



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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## VEGETABLE FEATURE: NEW POTATOES

by Andrea Yoder

Potatoes are a vegetable everyone's familiar with, but not all are created equally and this week's potatoes are, in our opinion, very special. If you've been with us for previous CSA seasons you know we draw attention to this point every year because frankly, we just don't want you to miss out on this experience! There is a short period of time early in the summer when we have the opportunity to eat "New Potatoes." New potatoes are not a variety, but rather a term used to describe potatoes that are harvested off of a plant that still has green leaves on it. Our usual practice is to mow down the potato vines about a week in advance of harvest. In the week between mowing down the vines and actually harvesting the potatoes, changes take place in the plant that help to set the skins and make them easier to handle without damaging the skin. It also gives them a more durable skin to protect the flesh and make them better for storage. These potatoes were dug this past Saturday from plants with green vines. Freshly dug new potatoes have a flavor and texture unlike other potatoes throughout the season. It is a fresh, pure potato flavor and the skin is tender and delicate. When you cut them you'll notice they are very crispy and sometimes a little brittle because they have retained all their juiciness! Once cooked, the flesh is moist, creamy and smooth with a distinctive flavor that's hard to describe. Trust me, when you taste it you'll know what I mean!

The new potatoes in your box this week are a variety called Red Norland. They are an early, red-skinned potato with creamy white flesh. They need to be handled with care so as not to disturb the skin and expose the flesh. This year our potato field is in a location where the soil is a bit more sandy. Despite having rain the day before harvest, these potatoes came out of the ground very easily and are probably the nicest new potatoes I've ever seen!

## What's In The Box?

**SIERRA BLANCA ONIONS:** This is one of our favorite summer onions, which we often refer to as a "burger onion" as it's an excellent choice for hamburgers, hot dogs and sandwiches. It's mild in pungency, but full of onion flavor. You'll notice it has a very thin skin, which makes it perfect for eating fresh but not a candidate for long term storage.

**WHITE CAULIFLOWER:** Consider using this week's cauliflower to take a little culinary cooking adventure to another country. Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article for links to recipes from the other side of the world!

**ORANGE CARROTS:** Combine this week's carrots with a plant protein to make a vegetarian main dish. Links to recipes for **Red Lentil Falafel and Carrot & White Bean Burgers** are on the blog!

**SUMMER SQUASH (ZUCCHINI AND/OR SUNBURST SCALLOPINI SQUASH):** We are now harvesting from both our first and second plantings, which explains why there are several pounds in this week's box! Don't forget you can easily freeze raw zucchini. Just shred it and put it into freezer bags. Use it later for baked goods, casseroles or soup!

**GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS:** Use fresh cucumbers to make summer salads, add to sandwiches and wraps, turn them into quick pickles, or simply slice them and dip them in salt!

**THAI BASIL:** This type of basil has a purple stem and hints of anise in its flavor profile. It is used most often in Thai, Vietnamese and other southeast Asian dishes. If you're using this basil for the first time, refer to our **vegetable feature article from 2021** which includes links to 15 recipe ideas!

**RED NEW POTATOES:** These potatoes are very fresh and their skins are very delicate. As such, they will not store as well so we recommend you use them within a week. Read more about the unique beauty of new potatoes in this week's vegetable feature article!

**FRESH ITALIAN GARLIC:** It's back in the box! This garlic was harvested last Wednesday. We washed it straight out of the field and then put it in one of our greenhouses to start drying down. It's not fully dried, thus you may notice the skin surrounding the individual cloves is a bit thick and a little harder to remove. The cloves are juicy, crisp and bursting with fresh garlic flavor!

**BROCCOLI:** We have another crop of broccoli coming on this week! This week's variety has nice long stems. Peel away the outermost layer of skin on the stem to reveal the tender flesh inside. Shred it to make a broccoli slaw along with some shredded red cabbage!

**GREEN BEANS:** This variety of bean is called Provider and it's our early season green variety that has good germination vigor in cold spring soils. They are a little late coming on as they got hit by frost earlier this spring. Better late than never! You will notice this bean is more fibrous and may need a little longer cooking time.

**GREEN CURLY KALE:** Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article on the blog where you'll find several tasty recipes for using kale as a pizza topping!

**RED CABBAGE:** We have had limited success growing red cabbage in the spring, but this year's crop turned out to be quite nice! The heads of this cabbage are very dense and you may be surprised by how much the head actually yields. Shred it and make fresh slaws and salads or lightly stir-fry it.

We've given them the "white glove treatment" through the harvest and washing processes to preserve the integrity of their skins, but we encourage you to handle them with care as well. Wash them just before use and give them a gentle scrub if needed. There is no need to peel them, so my recommendation is to just skip that step.

I encourage you to slow down and really savor the flavor of these new potatoes as these first few weeks will be the only time during the season you'll be able to have this taste experience of freshly dug potatoes. You really don't need to do much to them and, in fact, I'd encourage you to do as little as possible! Honestly, most often I simply boil or roast them with fresh garlic and top them off with butter, salt, pepper and sometimes fresh herbs.

Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dark place, but not in the refrigerator. We store our potatoes in a warmer cooler at about 48-50°F which is most ideal. If potatoes are stored in colder temperatures (such as your home refrigerator), the starches will convert to sugars which is not what we want in a potato (save that characteristic for sweet potatoes!) So in a home setting, it's best to store them in a cool, dry location outside of the refrigerator where they will not be exposed to light which can cause the potatoes to turn green and bitter. If the potatoes have set their skins, in general they will store for a few weeks at room temperature in a brown paper bag (never in a plastic bag). However, because new potatoes are so fresh and we have not allowed them to set their skins, they will not store as well and are best eaten within one week.

### Summer Farmer Skillet Dinner

By Chef Andrea

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1 pound ground pork or beef	1 cup zucchini, medium dice	4 cups greens (kale, cabbage, amaranth, chard, beet greens, or any other seasonal cooking green), washed and chopped into bite-sized pieces or shredded
1 cup chopped onion	2 cups green or yellow beans, cut into bite-sized pieces	2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced	1 cup cream, divided	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ cup white wine	½ cup coarsely chopped fresh herbs (thyme, parsley, savory, oregano, rosemary etc.)	
2 cups potatoes, skin on, cut into bite-sized pieces		
1 cup carrots, medium dice		

1. If you have a broiler in your oven, position the rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the broiler. If you do not have a broiler, preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Heat an 11-12 inch oven proof skillet on the stove top at medium-high heat. Add the ground pork or beef and cook until browned. Add the onion and garlic and continue to cook for a few more minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Add the white wine to the pan and then layer the potatoes and carrots on top of the meat mixture. Season again with salt and pepper. Cover the pan and simmer for 5-8 minutes or until the potatoes and carrots have started to soften but are not all the way cooked.
4. Add the zucchini, green beans and ½ cup of the cream to the pan. Season this layer with salt and pepper. Cover the pan again and simmer for another 5-6 minutes.
5. Remove the cover and sprinkle the herbs on top. Spread the greens on top, and season with salt and pepper. Pour the remaining ½ cup of cream around the edge of the pan. Cover the pan again and simmer for about 5 minutes or until the greens are wilted. Remove the cover and simmer on the stovetop for an additional 5-6 minutes or until the cream is reduced by about half.
6. Spread the shredded cheese on top of the greens. Remove the pan from the stovetop and put it in the oven under the broiler or in the hot oven. Bake just until the cheese is melted, bubbly and starting to brown.
7. Serve hot. If you have any leftovers, they will reheat well for another meal or they are delicious served with toast and eggs for breakfast.

This is a basic recipe that can be altered to use any seasonal vegetables you have available. Add the vegetables that will take the longest to cook to the pan first and finish with the quick cooking greens on top. And the best part is... you only dirty one pan! This has become one of our favorite, simple ways to make a hearty meal using seasonal vegetables without a lot of fuss and enough leftovers for the next day! Perfect Farmer food at the end of a long summer day!