



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

September 11 - 12, 2020

## What's In The Box?

**SWEET PEPPERS:** This week you'll receive a variety of sweet peppers which may include the following. Italian Frying Peppers which may be red, orange or green. These peppers are long and slender with a pointy tip. You can tell the difference between a green Italian frying pepper and a poblano pepper by the color. Poblano peppers are dark green, almost black. Some boxes may receive green bell peppers which may be entirely green or may be starting to turn red. Leave these on your counter and they'll continue to ripen and change color. Lastly, some boxes may receive Orange Ukraine peppers. These peppers have a Red-Orange color and have a more blocky, stout appearance.

**POBLANO PEPPERS:** These are the DARK GREEN peppers with blocky shoulders and a tapered point. This is a hot pepper with medium heat. Refer to our **Poblano Pepper Vegetable Feature** article published on our blog several weeks ago for suggestions for using this pepper.

**"FANTASTIC" SWEET CORN:** Before you enjoy this week's sweet corn, please make sure you have read the important note regarding Corn Earworm. You can find this information in your ["What's In the Box" email](#) or in the newsletter.

**CALIBRA YELLOW ONIONS:** This variety is a Sweet Spanish cross. We favor Sweet Spanish onions for their mild, sweet flavor, but they tend to have a shorter shelf life. This onion brings the best of both worlds to the table—flavor and shelf life!

**PORCELAIN GARLIC:** This type of garlic is characterized by bulbs that have fewer cloves, but each clove tends to be larger in size in comparison to Italian garlic. Include garlic in your meals every day as a dose of preventative medicine for your immune system!

**VARIETY OF LARGE TOMATOES:** There are some big, beautiful tomatoes in this week's bags! Please handle with care as these soft fruits are very delicate. Some of your tomatoes may be ready to eat now while others in your bag may be a little green and need more time to ripen. We recommend you ripen tomatoes at room temperature, but do so with a close watch. If you start to see any spots or signs of deterioration forming, it's time to eat the tomato! Just cut away the affected portion and enjoy the remainder.

**JALAPEÑO PEPPER:** Look for one jalapeño in your box this week. We believe this year's jalapeños are hot, so start conservatively when adding jalapeños to your food. You can always add more to adjust the heat level to your liking. If you don't use the entire jalapeño for a recipe, put the remainder in a bag or sealed container and store it in the refrigerator for later use.

**RED SEEDLESS WATERMELON AND/OR MELON:** We're nearing the end of watermelon and melon season. All the watermelons have been harvested and we're looking at maybe one more week of melons. This week's boxes may contain watermelon only or a mix of watermelon and one of our melon varieties. In addition to the Sweet Sarah cantaloupe, French Orange, Sun Jewel, and Sugar Cube melons, we're also picking a new trial variety called "Amy." This is a canary melon characterized by bright yellow skin and smooth, sweet white flesh. If you receive this variety, let us know what you think.

**GREEN TOP RED BEETS:** Beets contain important antioxidants, specifically anthocyanins which give them their deep, red color. Don't forget to eat both the beets and the green tops! You may even choose to use the beet greens in combination with this week's rainbow chard as the two are very similar.

**GREEN TOMATILLOS:** Refer to our **Tomatillo Vegetable Feature** article published on our blog earlier this season which included a list of recipe suggestions. Some of the outer husks surrounding the tomatillo may have some spots on them. This typically only affects the outer covering which is inedible and should be removed anyway. Once the husk has been removed, wash the fruit and it's ready to use!

**CILANTRO:** Cilantro pairs well with many of the other vegetables in this week's box. Use it to make salsa, add it to a fresh tomato and corn sauté, or use it to make a watermelon and tomato salad! The leaves and stems are usable, just chop the stems finely.

**RAINBOW CHARD:** Use this green to make **Creamy Chicken & Greens with Roasted Poblano Peppers**, a popular recipe featured in our newsletter back in 2019.

**ORANGE CARROTS:** This week's carrots are our favorite variety, "Bolero." This is our main variety for storage which is one of the reasons we like it. The other reason...they're typically the sweetest carrot we grow!

### Sweet Corn: Please Read This Important Message! By Chef Andrea

Before you peel back the husks on this week's corn, please read this important message. Those of you who have been with us in previous years know sweet corn is a challenging crop to grow and manage organically. Many critters enjoy sweet corn as much as we do, so we invest a lot of time, energy and resources into protecting the crop from raccoons, deer, birds, and other pests including Corn Borer moths and Corn Earworms. You can read more about these interventions on our **blog** in an article we published last year.

This is our final crop of sweet corn and it's always a gamble

because this is the time of the season when we battle corn earworms, a pest that migrates from the south and is one of the biggest challenges for organic management. We monitor the migration of corn earworm moths both by reports we receive through the University of Wisconsin as well as monitoring their presence in our own fields with the use of a pheromone trap. The moths lay their eggs on the silks of the corn. If we can intervene with a timely application of an organically approved spray, we can prevent the eggs from turning into worms which make their way down the silks of the corn and into the top of the ear of corn. Most years we're able to prevent the corn earworm, but in other years, despite our best efforts, the annoying corn

earworm wins.

So, with that explanation and background, you need to know that this week's corn will contain these small worms in most or possibly all of the ears in your box. We were faced with the difficult decision of harvesting and delivering this corn or the alternative which is to abandon the crop and chop it back onto the field. We checked many ears of corn to see how extensive the damage was and we consistently found one small worm (¼-¾ inch long) that had only affected the top ½-1 inch of the ear, leaving the remainder of the ear entirely usable. With such a small percent of damage, abandoning and destroying a crop that is 90-95% wholesome, usable and otherwise excellent corn seemed like an irresponsible decision. In this country we are often too quick to discard food that is less than perfect, resulting in unnecessary food waste. So, we are taking a gamble and included this corn in your box this week.

Here's our recommendation for what you should do. Before you peel back the husk, cut the tip of the corn off using a large chef's knife. Measure 2 ½ to 3 inches down from the tip of the corn, at the point where the silks start to come out of the green husk. (See pictures in the "What's In the Box email") If you cut at this point, you should cut below the part on the tip of the cob where the worm is. You'll discard several inches of husk and silk along with ½-1 inch of the end of the corn cob. If you follow this procedure you will not even see the worm and will be left with a beautiful cob of corn. Just remove the remainder of the husk and silks and use the corn.

Thank you in advance for your understanding. We welcome your feedback on this decision as it will help us decide whether or not to include sweet corn in the boxes one final time next week.

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## Vegetable Feature: Sweet Peppers!

By Chef Andrea

Late August and early September marks the peak of pepper season. This is the time of year when the field changes from a sea of green to a colorful array of orange, red and yellow. Several weeks ago we featured poblano peppers and we've been including a jalapeño in your boxes since mid-summer. We still have one more tasty hot pepper to share with you, but that selection will need to remain a mystery as it's not quite ready. So this week we'll turn our attention to the sweet side of our pepper crop.

It's a shame that the family of sweet peppers are so poorly represented in many traditional grocery store produce departments. While red and yellow bell peppers are lovely, there are so many other varieties of sweet peppers and many of them have better flavor! Over the years we've grown to appreciate other varieties such as Italian frying peppers which are delicious eaten both raw and cooked. Richard has also developed our own seed stock for orange Ukraine peppers which are not available commercially. They are similar to a bell pepper, but have a pointy tip and a thick flesh. They are an excellent pepper for roasting or stuffing. And then there are the sweet Mini Sweet peppers. Long before this became a mainstream pepper selection a CSA member encouraged us to try growing these snack peppers. Seed wasn't commercially available so we had to start by buying a pack of peppers from the store, picking all the seeds out of them and starting down the long road of producing our own seed. Many years have passed and we continue to produce our own seed for this crop despite the fact that seed is now commercially available for snack peppers. We continue to trial these varieties, but we continue to favor our own seed line as the peppers simply taste better!

### Visit our Blog where you will find the rest of this feature article!

#### Sweet Pepper and Cheddar Clafoutis

Note: Clafoutis is a custardy, baked dessert originating in France. It is traditionally filled with sweet cherries. This is Melissa Clark's savory spinoff on this French dish and it's delicious served as a main dish for breakfast, lunch or dinner! If you don't speak French, you can also refer to these as really good "cheesy eggs" as Farmer Richard refers to them.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

¾ cup whole milk	¾ tsp fine sea salt, divided, plus more as needed	2 ounces sliced ham, chopped (optional)	2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
½ cup crème fraiche (may substitute sour cream)	½ tsp freshly ground black pepper	2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil	¼ cup (1 oz) grated Parmesan cheese
4 large eggs	1 cup (4 oz) coarsely grated sharp white cheddar, cheese, divided	3 sweet peppers, (red bell, orange or red Italian frying peppers or orange Ukraine peppers) OR ½ pound mini sweet peppers	Fresh lemon juice, for serving
2 ½ Tbsp all-purpose flour			Crushed red pepper flakes, for serving
¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves			

1. Heat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the milk, crème fraiche, eggs, flour, basil, ½ tsp of the salt, and pepper. Stir in ¾ cup of the cheddar and the ham (if using).
3. Prepare the peppers by removing the stem and seeds and slicing into ¼-inch slices.
4. In a 9-inch ovenproof skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Stir in the peppers and cook until they are softened and golden at the edges, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in the garlic and remaining ¼ tsp salt and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
5. Scrape the egg mixture into the skillet, and top it with the remaining ¼ cup cheddar and the Parmesan. (Or for a more elegant presentation, scrape the vegetables into a gratin or casserole dish and add the egg mixture and cheese to that.)
6. Bake until the eggs are set, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool slightly, then top with lemon juice and red pepper flakes.

Thinking Ahead:

You can cook the peppers and garlic up to 3 days in advance. Store the mixture, covered, in the refrigerator. Gently rewarm it in an ovenproof skillet before adding the egg mixture and baking.

Recipe borrowed (with minor adaptations) from Melissa Clark's book, *"Dinner in French: My Recipes by Way of France"*