



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

July 26-27, 2019

VEGETABLE FEATURE: Cucumbers

By Andrea Yoder

"Why Cucumbers? (Doesn't everyone know about cucumbers?)" This is the opening line to the chapter about cucumbers in Elizabeth Schneider's book, *Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini*. Cucumbers and zucchini are kind of staple summer crops, you just have to have them. The thing about both of these crops that can sometimes be frightening is their ability to produce like crazy in the heat of the summer which leaves us with a pile of cucumbers and the question "What in the world am I going to do with all these cucumbers?!" Don't worry, I have some suggestions for you this week!

While we're only accustomed to seeing several different types of cucumbers in this country, there are many different shapes and colors of cucumbers world-wide. They are thought to have originated in India or the surrounding area. They then spread into other Asian countries as well as Europe and then made their way to the Americas where they were introduced to this part of the world by explorers. Cucumbers, which thrive in warm climates and the heat of summer, are known to be very cooling and help us stay hydrated with their high water content. This cooling characteristic also makes them a sensible condiment or accompaniment to counter spicy foods such as chiles and curries. We grow the most familiar "green slicer" cucumbers as well as our favorite variety of cucumbers called silver slicers. Silver slicers produce a smaller cucumber that has a white to pale yellow skin color with crispy, fruity flesh. We have grown to prefer this variety because the flavor is more complex, the flesh maintains its crispness, and it doesn't have any/many of the compounds in cucumbers that can cause burping or gastrointestinal consequences.

In addition to their high moisture content, cucumbers have other important nutritive qualities. They are also high in vitamin K as well as a host of phytonutrients that have

What's In The Box?

WHITE SPANISH ONIONS: This week we're finishing off the scallions and moving on to White Spanish Onions. Spanish onions are more mild and sweet, making them a great choice for eating raw in salads.

GREEN AND/OR ITALIAN ZUCCHINI: Check out this week's *Cooking with the Box* article for a link to **Zucchini Enchiladas** as well as other recipe ideas for utilizing zucchini.

BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER: Steamed, stir-fried, roasted or raw, there are many ways to use broccoli or cauliflower. Of course there's the classic pairing with cheese sauce that is a winner every time!

GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: Not sure what to do with cucumbers? Check out this week's **Vegetable Feature Article** on our blog which includes a list of **30 different recipes/recipe collections** that feature cucumbers! Get creative with cucumber jelly, cucumber lime popsicles and sparkling peach cucumber lemonade!

FRESH ITALIAN GARLIC: It's starting to dry down a bit more than last week's garlic, but is still considered fresh. Store it on the counter until you're ready to use it.

GREEN TOP CARROTS: Carrot tops are a sign of freshness and they're edible! Use them to make Carrot Top Hummus!

GREEN AND/OR YELLOW BEANS: Turn this week's beans into **Cheesy Ham Green Bean Casserole**. Even the pickiest of eaters will eat this!

NEW POTATOES: Check out **last week's vegetable feature article** to learn more about what makes these potatoes "New Potatoes." Due to their thin skins, they won't store for more than a week or two. Eat them soon!

GREEN CURLY KALE: Green curly kale is a cooking green that softens and gets tender with cooking. It's simple to prepare, just sauté with other summer vegetables and season with fresh herbs.

GREEN BELL PEPPER: This is just the start of more peppers to come!

JALAPEÑO PEPPERS: There is one jalapeño in this week's box. Make sure you don't overlook it when you're unpacking your box. Remember THIS IS A HOT PEPPER!

RED DANDELION GREENS: Try a simple dandelion salad! Add some onions, tomatoes and basil with a splash of oil or vinaigrette for a quick meal. The greens can also be lightly sauté if you prefer a more mild flavor.

CHOCOLATE SPRINKLES OR SUNORANGE OR RED GRAPE TOMATOES: Enjoy the season's first taste of CSA tomatoes! If you can resist eating the entire pint on the way home, you're ahead of the game. How much easier can a snack get than rinse and go?

CHOICE: ITALIAN BASIL—Please only take a handful as a portion per vegetable share, not per household for sharing partners.

anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. These nutrients are thought to be beneficial for heart and brain health as well as cancer prevention and perhaps are helpful in managing diabetes. There's a reason why cucumbers are often associated with skin treatments as well. Cucumbers can help decrease swelling, puffiness, skin irritation and soothe a sunburn due to their cooling and anti-inflammatory properties.

Cucumbers pair well with a whole host of ingredients, but some of the most common pairings include herbs such as mint, basil, parsley and dill as well as

other vegetables such as onions, tomatoes and garlic. Cucumbers also pair well with other fruits such as melons, watermelon, limes, lemons, grapefruit and berries. Of course they also play well with feta cheese, cream, buttermilk, sour cream and yogurt.

There are so many things you can make with cucumbers. Of course, they are good to eat with just a little sprinkling of salt, but beyond this simple pleasure they are most often used in salads and pickled. They can also be used in sandwiches, cold and hot soups, desserts such as sorbet and popsicles, refreshing drinks both with and without alcohol, and condiments such as Tzatziki and Raita. But don't think cucumbers are only for eating raw. They can also be cooked! That's right, cucumbers can be stir-fried, sautéed, roasted and baked.

I hope you'll check out this week's blog post which includes an extensive list of 30 recipes/recipe collections utilizing cucumbers! I hope you enjoy some of your old "go-to" ways of eating cucumbers this summer as well as experimenting with some different ways to use cucumbers! Lastly, cucumbers are sensitive to cold temperatures and ideally should be stored at 45-50°F. Thus, we recommend only short-term storage in your refrigerator or just keep them on the counter at room temperature until you use them within a few days. Have fun and don't forget to stay cool as a cucumber this summer!

Produce Plus Items Available to order now for delivery August 1 - 3 (Depending on your delivery area)

Italian Basil, 3 pounds - \$35
Fresh Italian Garlic, 3 pound bag - \$26
Green Zucchini, 10 pounds - \$18
Lacinato Kale, 12 bunches - \$22
Green Curly Kale, 12 bunches - \$22

When ordering, please email csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com and include:
First and last name
Phone number
Pick-up location
Quantity of each item you are ordering

See your **What's In The Box Email** for more information!

Summer Vietnamese Rice Noodle Salad

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Salad:

8 ounces thin rice noodles (roughly the width of linguine)
1 ½ cups cabbage, thinly sliced
2-3 medium carrots, shredded or cut into matchsticks
1 large or 2-3 medium cucumbers, halved, seeded, and thinly sliced
1 cup chopped fresh herbs, preferably a combination of basil, cilantro, and mint
16 ounces cooked tofu, chicken, or shrimp, cut or torn into bite-sized pieces
1 cup roasted, salted peanuts or toasted almonds, coarsely chopped

Dressing:

½ cup fish sauce
½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
¼ cup light brown sugar, plus more to taste
2 medium cloves garlic, minced
½ to 1 fresh jalapeño, minced

1. To prepare the dressing, combine the fish sauce, lime juice, brown sugar, garlic, and the jalapeño. Whisk well. Set aside. (**Note:** The dressing will store in the refrigerator for 3 days to a week.)
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the rice noodles, and cook for 4 to 5 minutes (or according to package instructions), until tender but not mushy. Immediately drain the noodles into a colander, and rinse them well with cold water to cool them. Shake the colander to drain away excess water.
3. When the noodles are well-drained, put them in a large bowl along with the vegetables, herbs and tofu or meat. Spoon dressing over the entire mixture and toss well to combine.
4. Serve with chopped peanuts or almonds on top.

Recipe adapted from *Food52.com*.

Stir-Fried Cucumbers (Oi Bokkeum) "Quick and easy Korean cucumber side dish"

Yield: 4 servings

1 pound cucumbers	1 scallion, finely chopped
1 ½ tsp salt	1 tsp sesame oil
2 tsp vegetable oil	½ tsp sesame seeds
½ tsp minced garlic	

1. Cut the cucumbers in half lengthwise, then thinly slice crosswise slightly diagonally. If the cucumbers are thin, you can simply cut into thin rounds.
2. Toss the cucumber slices with one and a half teaspoons of salt to coat evenly. Let rest for 5 minutes.
3. Squeeze as much water out from the cucumber slices as possible. Don't worry about bruising them. They will recover when stir-fried.
4. Heat a pan over high heat. Add ½ tablespoon of cooking oil. Quickly stir in the garlic. Add the cucumbers. Stir-fry for a minute until the cucumbers are slightly cooked. Turn off the heat. Toss well with the scallion, sesame oil, and sesame seeds.

Recipe borrowed from www.koreanbapsang.com.