating coming our way!

Despite the late start to the season, our summer crops are coming in pretty much on schedule. We planted tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers and eggplant during one of our chilly May weeks. Thankfully they acclimated well to the field and have responded well to the fertilizer we've given them through the driplines. Couple this with two hot spells and they look fantastic! We started harvesting eggplant last week and little peppers are starting to hang on the plants in the pepper field which we just finished weeding this week. The first tomato planting has been tied with 5 strings to anchor the plants to the stakes and keep them growing upright. We have formed a wall of tomato plants with a lot of fruit hanging on the vines. Pretty soon we'll see them start to ripen! Our second plantings of zucchini and cucumbers are looking good and will soon be ready to replace the early crop which has already peaked and is slowing down with production.

While we're just starting to harvest summer crops, we're also planting our fall crops. We now have two fields of fall carrots planted and up! The last planting needed to be watered to soften the hot dry soil crust so the new sprouts could push through. This week we're harvesting the first beets of the season, but we're also planting the last crop of beets for storage into fall and early winter. Only turnips, daikon, storage radishes, and tat soi remain.

What's In The Box?

SIERRA BLANCA ONIONS: This week's onion selection is more mild than storage onions. Slice them thinly and use them for sandwiches, salads, salsa, etc.

FRESH PORCELAIN GARLIC: You'll find that fresh garlic that has not been cured and dried is juicy and mild compared to stored, dried garlic.

ITALIAN AND/OR GREEN ZUCCHINI: Our zucchini crop has peaked and is starting to decrease in production. Just a few more weeks and we'll have a new field to harvest!

GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: The ideal storage temperature for cucumbers is 50°F. It's better to store them at room temperature as they'll get chill injury if stored in a cold refrigerator.

BROCCOLI: This is a big broccoli harvest week! Don't let the stem go to waste. Thinly peel away the outer skin and you'll find the flesh inside is tender and sweet.

GREEN TOP CARROTS: Harvesting carrots with their green tops is a sign of freshness. The green tops are also edible, so don't discard them! Use them to make pesto, add them to soup, or use them to flavor vegetable or meat broth.

GREEN AND/OR YELLOW BEANS: Our early season bean varieties were specifically selected because of their ability to germinate in cold spring soil. This allows us to start our bean harvest season sooner.

RED AMARANTH: This is the dark burgundy bunched vegetable in your box. See this week's *vegetable feature article* for more information.

GREEN TOP RED BEETS: Eat the beets and the greens! Beet tops are similar to chard and they may be used interchangeably.

SWEETHEART CABBAGE: This pointy head cabbage is known as a "salad cabbage" meaning it is tender enough to be eaten raw. Use it for a traditional cole slaw or other fresh cabbage salad.

CHOICE: ITALIAN BASIL –We've sent enough for one portion per vegetable share. Check out this week's *Cooking With the Box* article for recipes using basil.

Of course, we'll continue to plant our weekly plantings of cilantro, radishes, dill, mustard, baby arugula, etc until early September.

We have four crops of sweet corn, beans and edamame planted and growing well. The edamame was attractive to some hungry deer so we had to put a fence around the field earlier than we anticipated. The first crop of corn will be a little smaller due to the fact that black birds ate some of the seed before sprouts were even up! Nonetheless, tassels and ears are setting on and the following crops look even better. We're happy to be picking our first beans this week and we're looking forward to harvesting potatoes next week. The potato field is full of blossoms and the plants are setting a nice crop of tubers.

It looks like garlic harvest will start in earnest probably next week and we'll have a beautiful onion crop to harvest shortly after. Once we bring the onions and garlic in from the field, they'll need several weeks to dry in our greenhouses before we put them into storage for the fall and winter.

See our **blog** for the rest of this article!

Featured Vegetable: Red Amaranth

By Chef Andrea

Red Amaranth is a stunning “green” that actually has dark, burgundy colored leaves. It is an ancient plant that was part of the diets of Aztec civilizations in Mexico up to 7,000 years ago. It was also an important staple food for the Incas of South America and the people of the Himalayan region of Asia. In these ancient cultures, amaranth was also used medicinally and in cultural rituals. It was held as a symbol of immortality and means “never-fading flower” in Greek. Like many other vegetables, amaranth was a multi-use vegetable. The seeds were used as a winter staple and the young leaves were eaten as a fresh vegetable. There are about 60 different varieties of amaranth, some grown to harvest seeds, others for the leaves, and several ornamental species. The variety of amaranth we grow is referred to as “Polish Amaranth”....and there’s a story to go with this name.

We actually purchased the seed for this year’s crop from Wild Garden Seeds (WGS), which is kind of funny because Richard is the one who actually gave them the seed originally! Some of you may have heard this story already, but for those of you who don’t know it the story goes like this. One day Richard was driving to town and saw a beautiful red amaranth plant growing in a garden along the way. He stopped and asked the people who lived there about this plant. They said their Aunt May brought the seed with her from Poland and they were happy to share it with Richard. So Richard collected some seed and started growing it, mostly as a baby green to mix into his gourmet salad mix. It didn’t do so well as a salad mix ingredient, but in later years we found success growing it as a mid-summer bunching green used for cooking. Since we aren’t in the business of seed production, Richard passed the seed onto Frank Morton at WGS and he has been maintaining this variety of amaranth.

(See our **blog** for the rest of this vegetable feature article!)

Cooking With This Week’s Box!

This week’s box has some colorful new vegetable selections, starting with the gorgeous Red Amaranth! This has become one of our favorite, and most striking, summer vegetables. We’ve been growing this vegetable for several years, so you’ll find the most diverse recipe collection for this vegetable on our website in our searchable *recipe database*. There are a few recipes popping up here and there on the internet, including the recipe we’re featuring this week. This recipe for **Black Beans with Amaranth** (see below) was originally featured at *Cooking.nytimes.com*. Several years ago one of our market customers brought me a copy of this recipe and raved about how good it is. The next year, I had another market customer recommend this recipe, followed by yet another. Needless to say, this recipe came highly recommended by several other members as well as one of my colleagues so I figured it must be a winner! Serve these flavorful beans along with rice, meat or grilled vegetables to make it a full meal.

The other most colorful vegetable in this week’s box is the bunch of green top red beets! You’ll want to utilize both the root and the greens, which is the reason I created this simple recipe for **Creamed Beets with Greens**. This is one of Richard’s favorite recipes for preparing beets. It’s a simple recipe that comes together very quickly and makes a nice side dish for grilled or roasted meat.

(See our **blog** for the rest of Chef Andrea’s suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)

Black Beans with Amaranth

Yield: 6 servings

1 pound black beans, washed, picked over and soaked for six hours or overnight in 2 quarts water	Salt to taste
1 large onion, chopped	2 to 4 Tbsp roughly chopped cilantro, or a few sprigs fresh epazote
4 garlic cloves, minced	1 bunch amaranth, leaves and stems separated

1. Drain and rinse the black beans, discarding the soaking water. Put the beans in a large, heavy bottom soup pot or Dutch Oven. Add fresh water to cover the beans by two inches. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and skim off any foam. Add the onion and half the garlic, and reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer one hour.
2. Next, add the remaining garlic, the epazote (optional) and salt. Simmer for another 30 minutes. Add the cilantro and finely chopped amaranth stems. Simmer for another 30 minutes, until the beans are tender and the broth aromatic.
3. While the beans are simmering, wash the amaranth leaves. Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and fill a bowl with ice water. When the water comes to a boil, salt generously and add the amaranth. Blanch for two minutes, and transfer to the ice water. Drain, squeeze out excess water (it will be a beautiful plum color) and chop coarsely.
4. Just before serving, taste the beans and adjust seasoning. Stir in the amaranth, simmer very gently for five to 10 minutes, and serve.

Author’s Note: The beans will taste even better if you make them in advance, and they can be made up to three days ahead of serving. The blanched amaranth will keep for three days in the refrigerator.

This recipe was adapted from Martha Rose Shulman’s original recipe featured at *cooking.nytimes.com*