



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

July 24-25, 2015

HVF's "Culture of Cleanliness" by Farmers Richard & Andrea

Earlier this spring we had our annual visit from our Food Safety Inspector, Dr. Kolb. For over 10 years we've chosen to do a third-party, voluntary food safety audit of our farm. When the inspector comes, he checks out all areas of our operation from the packing shed to the field and everything in between. He looks at equipment, storage facilities, tractors, records, etc. He actually starts his inspection before he ever pulls in our driveway! As he approaches our farm he looks at the roadsides scouting out trash and debris. Seriously, are we responsible for the roadsides too? Yes! Any area near or surrounding our farm is important to our "Culture of Cleanliness," a term we adopted from Dr. Kolb's food safety jargon. We want every person who visits our farm to have a positive "first impression" that leaves you thinking "Wow! What a clean, organized farm!"

When we first started down this road many years ago, food safety on farms was not as much at the forefront as it is now. Many smaller farms still don't have a food safety program in place and are scrambling to pull it all together given more recent legislation and increased regulation regarding food safety at the farm level. While the requirements of this legislation are still being determined, it's inevitable that the requirements will only continue to become greater. One of the biggest complaints from farmers is the time and money they need to invest to implement a food safety program. Yes, it is an investment of both time and money. We have two crew members who spend several hours per week doing pest control monitoring around the farm. We also take time to put up fencing in vulnerable field areas to exclude critters such as deer & raccoons from crop areas. Every month we do environmental lab tests which cost not only time, but also the cost of the lab analysis. Every day we invest time in properly cleaning and sanitizing wash lines and equipment. These are just a few of the expenses we incur to support our program. Nonetheless, we feel it is important to be aware of food safety issues and stay well ahead of the curve. Many of our wholesale accounts now require documentation of our food safety program in addition to organic certification. But the value of our interest in food safety goes beyond satisfying a buyer's request. With each visit from our inspector we learn new things and are challenged to make improvements to procedures, facilities, machinery, etc.

Over the years Dr. Kolb has taught us

to see our operation through a different set of eyes. Over the course of time we have developed what we referred to previously as the "Culture of Cleanliness." This mentality extends to all areas of the farm. Everyone on the farm, regardless of position, shares a responsibility in upholding the policies we have in place as well as helping us continue to identify areas for improvement. We are proud of the progress we have made over the past 8-10 years that has led to a more organized, clean farm that we are all proud of!

We don't just think about food safety once a year when the inspector is coming. No, we think about it every day. We take our job of providing you and your families

with safe food very seriously. Color-coded brushes, red buckets, orange buckets, white buckets, stainless-steel equipment, food-safe grease, clean equipment bearings, yellow-handled harvest knives, tractor-diapers and general good hand-washing...these are just a few parts of our day-to-day work lives that are directly related to food-safety. We have many SOPs (standard operating procedures) in place and more yet to develop. Every year we set aside time to do annual training to remind every crew member about the SOPs and build upon previous knowledge.

Our food safety program will likely never be "finished." It will always be a work in progress as we make continuous improvements and build upon our

This Week's Box

FRESH GARLIC: If you've yet to make garlic confit, make haste! This sweet, caramelized condiment is perfect on anything, but I especially recommend lending it to crusty bread, vegetables and pasta. Check out *Saveur* for their Simple Garlic Confit recipe.

SWEET SPANISH ONIONS: The sweetness of these onions makes them a perfect addition to pasta or potato salad—toss in some olives and fennel if you're feeling extra adventurous.

BROCCOLI: For a nice side dish, toss florets with olive oil, red chile flakes, smashed garlic and salt to taste. Sauté or grill for a few minutes, until your broccoli is lightly browned. Don't forget that the thick stems are edible as well. Simply peel away the thicker outer skin to reveal a tender, sweet stem on the inside.

WHITE CAULIFLOWER: Put a Sardinian spin on your cauliflower by roasting wedges with green olives and saffron. Cauliflower also pairs well with tahini, garlic, cumin and lemon.

YELLOW BEANS: For a bright summer salad, trim your beans and fold in minced garlic, feta, sliced cipollini or Spanish onions and mint. Toss with olive oil and red wine vinegar and enjoy!

ZUCCHINI: Zucchini pickles, anyone? These pickles, famously associated with San Francisco's Zuni Café, go hand-in-hand with any summertime burger or sandwich. Head online and check out Martha Stewart's replication of Chef Judy's Zucchini Pickles.

ORANGE CARROTS: Kick-start your morning with a carrot, orange, and ginger smoothie. Or head to Green Kitchen Stories and check out their recipe for Baked Carrot Cake Oatmeal.

NEW POTATOES: Boil and cube your potatoes and build your potato salad from there! Consider adding a combination of soft-boiled eggs, bacon, frisee, diced shallots, red wine vinegar, Dijon and blue cheese.

GOLDEN CHARD: See this week's vegetable feature for fun facts and recipe ideas!

SWEETHEART CABBAGE: Thinly sliced cabbage adds a wonderful, crunchy texture to tuna salad. For a zesty salad, head to Food52 and check out their Cabbage in Mild Yogurt and Mustard Seed Curry (don't worry if you don't have asafoetida, though if you love preparing Indian dishes, you can purchase or order it from The Spice House).

ITALIAN FRYING PEPPERS: This pepper is a long skinny pepper that tapers to a point. They are actually classified as a sweet pepper, so don't worry about them having any heat. As far as green peppers go, this is a pretty tasty one, especially when cooked. While its name indicates it should be fried, and it is tasty when cooked as such, you can also eat them raw.

BABY ARUGULA: Toss arugula with a flavorful vinegar and an unrefined nut oil of your choosing (hazelnut, walnut, etc). Top it off with freshly shredded cheese and you have a quick and tasty side salad.

CHOICE-ITALIAN BASIL: Please take only a small portion of basil for your household. Please limit yourself to a small handful so everyone has the opportunity to take some. We will be offering bulk basil as a produce plus offering for next week!

current program from year to year to ensure we're always moving forward. This past year we invested in some pricey stainless steel packing shed equipment that was greatly needed. We also implemented a new procedure for knife control. Upon Dr. Kolb's recommendations, we'll be putting together a HACCP plan over the next year and further developing some of the details of our traceback program. While traceback has been part of organic inspection for many years, we're starting to see an even greater emphasis on being able to trace back a vegetable not only to the field in which it was grown and harvested in, but also down to the exact lot of seed and every input and operation the crop went through over the course of its growing season!

Despite the time, energy and resources a good food safety program requires, we feel that this is one area that is well worth the investment. We are not scrambling to comply with regulations and feel that our farm is much better overall because of our food safety program. This year we earned an 100% rating score on our audit and a huge compliment from Dr. Kolb. When he sent his report and our certificate, he stated ***'I was absolutely serious when I said Harmony Valley Farm is a "Model Facility" - it is at the top of its game and very few in the produce industry can hold a candle to what you have done.'***

Vegetable Feature: Chard

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

This week, we're honing in on chard. Now, I know what some of you may be thinking—that, in the words of the wonderful Deborah Madison, "...chard isn't really all that exciting." Regardless of chard's wow-factor (or lack thereof), Madison does point out a few characteristics that are perhaps more important than the degree to which it excites the dedicated eater—namely, chard's reliability, its usefulness and its pleasantness to work with. So, if you have yet to give chard a try, read on and then go out and get yourself some of this humble, highly nutritious vegetable!

Chard is a relative of spinach and beets. Unlike the beet, however, the majority of chard's nutrients are concentrated in its leaves. Interestingly enough—and in great contrast to the sturdy beet—chard roots are inedible. Chard leaves and stems, on the other hand, are quite edible! While the stems are crunchy and taste slightly sweet, the leaves are thick and have a deep "greens" flavor similar to spinach and beet greens. In fact, if you're in a pinch, you can easily substitute chard for either of these two leafy greens.

People tend to associate chard with winter. While chard can grow throughout the year and does have a preference for cooler weather, its prime cultivation period spans from June to October. Although chard isn't a fan of extreme heat, it's unlikely to bolt, as is common with other vegetables like spinach, arugula and basil.

In the kitchen, chard is extremely versatile. Whether your method is to sauté, steam or braise, chard will play along quite nicely. In terms of basic preparation, stack leaves and stems on top of one another. Trim the ends, and then separate the stems from the leaves. The general rule for dealing with the different level of thickness between chard's leaves and stems is to cook the leaves as you would spinach and the stems as you would asparagus. For instance, if you're sautéing your chard with some olive oil, garlic, red pepper flakes and sea salt, cook the chopped stems until they're relatively tender before adding the chopped leaves for a final few minutes on the heat.

I will include one disclaimer here. Due to its leaves being somewhat thick, chard doesn't work well as a raw addition to salads (unless you're using very young leaves). Feel free to toss raw leaves and stems into your blender or juicer, however, and it'll be sure to give you a nutritional boost.

Speaking of nutrition, chard is reputed to be just as nutritious as kale. (What?! Yes, so eat up.) Its plethora of antioxidants qualifies chard as a superfood. Meanwhile, chard is an excellent source of vitamins K, A and C. Time for a fun fact! While a single serving of chard has only 35 calories, this same serving contains more than 300% of your daily vitamin K needs. You'll also be getting a healthy dose of potassium, magnesium, iron and fiber with each forkful.

For storage purposes, remove the twist tie from your chard, wrap the bunch in paper towel and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to seven days.

Sources: Deborah Madison's *Vegetable Literacy*; The Wisconsin Master Gardener Program: *Swiss chard*

Chard with Raisins & Pecans

Recipe sourced from *Wild About Greens*, by Nava Atlas.

Serves 4

1 bunch chard

1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced

¼ cup marsala or other dry red wine

½ cup raisins

1 Tbsp capers, optional

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

⅓ to ½ cup finely chopped pecans

1. Cut the chard leaves away from the stems. Trim about an inch from the bottom of the stems, then slice the stems thinly. Stack a few leaves at a time and cut them into ½-inch ribbons. Chop the ribbons in a few places to shorten them; repeat this process with all the leaves.
2. Heat the oil in a medium skillet. Add the garlic and saute over low heat until golden. Add the marsala wine and as much chard leaves & stems as will fit comfortably in the pan. Cover and allow the greens to wilt down briefly; continue to add the chard until all of it is in the pan. Cook, covered, until the leaves are tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the raisins and the capers, if you're using them, then season with salt and pepper. Scatter the pecans over the top and serve at once either on its own or spooned over soft polenta or rice.

Green Pancakes with Swiss Chard

Recipe sourced from Clotilde Dusoulier's book, *The French Market Cookbook*.

Serves 4

1 cup all-purpose flour

Salt, to taste

4 large eggs (2 whole and 2 separated)

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

2 Tbsp dry white wine

½ cup milk

8 ounces chard leaves, finely chopped

Olive oil for cooking

1. In a medium bowl, combine the flour and 1 tsp salt and form a well in the center. Add 2 whole eggs and 2 egg yolks and stir to mix with part of the flour from the mound. Sprinkle with pepper. Add the garlic and wine and then pour the milk in a slow stream, whisking as you go, until all the flour is incorporated and the mixture is creamy and mostly lump-free. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.
2. When ready to cook the pancakes, remove the bowl from the fridge and fold in the greens.
3. In a clean bowl, beat the 2 egg whites with ¼ tsp salt with an electric mixer or a whisk until they form stiff peaks. Fold them into the batter with a spatula, working in a circular, up-and-down motion to avoid deflating the egg whites.
4. Heat 1 Tbsp cooking olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Ladle about ¼ cup of the batter into the hot skillet, without flattening. Repeat to form as many pancakes as will comfortably fit in the skillet, probably no more than 4.
5. Cook until the edges are set and the pancakes are golden underneath 4 to 5 minutes. Flip and cook until the other side is set and golden, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a warmed serving plate, grease the skillet again, and repeat with the remaining batter. You should have enough to make 10 to 12 pancakes.
6. Serve hot, adding a little more pepper and a sprinkling of salt on top.

**Serving Note from the author of the recipe: "They make for a lovely weeknight dinner, paired with a green salad, and they're a welcome brunch item too."