



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

June 5 - 6, 2020

Vegetable Feature: Cilantro

By Chef Andrea

Cilantro is an important crop on our farm. We plant cilantro every week for about 20 plantings starting in April and going through the end of August. Our goal is to move right from one crop into the next as we harvest cilantro starting in mid to late May through October or the first part of November. Over the course of the season we will end up planting 16-18 acres of cilantro total! Each crop has the potential to yield as many as 18,000 to 24,000 bunches! Some of our experienced crew members can make more than 100 bunches of cilantro an hour when they are harvesting. That is a lot of cilantro and obviously more than we could use for CSA boxes. Cilantro is one of our top "bread and butter" crops that we supply to our major wholesale buyers supplying this region. As you can see, it's a big deal for us!

Cilantro, also sometimes called coriander, is used extensively in a wide variety of cultures and cuisines across the globe ranging from Mexico to Asia. While we often think of it as an herb which is used more sparingly as an accent to other foods, don't be afraid to use cilantro in more bold ways where it is the main ingredient. With many herbs, recipes tell you to pick the leaves off the stems and only use the leafy part. I am an advocate for using stems as well, especially for herbs with tender stems such as cilantro. There's a lot of flavor in those stems, so it seems like such a waste to throw them out!

Cilantro is often used in salsas, fresh vegetable salads and as a condiment for tacos, curries, soups and more. It's also a delicious ingredient to incorporate into spreads and sauces such as chimichurri (with cilantro in place of traditional parsley), **Cilantro-Garlic Scape Pesto**,

vinaigrettes, etc. It is also often incorporated into smoothies and green drinks because of its contributions to health related to detoxifying the body. So, as you can see there are many different ways to use a bunch of cilantro!

Some people love cilantro, others are learning to like it and some have an aversion to it because to them, it tastes like soap. This latter group is actually a pretty small subset of the population. To them, a natural chemical compound in cilantro has an unpleasant soapy taste. If you experience this, we'll let you take a pass on eating this vegetable. But for everyone else, eat your cilantro as it has some valuable health benefits! It is an excellent source of zinc as well as vitamins A, C, E and K. It also works as a chelator and detoxifier for our bodies removing toxins, heavy metals, molds, yeast and fungi. It's on the green cleaning team, which is why it's a common ingredient in green smoothies and drinks!

For the longest shelf life, we recommend you remove the twist tie and wash your cilantro in a sink of clean, cold water. If you have a salad spinner, use it to remove excess water from the cilantro before storing it in a plastic bag or container. If you don't have a spinner, just blot or shake off as much excess water as you can. Before storing, remove any damaged or spotty leaves. It may also be helpful to put a dry paper towel in the bag or container you're storing it in. For best results, use within 7-10 days.

What's In The Box?

BABY SPINACH: This week's spinach crop may be a bit more delicate than past crops due to heat and recent rain. We recommend you put a dry paper towel into the bag to absorb any extra moisture retained on the leaves and eat it within a few days for optimal quality.

POTATO ONIONS OR GREEN GARLIC: The green tops on potato onions are round while the green tops on garlic are flat. You may use either interchangeably in recipes.

ASPARAGUS: Store asparagus in the refrigerator, either upright in a glass of water or wrap the base of the spears with a moist paper towel. We are approaching the end of asparagus season, but hope to harvest at least one more week.

RED RADISHES: Eat the radishes and the green tops! Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article where you'll find a recipe for **Quick-Pickled Radishes** and **Radish Top Pesto**!

SALAD MIX: This is a mix of baby lettuce varieties and spicy Asian greens. The little flowers in the bag are violas and they too are edible! For the greatest storage potential, store salad mix in the refrigerator.

BABY ARUGULA: These greens have a spicy bite to them. Toss them with the **Creamy Cilantro Dressing**, one of this week's featured recipes and a nice contrast to the spiciness of the greens!

HON TSAI TAI: This is the bunched green with purple stems and yellow flowers. You may eat the leaves, stems and flower stalks. For best results, chop the stem portions finely. This green may be eaten raw in salads or may be lightly cooked.

CILANTRO: See this week's **vegetable feature** article for more information! Store cilantro in the refrigerator in a plastic bag.

BABY WHITE TURNIPS: The tender, delicate green tops are also edible! Check out **last week's vegetable feature** article for more information about how to use both the tops and the roots.

BROCCOLI: Our first crop surprised us! The heads are small, but we'll take them. Add them to a stir-fry along with asparagus, baby white turnips and hon tsai tai.

RHUBARB: We planted a new rhubarb field this year, but it will be several years until we harvest from the new planting. In the meantime, we're able to harvest a small amount from our established field and have asked Richard's longtime friend and fellow grower, John Zeher, to help meet our needs this year from his field. Store rhubarb in a plastic bag or closed container in the refrigerator. If it gets a little limp or dehydrated, chop it up and cook it to make rhubarb sauce or puree.

MINI GREEN ROMAINE OR LITTLE GEM HEAD LETTUCE: This is the first of our field-grown head lettuce. Both of these varieties are compact, small varieties. Use these small leaves for wraps or salads.

Creamy Cilantro Dressing

Yield: 1 cup

1 cup packed cilantro	1 tsp honey
1 clove garlic or one stalk green garlic	1 tsp lime juice
4 Tbsp plain yogurt or sour cream	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 ½ Tbsp olive oil	3 tsp water, as needed

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor or blender and blend until smooth.
2. Taste and adjust seasonings to your liking. Add the water as needed to adjust the consistency of the dressing.
3. Serve as a dressing for green salads or as a sauce on fish, chicken, vegetables, etc.

Recipe adapted from *PinchOfYum.com*

Noodles with Miso-Cilantro Sauce

Yield: 2-3 servings

1 Tbsp white miso	4 cups baby spinach or chopped pea vine
1 garlic clove or one stalk of green garlic, roughly chopped	2 cups cilantro leaves and stems, rough chopped
½ cup sunflower oil	Kosher salt, to taste
1 tsp toasted sesame oil	10-12 oz ramen noodles or other thin noodles
1-2 tsp fresh lemon juice	1 Tbsp unsalted butter
1 Tbsp rice vinegar or apple cider vinegar	Toasted sesame seeds, for serving
¼-½ cup water (as needed)	

1. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil.
2. While the water is heating up, make the sauce. In a blender jar or food processor, combine miso, garlic, oils, lemon juice, vinegar and a few pinches of salt. Blend until the mixture is smooth and very green. You may need to add ¼ to ½ cup of water to the blender to adequately mix all the ingredients. Use the water sparingly. Season the sauce with salt and set the sauce aside.
3. Once the water is boiling, cook the noodles according to package instructions. Once cooked, drain the noodles and add to a medium size bowl along with the butter. Allow the hot noodles to melt the butter, then toss until all noodles are evenly coated. Mix in enough of the miso-cilantro sauce to generously cover all the noodles.
4. Divide the noodles between individual bowls for serving and top with toasted sesame seeds. If you have any extra sauce, save it and store in the refrigerator for several days or freeze it.

This recipe was adapted from one originally published in *Bon Appetit Magazine* in March 2018.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESOURCES?

HVF's BLOG: Each week we publish the "Cooking with the Box" blog that contains recipes for every item in the box, including the featured recipes from the "What's In the Box Newsletter," as well as other helpful cooking tips and the weekly vegetable feature. Subscribing to the blog is a great way to keep up to date on news outside of the CSA season since we post monthly during our off season as well!

FACEBOOK GROUP: Looking for an online community of CSA folks just like yourself? We invite you to join our private Facebook Group! This is a place where you can ask any vegetable or cooking question you might have, share recipes and pictures of things you're making in your own kitchen and so much more!

HVF's RECIPE DATABASE: All of our newsletters from previous years are archived on our website. We also have a searchable recipe database where you can search by vegetable for recipes featured in previous newsletters.

WALL CALENDARS: Our 2020 CSA calendars are here! There should be some at all sites this week. Please pick one up at your site this week if you don't have one yet!

The calendar is full of pretty pictures, but it's also packed with LOTS OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION! Need information about your pick up site or site host? Look in the back of your calendar! Not sure how to best store a vegetable? That information is in the front of the calendar! Can't remember which weeks you need to pick up your share? There's a page of handy stickers in the front of the calendar. Use them to mark your delivery weeks or as reminders for other important CSA related information!