



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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## How Cover Crops Help Save the Planet

By Gwen Anderson

Like most kids, I learned about photosynthesis when I was in grade school. I learned that plants ate sunshine, breathed in carbon dioxide, and exhaled oxygen. I remember as a child thinking how great it was that I was exhaling what my new tree out back was inhaling, and in turn, it was exhaling what I needed as well. I knew protecting the forests was good for the planet; we learned about it every Earth Day. What I didn't know is that we should also be protecting our farmlands.

As we are growing our crops, they are eating all of that sunshine, breathing in all of that carbon dioxide, taking nutrients out of the soil to grow. Then we harvest those crops. They stop breathing in that carbon dioxide. Then what? On the typical conventional farm, the lands sits empty, doing nothing. Rain comes, washes away all of that expensive chemical fertilizer, the ground gets hard and cracked as it dries, and blows away in the wind. Next year, they plant seeds, spray it with more chemicals because they all washed away the year before, harvest the crop once it grows, if it grows. Rinse, repeat.

That isn't how we do things at Harmony Valley Farm. Farmer Richard has been planting cover crops for over 40 years. As soon as we are done harvesting, we either plant a new crop if the season is early yet, or we "put the field to bed" by planting cover crops. Right now, we already have 30 acres of our farm planted with cover crops, and will continue planting it as the harvests keep coming in. As it stands, about 70% of our ground will be cover cropped by fall, and we are increasing that number by seeding grass and clover into our late harvested crops like Brussels sprouts and fall broccoli.

What are cover crops? They are crops that cover the ground! We don't sell them, they aren't vegetables.

See our [blog](#) for the rest of this article!

## What's In The Box?

**ZUCCHINI OR YELLOW SUMMER SQUASH:** We're hoping we can continue picking zucchini for another week or so. If you have a favorite recipe using zucchini and want to make it again before the end of the season, you should do so this week while you have the chance!

**RED RIVER ONIONS:** Red onions are commonly used in raw preparations such as salads and on sandwiches. However, they can be cooked as well, sautéed, roasted or caramelized.

**MISSOURI GARLIC:** Notice the large cloves of garlic on these small, but mighty heads of garlic. Larger cloves mean easier peeling!

**CARROTS:** This week's carrot variety is called Mokum. This is one of our early season "Nantes" carrot varieties known for producing tender and sweet carrots that have a good flavor without any bitterness.

**JALAPEÑO PEPPERS:** Our variety this year is proving to be quite nice, producing large, firm peppers that do have a good amount of heat! If you prefer less heat, carefully remove the white ribbing and seeds from the inside of the pepper. This is where most of the heat will be.

**SWEET SARAH MELON OR GOLD POTATOES:** Sadly, our cantaloupe season has come to an end. Some boxes will receive melons and the remaining will receive gold potatoes.

**RED SEEDLESS WATERMELON:** It's not easy to grow a seedless watermelon, and it's not easy to pick them either. We are fortunate to have Farmer Richard's forty plus years of experience to guide and train our professional, skilled picking crew. They do the best they can to pick the watermelons at the peak of ripeness, but unfortunately we can't look inside each one making their job pretty tricky!

**SWEET CORN:** Awesome is the name of the variety this week and we think you'll find this corn lives up to its name! We still have one more full planting of corn yet to come and the good news is....we've been able to combat the dreaded corn earworm so far and have kept the raccoons out of the field!

**VARIETY OF TOMATOES:** Our first planting of tomatoes are finished, but our second planting is producing pretty well. How many more weeks will we be able to pick before the first frost? Yikes!

**GREEN BEANS:** We are picking our last crop of beans, which means this may be our final week of harvest or we may possibly be able to pick a few more next week. Enjoy them while they're fresh!

**EDAMAME:** This is a fresh soybean. The pod is not edible and we recommend cooking them in boiling salted water for 4-6 minutes before you try to take them out of the pod. See [last week's vegetable feature](#) article for more information as well as recipe ideas.

**TOMATILLOS:** Store tomatillos at room temperature prior to using. Remove the outer husk and use the fruit contained inside. You'll find more information and a recipe in [this week's vegetable feature](#) article.

**POBLANO PEPPERS:** This is a pepper with a moderate level of heat. Poblano peppers are dark green. The pepper has a wider top and the body of the pepper tapers to a point.

**GREEN BELL PEPPERS:** If you leave these peppers on your counter, they will continue to ripen and will eventually turn red!

**CHOICE-- EGGPLANT:** Even the large ones are still good quality. Use eggplant to make some of the classics such as [Eggplant Parmesan](#) or [Baba Ganoush](#).

### Featured Vegetable: Tomatillo

Tomatillos are an interesting “vegetable,” which are technically a fruit. Despite the fact that they are often referred to as a “green tomato,” they are a bit different. Tomatillos grow on plants that are similar to a tomato plant, but they are usually larger and have more of a wild, jungle-like appearance. Their main stem is thick and sometimes resembles a small tree trunk! The plants can grow to be over seven feet tall, so we put stakes in between and tie the plants to them progressively as they grow in order to keep the plant upright and the fruit off the ground. Tomatillos grow from pretty little yellow blossoms which are a favorite food source for bumble bees and other pollinator creatures. The fruit is hidden inside a husk that looks like a little paper lantern. You know the tomatillo is ready to pick when it fills the husk completely. While most tomatillos are green, we also grow a heirloom purple variety that, when fully ripe, is dark purple on the outside and light purple inside!

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

### Cooking With This Week's Box!

Welcome back for another week of cooking with the bounty of late summer! I had a lot of fun testing this week's featured recipe for **Vegetable Enchiladas with Tomatillo-Cream Sauce** (see below). This was my first time ever making enchiladas. While there are several steps to the process, they are really quite easy to make and very delicious to eat! It also gave me a chance to talk to some of the Mexican ladies I work with about cooking. Beatriz and Antonia are excellent cooks and make delicious tortillas, tamales, etc. They coached me on different ways to prepare enchiladas, salsas, etc. Food is a great portal to use for getting to know other people and other cultures. While my version of this recipe may not be entirely traditional, it's pretty close and I think you'll enjoy it! This recipe is also a great way to utilize multiple vegetables in your box in one recipe!

We're happy to have more sweet, tender edamame beans this week and I can't resist making my favorite **Fried Rice with Edamame & Corn**. I make this in the winter with frozen vegetables, but it's best made in the height of the season with fresh vegetables including edamame, sweet corn, carrots, garlic and onions.

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

### Vegetable Enchiladas with Tomatillo-Cream Sauce (Enchiladas Suizas)

Yield: 4 servings

¾ pound green tomatillos, husks removed	½ cup boiling water	1 cup diced zucchini
1 jalapeño pepper	1 cup sour cream	½ cup diced red onion
1 poblano pepper	Salt and freshly ground black pepper	2 ears fresh corn, kernels cut from the cob
¼ tsp cumin seeds, toasted	2 Tbsp vegetable oil, plus more for frying the tortillas	4-6 oz mozzarella cheese, shredded
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped	4 oz fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced	8 (6 inch) corn tortillas
½-¾ cup roughly chopped cilantro	1 cup diced sweet peppers	Pico de gallo, for serving (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. First, roast tomatillos, jalapeño and poblano pepper either over an open flame such as a grill or gas burner, or under the broiler in the oven. Roast until blackened all over. Once roasted, put the tomatillos and jalapeño directly into a blender. Put the poblano pepper in a bowl and cover it to steam for 5-10 minutes before removing the peeling and the seeds. Roughly chop the poblano pepper and add it to the blender.
3. Add the cumin seeds, garlic, cilantro, salt, freshly ground black pepper and boiling water to the blender along with the tomatillos and peppers. Blend until smooth, then add the sour cream and blend to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning of the sauce to taste with additional salt and pepper. Set the enchilada sauce aside.
4. Heat a medium sized skillet over medium heat. Add 1 Tbsp vegetable oil to the pan. When the oil is hot, add the mushrooms and onions. Sauté for several minutes or until the mushrooms begin to soften. Add 1 Tbsp more oil to the pan and then add the sweet peppers, zucchini and corn. Season with salt and pepper. Sauté until the vegetables are tender but not fully cooked. Remove from the heat and set aside.
5. Heat another medium sized skillet over medium-high heat. Add enough vegetable oil to the pan to completely cover the bottom of the pan in a thick layer. Working in batches, grasp tortillas with tongs and fry each one in the oil just until it's pliable, 30-40 seconds at most. Transfer the tortillas to a plate lined with paper towels to absorb any excess oil. Once all of the tortillas are fried, you can start assembling the enchiladas.
6. First, prepare a 9 x 13-inch baking pan by pouring a thin layer of sauce in the bottom. Lay each tortilla on a work surface and prepare them one at a time. Put some of the vegetable mixture on the tortilla and roll it as tightly as you can. Put the rolled tortillas in the baking pan, seam side down. Repeat with the remaining tortillas to create one row down the center of the dish. Once all of the tortillas are rolled, pour the remaining enchilada sauce over the tortilla rolls. Spread the shredded cheese evenly over the top of the tortillas.
7. Bake the enchiladas for 25 minutes, until the sauce is bubbling and the cheese is melted on top and lightly browned. Remove from the oven, and let cool for 10 minutes. Serve warm with plenty of sauce and pico de gallo.

This recipe was created by Chef Andrea Yoder. It was adapted from and inspired by a recipe for **Chicken Enchiladas Suizas** featured in the July 2012 publication of *Saveur* magazine. The original version of the recipe may be found at [saveur.com](http://saveur.com).