



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

June 27-28, 2014

## A Rainy Day At the Farm..... Strawberry Day 2014

By Richard, Andrea & Captain Jack

Last week was characterized by rain, rain, and more rain. Thankfully we skirted some bad storms and didn't have as much rainfall as in surrounding areas. Our fields were wet and we tromped through the week with muddy boots, but everything was intact and we continued to prepare for our annual Strawberry Day on Sunday, June 22! Every year we worry that the strawberry fields won't be in their prime for the day of the party. Will there be enough berries? Will the season be too early or too late? What if there are no strawberries for Strawberry Day?! Well, this year the plants cooperated and there were plenty of berries to pick. Richard checked the weather forecast and it looked like the rain was going to hold off until the evening. We woke up to bright sunshine and as the morning went on it looked like it was going to be a sunny, beautiful day. It was hot and humid, but no rain.

We were expecting nearly 200 members to attend the event and people started arriving around noon. The lunch table was quickly filled with a variety of dishes that everyone contributed to the meal. Chef Caleb made beautiful vegetable and cheese platters as well as enough macaroni and cheese to feed the army of people we were expecting! As we ate, the clouds started to roll in...but everyone was excited to see the fields so we hopped on the wagons and decided to take our chances. As we were heading down the road, we felt the air change. It became cool and breezy, which was a welcomed relief from the hot, sticky air we felt in the morning. I thought I saw a camera flash over my shoulder, but then I heard the rain drops start hitting the roof of the wagon and realized the flash was distant lightening and not a camera. The rain fall was nice and steady and we were all feeling more refreshed.

First we drove around the onion field. Everyone was asking great questions about the different varieties of onions, why we plant them on the silver plastic, and when we would be harvesting them. We were anxious to get to the next stop near the melon fields, so we didn't stop in the onions. A few members jumped off the wagon when we got near the melon field to check and see if they could find any baby melons on the vines. No baby melons yet, but a lot of blossoms and healthy plants! The rain continued to fall, so we decided to get going with hopes that it would let up by the time we got to the zucchini field. This is where the great adventure came in...the river crossing. It's always fun to cross the river, which was moving at a rapid clip on Sunday. All members were advised to hold onto their flip flops so they wouldn't fall in the river.

## This Weeks Box

**Green Boston Lettuce:** Do as the French, and cook your lettuce with your peas! Add fresh mint and a touch of butter for more complexity.

**Purple Scallions:** For a colorful contrast, add your sliced scallions to garbanzo beans along with cumin, chopped lemon and parsley. Remember, you can use the entire plant.

**Garlic Scapes:** Mix up your typical routine of garlic scapes and scrambled eggs and try something spicier. Sauté your scapes along with ginger and garlic and toss them into a soba noodle salad.

**Strawberries:** Stray from the norm, and try roasting your strawberries along with rhubarb, maple syrup, sweet vermouth, balsamic vinegar, and a dash of salt. We promise you won't be disappointed!

**Zucchini or Scallop Squash:** Did somebody say zucchini butter? Yes! Mixed with shallots and garlic, this condiment will be a savory treat on your toast all summer long.

**Kohlrabi:** See the feature article and recipes in this week's newsletter.

**Rainbow Chard:** Similar to bok choy, chard stalks need to cook longer than their leafy counterparts. Boil stalks in salted water for two minutes, then add the leaves and boil for another minute. Drain, rinse and then squeeze, using your hands to gently press out as much water as you can. Consider topping with a Greek yogurt, tahini, lemon and garlic sauce.

**Sugar Snap Peas:** The pods of these peas are edible. Remove the stem end and the string that runs along the top of the pea pod. Slice up a few radishes and sauté them along with shallots and your sugar snap peas. Add a splash of orange juice and about a tablespoon of freshly chopped dill for a playful twist.

**Green Top Red Beets:** Beets are back! Chop into small chunks, and throw them into your blender along with strawberries, ginger, lemon juice, water and honey. Don't forget about the greens—they're edible too.

As far as we know, no one had to venture down the river after the party to retrieve their shoes!

The rain didn't stop, but that didn't seem to phase anyone. A few members jumped off the wagon to check out the zucchini and pick a few. The plants are standing tall and are loaded with blossoms! With the rain continuing to fall, we changed the plan a bit and decided to take a leisurely drive around the tomato field. It was a beautiful sight to see as we approached the field. In the distance you could see all the tomato stakes and as we got closer it was clear the crew had been hard at work staking, mulching and tying the tomatoes. We talked about our favorite tomato varieties and took a moment to anticipate the season when we will enjoy fresh slices of juicy tomatoes.

Well, needless to say the rain didn't let up as we made our way back to the farm. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves despite the gray skies. Our valley is beautiful whether in the sunshine or when it's filled with the misty rain. The pastures were bright and green and the fields looked beautiful as we drove on the road overlooking the rhubarb, leeks and celeriac.

When we got back to the farm, Chef Caleb had tubs of strawberry ice cream waiting for us. This ice cream was made specifically for this day by our friends at Castle Rock Organic Dairy. They used our strawberries and put in almost three times the amount they normally use! Everybody had an opportunity to pick their fill of berries and the rain did eventually stop. Three hundred fifty pounds of

strawberries were picked by the end of the day and an unknown amount of berries were consumed in the field. We had our annual "Pick the largest berry" contest again with some pretty impressive entries! Peter Dowd from the Twin Cities was the winner in the adult division. He drove away happily with a ½ gallon of strawberry ice cream packed away on ice. Daniella Altamarano was the winner for the children's division and also left with a smile on her face as her Dad put the cooler with ice cream in their car. Daniella is the daughter of Antonio who works in our packing shed.

We always enjoy the face-to-face conversations we're able to have with members at events such as these. Many of our crew attended the party as well and had an opportunity to connect with those who came. Captain Jack looks forward to Strawberry Day every year and had a great time playing "stick" with all the children. He was "dog tired" by the end of the day and sad to see the last family drive away. He slept well on Sunday night and had to take most of the day off on Monday to recuperate.

Through the entire day I didn't hear a single complaint about the weather and everyone made the most of their visit to the farm! Here is an excerpt from an email we received from a member after the party. She summed up the day very well. "I want to thank you for the lovely strawberry picking day, especially in the warm gentle rain. Your example of not letting the rain stop us from picking strawberries made the strawberries sweeter."

## Feature of the Week: Kohlrabi!

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

According to renowned writer and chef Deborah Madison, our featured vegetable this week is a bit of an “oddball.” Based on its appearance and unusually mild taste, I’d say she’s on to something. Hailing from the brassica family, kohlrabies are essentially swollen stems with a taste and texture similar to that of broccoli stems. We grow both purple and green varieties, though you’ll find that the flavor is consistent between the two.

When working with young kohlrabies—roughly the size of a tennis ball—whether or not you remove the skin is up to you. If you do opt for peeling, cut a thin slice off of the top and bottom of the bulb so you have a flat surface to work with. Then cut the bulb in half and proceed with either a peeler or a paring knife. As for the skinnier stems that protrude up from the bulb, these may be too fibrous to eat but it never hurts to take a bite to make sure. The leaves, however, are quite edible and may be prepared similarly to kale and other leafy greens in the brassica family. If more mature, remove the center rib of the leaf, much as you would do with kale and collard greens.

Because of their mild flavor, kohlrabi can get lost if thrown into a sea of competing tastes. Whether you choose to prepare them raw or cooked, you will get the most out of your kohlrabies if you adopt a simple, straightforward approach. Try grating them into a salad of slivered mustard greens and chopped napa cabbage, or slice them thinly and serve with tart green apples, lemon juice, ginger and oil. Alternatively, grilling or oven roasting your kohlrabies creates a sweet, slightly caramelized side dish perfect for steak or grilled fish. Also consider pairing kohlrabi with blue cheese in a gratin, or steam them and top with a horseradish cream sauce. But don’t forget the most straightforward approach of all—just slice and eat!

If you store them in a plastic bag in your refrigerator, you’ll have a few weeks to decide what to do with your kohlrabies. Wrap and store the leaves separately, also in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.



Antonio washes purple kohlrabi for this week’s deliveries.

### Reminder! Please use the checklist provided at your site.

- Check your name (and only your name) off the checklist when you pick up your share.
- Do not take a box if your name is not on the list. Remember that if you take a share and your name is not on the checklist, you are taking another member’s share.
- If you believe your name should be on the list, please contact the farm and we will be happy to help you.
- If your name is on the list but there is no share for you, Contact your site coordinator first & then the farm. You may have to go to another site, but we should be able to find you a box if needed.

Make sure anyone who picks up your share for you knows what to expect and where to go!

## Coconut Kohlrabi Slaw

By Andrea Yoder

1. Remove the leaves from the kohlrabi. Stack the leaves and slice them thinly. Cut the kohlrabi bulb into thin matchstick pieces. If the peel is tender you can leave it on. Place the kohlrabi leaves and bulb in a medium bowl.
2. Cut the zucchini into thin matchsticks and add them to the kohlrabi along with the green onions, garlic scapes, cilantro, basil and mint. Toss the mixture to combine the ingredients.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the coconut milk, rice vinegar, soy sauce, honey, ginger and ½ tsp salt to make a creamy dressing. Add the dressing to the vegetables and stir to combine. Add the shredded coconut, stir to combine and let set for about 10 minutes. Adjust the seasoning to your liking with salt and black pepper.
4. Serve slightly chilled or at room temperature with chopped almonds or peanuts on top.

Serves 4

1 medium or 2 small Kohlrabi, bulbs & leaves  
1 small zucchini  
2 green onions, sliced thinly  
2 garlic scapes, sliced thinly  
3 Tbsp cilantro, minced  
1 Tbsp basil, chiffonade (sliced thinly)  
1 Tbsp mint, chiffonade (sliced thinly)  
¼ cup coconut milk  
2 Tbsp rice vinegar  
2 tsp soy sauce  
2 Tbsp honey  
½ tsp ground ginger  
½ tsp salt, plus more to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
2 Tbsp shredded coconut  
¼ cup almonds or peanuts, toasted & chopped



## It’s time for Local Thyme!!

Harmony Valley Farm is partnering with Local Thyme, a menu-planning service, to offer additional resources to our Market and CSA members as well as a customized weekly menu plan.

Visit [www.localthyme.com](http://www.localthyme.com) from a computer (not a mobile device) to register. Enter the farm code: LTHVFREE under ‘I belong to a CSA’ and click the sign-up button. Fill in your information and choose the ‘I agree’ button. Then click ‘Subscribe’ on the next page and follow the instructions in the confirmation email that will follow!