



Harmony Valley Farm

An Update for Our Community Supported Agriculture Members

Harmony Valley Farm, S. 3442 Wire Hollow Rd., Viroqua, WI 54665
608-483-2143 harmony@mwt.net www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

June 23, 2001
Vol. 9, iss. 9
Week No. 25

THIS WEEK'S BOX

BROCCOLI
SPINACH
KOHLRABI



LETTUCE MIX
STRAWBERRIES - ONE CONTAINER MAY BE VERY RIPE, EAT FAST.
ZUCCHINI (YELLOW OR GREEN) BUNCHED ASIAN GREENS - HMONG-STYLE WITH FLOWER BUD. YOU EITHER HAVE WHITE STEM PAK CHOI OR GREEN STEM TAT SOI IN YOUR BOX.
GARLIC SCAPES - THE CURLY BUNCH OF STEMS.
RED AND WHITE GREEN ONIONS
NO CHOICE THIS WEEK

The Wildlife of Harmony Valley -- by Linda

I grew up in the 60's on a traditional Wisconsin farm. You'd think that would mean I was familiar with all sorts of wildlife and birds; not so. I believe it was, in many ways, a dark period for wildlife in the middle of America. Habitat for many critters was scarce. Hedgerows of flowering and fruiting trees were dozed to make way for cropland of a single species of plant spanning quarter-sections. DDT had just been banned but its effects were still very apparent. The fauna of rural Wisconsin was heavy on white tail deer, raccoons, grey squirrels and ground squirrels. Most of these creatures thrive on the changes humans make in the landscape --fields in the summer, and cribs in the fall, full of corn, being an important one. I played in the woods, the streams and pastures of our 275 acre farm. I knew its nooks and crannies well. When I was old enough to ride the horses most every summer afternoon, I began to know the back trails of neighbors' farms, too. Yes, we saw wildlife, but not the diversity I see here on our farm today. I remember the sighting of a "chicken hawk" caused a stir with all the kids on the school bus. The two brothers ran up the drive shouting to their dad to "get the gun!"

It's different here at Harmony Valley. This spring we've watched the fox family growing up behind Dorothy's barn. There were 4 pups, one seemed gimpy. Now we never see them in a group, so don't know how many survived, but I still catch glimpses of a fox several times a week, darting here or there. Eagles fly the Bad Axe River and if you are down there at sunset you can count on watching one heading for its roost in the west. Herons, turkeys, sandhill cranes, wood ducks, red tails, great horned owls, hairy, downy and pileated woodpeckers, ruby throated hummingbirds, orioles, goldfinches, blue birds, barn, bank and tree swallows, phoebes, king birds, king fishers, morning doves, robins, cedar waxwings, nut hatches, cardinals, rose breasted grosbeaks and many unidentifiable warblers-- at any moment, no matter my task, I just look around and see (or hear) one of these marvelous birds. I'm so lucky to live here. In my office, while writing this, I've seen the hummer and his mate, and can watch the nut hatch at the bird feeder.

We've got our share of reptiles, too. Harry found a fox snake last week, and Richard found a fox and garter snake twined together under a bin. (No rattlers spotted this year.) Turtles are crossing the road along the river looking for a nesting spot now. A tree frog was nabbed by Adrian on Monday and displayed over lunch before he was released. They are soooo cute! Toads are frequently seen in the vegetable fields, and leopard frogs will be seen soon, too. The creek is a chorus in the evenings.

We have our share of not-so-welcome animal friends, too. More deer than can be supported here, raccoons, opossums, woodchucks, field mice and rabbits (though I haven't seen rabbits at Dorothy's since the foxes have moved in.) Richard has his nearly tame bunny that lives in the back yard. Maggie, the dog, patrols the yard in vain -- bunny has so many hiding places he isn't even worried.

I know our DNR friends will be skeptical, but this spring Richard spotted a wolf or wolf-dog in the back yard. Maggie caught Richard's eye; she was peering into the woods, hackles up. He looked outside in time to see her facing off with a much larger, lankier black canine. (Maggie is a large collie/golden-type mutt, so seeing her near the canine gave Richard a perspective on its size.) With Richard's appearance the wolf headed up into the woods and Maggie, arthritic hips and all, chased after -- feeling, no doubt, pretty impressed with her ability to protect her family from dangerous intruders. Coyotes live in the valley, too. We rarely see them, but on summer nights, now and then, they can be heard carrying on with their eerie yapping. More than once I have been roused from sleep to the crazy, almost laugh-like calls of coyotes under a bright moon.

After May's big flood the beavers moved out, but it is probably only temporary. Plenty of willow, their favorite building material and winter food, has grown back along the creek to entice them to build again.

It is the diversity of birds and animals that impresses me, awes me, inspires me. I am glad that we maintain a farm, make a living and, at the same time, support the habitat that these wild creatures require to thrive.

Ours is certainly not the only farm providing habitat to wildlife. The CRP programs that actually pay farmers to take marginal land out of production has resulted in many acres of habitat that support wildlife. I don't foresee marginal acres being put back in production soon, but the next challenge to wildlife will be the ever expanding human population that becomes less and less dense, sprawling suburbia into former marshes, fields and woodlands. I'm hopeful that attitudes toward wild life have changed since my childhood and we will all have opportunities to enjoy the wild creatures we share our earth with.

To Return, Or not To Return

For those of you who took home strawberry flats and green pulp containers; we will pick them up at the drop off sites so **do bring them back there**. Linda might have told a few people otherwise, imagining the nightmare of finding room for them on a full CSA truck, but we could definitely use them again, especially the waxed flats.

Harry Writes

I would like to personally thank everyone that came out for Strawberry day. I very much enjoyed everyone else's food, and all the positive input I received from those I spoke with. Thank-you for your support! As I enjoyed a particularly good strawberry-rhubarb bar, I thought of a great idea. I would like you, our CSA members, to SEND ME YOUR FAVORITE RECIPIE(S), or just a really good one that you have enjoyed, and are willing to share. I want to start a collection of recipes, and periodically post a "featured" member's recipe. You can send them to me via USPS @ S 3442 Wire Hollow Rd. Viroqua, WI 54665, or to my email HIBYME@HOTMAIL.COM. If you are willing to share with me but not everyone else, just let me know, no one will ever know our secret. (Just kidding! We all know this is a "community", right?). I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you. Thank-you, and Cook Happy!



This Week...

Garlic Scapes are new this week in the box. Scapes are the seed stalk that the garlic sends up when it begins to bulb out. The scapes are removed before maturing, this gives the garlic more energy for the bulb creating a 20%- 30% increase in size. The scapes are utilized when the garlic has passed the green garlic stage, but not yet reached the mature stage. Once the garlic is mature, the bulb will be dried for use through the winter. Garlic is ALWAYS in season. The scapes can be used just like green garlic, or chives. It has a very mild flavor, sweet, green, garlicky. This week I have thrown it in everything. Here are just a few ideas:

Spinach and Scape Pesto

Puree: 1/2 bag spinach, 1/2 c. grated parmesan or romano cheese, 1/4 c. toasted nuts (pine or walnut), 5 or 6 scapes, 1/2c. olive oil. S&P to taste. 4 or 5 basil leaves can be added if you wish.

Chicken with Scapes

Sauté 4 seasoned chicken breasts in 2T. olive oil and 1 T butter. When they are almost cooked take them out of the pan to rest. Leave the empty pan over the heat for 15 seconds then add 1/2 c white wine, and 2 T lemon juice, to deglaze. Add 4 scapes, chopped, and 1 1/2 t chopped capers(optional). Bring to a boil and add chicken breasts. Add 2T. cold butter and remove from heat. Stir butter through sauce until combined. The sauce should look silky and continuous, not broken. Adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve chicken immediately, topped with sauce.

Quick Scape Veggie Dip

Combine: 1 c. Mayo, 1 c. sour cream, 4-6 scapes chopped fine, 1 T. dill, 2 T. vinegar (wt. wine, wt. balsamic, champagne, etc.) S&P to taste, Milk to thin if necessary. Scapes are also great in mashed potatoes, omelets, pizza topping, pasta, stir-fry, and on, and on.

EARLY SUMMER "BOX" STIR-FRY

serves 4-6

1# beef or chicken sliced thin, or tofu cubed
1/2 c. light soy sauce
2 T. lemon or lime juice
1 T. Ginger, grated
3-4 scapes, chopped
4-5 green onions, chopped
1 t. fresh savory, chopped
2 carrots, small dice
1 - 2 bulbs kohlrabi, peeled, small dice
1 1/2 c. broccoli florettes
1 c. summer squash, diced
1 bunch pak choi, chopped
2 T. cilantro, chopped (optional)
1/2 c. water
1 T. cornstarch combined w/ 1/2 T. water

Marinate the meat or tofu in soy sauce, lemon juice, ginger, 1/2 scapes, 1/2 green onion. Add 1 T. oil to hot pan or wok. Strain meat or tofu saving the liquid. Add to pan and sauté just until cooked. Remove from pan and set aside. Add 1 T. oil to pan. When hot, add remaining scapes and green onions. When you smell the onions cooking add the carrots. Next, add the kohlrabi. Sauté, for one or two minutes, Add broccoli and water. Steam for 2-3 minutes. Add squash. Wait one minute, add pak choi and savory. Add reserved marinade and bring to boil. Add cornstarch "slurry" and stir to thicken. Add meat or tofu and serve over hot rice.

Attention!!

This week I was made aware that last week's "Box" only contained three Kohlrabi, and my recipe called for six (Kohlrabi gratin) This recipe works very well if you use potatoes in combination with Kohlrabi. Alternate layers of potatoes, sliced thin, and Kohlrabi. This will help "stretch" the dish to accommodate limited kohlrabi. Remember, you can also put the chopped greens between the layers for added color, flavor, and texture appeal.

Strawberry Day Report

There were over 100 guests at the farm this past Sunday to pick berries, potluck, tour and even camp. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and who could help but enjoy themselves in the berry patch at its peak!

We, too, enjoyed the camaraderie and new and renewed friendships. For some it was their first visit to the farm, others have made it a family tradition to trek out on Father's Day for berries and fun.

The next event, listed on your calendar, is Garlic Braiding Workshop in Madison on Sat. August 4. The tentative location is L'Etoile's first floor - Market Cafe. More news in the weeks to come.

About containers - Only return HVF plastic pints and quarts, not containers from the store or other farms, please. Nest them and put them in the marked place at your site. Thanks