



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

July 6, 2017

What's In The Box?

PURPLE SCALLIONS: It's been an excellent onion year so far. Cross your fingers that the tops will continue to remain healthy in the field and the onions will keep growing and multiplying as well as these purple scallions have!

FENNEL: Please refer to **last week's newsletter** and **blog** post about fennel. You'll find two delicious recipes plus suggestions for other ways to use this unique vegetable.

FRESH ITALIAN GARLIC: This garlic was just harvested, so the layers of skin surrounding the cloves are still very fresh and will need to be pulled away to expose the fresh, juicy cloves inside.

GREEN TOP GOLD BEETS: If you profess to not like beets, this may be the beet for you. Golden beets are more mild in flavor and sweeter than red beets....and as always, eat the greens too!

SUGAR SNAP OR SNOW PEAS: We still have one more planting of peas coming...they're blooming right now. Don't forget that all of our peas have edible pods. All you have to do is remove the string that runs on top of the pea and is connected to the stem.

ITALIAN & GREEN ZUCCHINI: Our first crop of zucchini is producing much better this week now that we have had some warm days! The Italian variety is lighter green with stripes and ribs. It is more firm and best for grilling.

GREEN OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: Another heat-loving crop that really stepped up production with the heat this week! The silver slicer cucumbers have pale yellow skin, are a little smaller than the green cucumbers, and have a crisp texture with a fruity flavor.

GREEN TOP CARROTS: These are an older European "nantes" variety called "Mokum" that is known for being an early carrot with a sweet juicy flavor. The greens are edible too! Read this week's *Cooking With the Box* feature on our **blog** for suggestions about using the carrot tops!

BROCCOLI: The stems of broccoli are edible too. Just peel away a thin outer layer of skin and you'll find a tender, juicy core that is delicious raw or cooked.

AMARANTH GREENS: Don't be fooled...this is a cooking green, but the leaves are mostly deep burgundy red in color and sometimes have a touch of dark green! See this week's vegetable feature for more information about this cool vegetable!

Meet My Friend Carol....

This week's newsletter article was written by longtime CSA member, Carol Wilson. Carol was kind enough to share some of her strategies, resources and thoughts about how to find success and pleasure as CSA members "eating out of the box." Carol and her husband, Bob, have been CSA members in Madison, Wisconsin for over 20 years. They raised two wonderful children on HVF CSA vegetables. Their daughter, Jesse, lives and works in New York City where she now enjoys cooking with her own CSA shares. Their son, David, resides in California where he enjoys his work as a wine maker. Both Jesse and David have grown to develop an appreciation for good food and totally get what it means to eat seasonally. When their children left home, the weekly CSA box became more of a challenge for only Bob and Carol, but they have done well with the challenge and continue to eat through a weekly vegetable share. They have seen us through times of bounty when we had huge pepper crops and stuck with us through three difficult flood years. They have listened to us when we needed their support and perspectives, offering us enlightenment and sometimes just a dose of comic relief. Over the years they have become not only loyal, committed CSA members, but they have also become our good friends. This past winter they visited us for a weekend, including their dog Iris. Bob helped me reinstall a bathroom cabinet that had been removed for a plumbing repair while Carol coached Andrea through a basket weaving project! Bob and Carol are an example of how important our CSA members are to our farm. They help make the difficult days more manageable and meaningful. This is what Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is really about! ---Farmer Richard

Overwhelmed? Don't Be!

By Carol Wilson, Madison HVF CSA Member

We have been members of Harmony Valley Farm (HVF) for over 20 years and initially experienced being overwhelmed as we learned to eat seasonally and to make use of our wonderful HVF produce. Learning to eat seasonally and to incorporate less familiar vegetables into your repertoire is so rewarding, but requires strategies and a little effort. Below are some of the strategies we learned over the years and now, long after our children grew up and moved out, we continue to receive a weekly box and experience the pleasures of healthy eating.

When we come home with the box, 2 things are key for me: proper storage and inventory. My daughter does not bag her greens and then they wilt. Another friend leaves veggies sitting on the counter and they go soft quickly. Properly stored veggies last longer and taste better. However, once those veggies are stored away, it can be hard to remember what you have on hand. I solve that dilemma by creating a list of our veggies and posting it on the fridge. I have counted over 20 different veggies at one time in our fridge!

(See our **blog** for the rest of Carol's article including some of her favorite cookbooks!)

Featured Vegetable: Amaranth Greens

Amaranth is a stunning “green” that actually has dark, burgundy colored leaves. It is an ancient plant that was part of the diets of Aztec civilizations in Mexico up to 7,000 years ago. It was also an important staple food for the Incas of South America and the people of the Himalayan region of Asia. In these ancient cultures, amaranth was also used medicinally and in cultural rituals. It was held as a symbol of immortality and means “never –fading flower” in Greek. Like many other vegetables, amaranth was a multi-use vegetable. The seeds were used as a winter staple and the young leaves were eaten as a fresh vegetable. There are about 60 different varieties of amaranth, some grown to harvest seeds, others for the leaves, and several ornamental species. The variety of amaranth we grow is referred to as “Polish Amaranth”....and there’s a story to go with this name.

We actually purchased the seed for this year’s crop from Wild Garden Seeds (WGS), which is kind of funny because Richard is the one who actually gave them the seed originally! Some of you may have heard this story already, but for those of you who don’t know it the story goes like this. One day Richard was driving to town and saw a beautiful red amaranth plant growing in a garden along the way. He stopped and asked the people who lived there about this plant. They said their Aunt May brought the seed with her from Poland and they were happy to share it with Richard. . So Richard collected some seed and started growing it, mostly as a baby green to mix into his gourmet salad mix.

(Visit our [blog](#) for the remainder of this article)

Cooking with This Week’s Box!

I recently picked up another cookbook entitled *Six Seasons: A New Way With Vegetables* by Joshua McFadden. In his book he divides the summer season into three different sections, early summer, midsummer and late summer. According to his system for seasonal distinction, we are still in early summer, as we transition from the tail end of spring into the first part of summer. Salad mix is done until fall and it’s time to switch to summer cooking greens and salads made with vegetables other than lettuce! There is quite a selection in this week’s box so cooking and eating is going to be very interesting this week!

Lets start with this week’s featured vegetable, Amaranth. If you’re new to this green, take a moment to read the vegetable feature in this week’s newsletter or on our [blog](#). Our featured recipe this week is **Spicy Amaranth Greens with Zucchini and Black-Eyed Peas**. This dish is tasty on its own, or you can serve it over grits, polenta or rice. If you’re not into black-eyed peas, substitute another bean of your choosing or leave them out as well!

(See our [blog](#) for the rest of this article & our suggestions for utilizing every item in your box!)

Spicy Amaranth with Zucchini & Black-eyed Peas

By Andrea Yoder

Yield: 4 Servings

1 bunch amaranth greens, washed
2 Tbsp vegetable oil, divided
1 Tbsp minced fresh ginger
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ cup finely chopped onion (If using an onion with green tops, save the tops)
1 ½ tsp ground cumin
¾ tsp ground coriander
¼ tsp ground cloves
¼ tsp ground cardamom
⅛ tsp cayenne (optional)
2 cups zucchini, chopped into bite-sized pieces
1 can (15 oz) black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
1-2 tsp salt, or to taste
2 Tbsp lime juice
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 cup finely chopped onion tops, optional (if using scallions or another onion with green tops)

1. First, prepare the amaranth greens. Wash the greens in a sink of water. Shake to remove most of the excess water. Separate the leaves from the stems. Finely chop the stems and set aside. Roughly chop the leaves and set aside.
2. Heat a medium saute pan over medium heat. Add 1 Tbsp of oil to the pan. Once the oil is hot, add the ginger, garlic and onion. Saute for 2-3 minutes or until you can smell the ginger, garlic and onion and the vegetables are softened.
3. Add the spices and 1 tsp salt to the pan. Stir to combine. Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan along with the zucchini and amaranth stems. Stir to combine and then saute for 7-10 minutes or until the zucchini starts to get tender, but is not fully cooked.
4. Add the black-eyed peas and stir to combine. Add the amaranth leaves to the pan and cover. Reduce the heat to medium-low and allow the greens to wilt down for about 5 minutes.
5. Remove the cover and add the lime juice. Stir to combine the greens with the bean mixture. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking by adding more lime juice and/or salt. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the green onion tops if you are using them.
6. You can serve this on its own or over creamy polenta, grits or cooked rice.