



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

September 11-12, 2015

Late Summer Farm Update

by Captain Jack de Wilde, The Dog

Hello Everyone! I've been rather quiet recently as we've had some other very important topics to discuss in the newsletters this summer. However, our Harvest Party is coming up in just a few weeks on Sunday, September 27 and you know I can't keep quiet about a farm party! Second to winter, fall is one of my favorite times of the year, so I'm happy that the changing of the seasons is upon us. While we've had a fairly cool summer with temperatures barely hitting 90°F, we've had some hot & steamy days recently. We've had to run the air conditioning in the office so the ladies can stay comfortable and get their work done. On these hot days I usually only work a half day and stay in the office during the heat of the day. If you have seen the amount of fur I have, you understand why.



So I thought this would be a good week to fill you in on where we are with things on the farm as summer is winding down and fall is beginning. With the cool summer we've had, many of our fall crops have been growing nicely and are actually coming in ahead of schedule. We have four fall broccoli plantings that normally mature in late September and all of October. Well, they've already started making heads and the first part of this week the crew cut over 1,200# of broccoli!

Our long tomato season is soon to come to an end. Last week we picked over 12,000# of tomatoes! We're trying to make the most of it before they're all ripe and gone. Dad still hasn't gotten tired of BLT sandwiches and he's eaten them every week for about 4-5 weeks now! Benji's crew said it's time to stop harvesting melons. We still have one more watermelon harvest, but after that we can officially say good-bye to watermelons & melons. Cucumbers and zucchini are also coming to a close. The peppers are still ripening and we hope to continue picking them until we see the first frost. I hope

This Week's Box

TOMATILLOS: Make your own salsa verde! Blend tomatillos, onion, cilantro, lime juice and a roasted jalapeño (or 2) and cook the mixture down to the thickness of your liking. Use it to top enchiladas or tacos or serve it as a dip with chips or peppers.

PURPLE MAJESTY POTATOES Perfectly purple potatoes! These potatoes are purple through and through, skins and flesh. They are best when roasted or pan-fried. Cut into wedges to make stunning oven fries.

BROCCOLI: Mix things up and make a broccoli-sesame stir-fry. Sauté broccoli with garlic, toasted sesame seeds, soy sauce and sesame oil. Add a bit of fresh ginger and then simmer in ½ cup of chicken broth until the broccoli is tender.

BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR CAULIFLOWER: Cut the heads into quarters, and toss with sliced celery, onion, parsley and lemon zest. Dress it with a simple red wine vinaigrette for a simple salad.

YELLOW ONIONS: Bring the sweet flavor of these onions to the forefront with *Saveur's* recipe for Creamed Onion Gratin.

ZUCCHINI: We're nearing the end of zucchini for the year. Make one more loaf of zucchini bread or your favorite summer zucchini recipe.

ORANGE UKRAINE PEPPERS: These sweet peppers resemble a bell pepper with a slight point on the bottom. They can be used anywhere you would use a bell pepper.

MINI-SWEET PEPPERS: See this week's vegetable feature for more information.

VARIETY OF LARGE TOMATOES: Make an easy & delicious fresh tomato sauce! Cut the tops off your tomatoes and process them in a blender or food processor, no need to core them or slip the skins. Cook the sauce down with a bit of olive oil, garlic and basil.

JALAPEÑOS: Use jalapeños to kick up homemade salsa! For a nice twist on a classic, serve Jalapeño-Watermelon Margaritas at an end of summer barbeque.

EDAMAME: Check out our recipe for Wasabi Roasted Edamame in our Recipe Database for a delicious and easy to prepare snack. This is likely the last week for edamame.

GREEN TOP CHIOGGIA BEETS: The green tops of these beets have a hearty flavor similar to kale, and can be steamed, sautéed or added to stir-fries. Roasted beets are delicious when topped with goat cheese, nuts and herb butter.

MINI GREEN OR RED ROMAINE LETTUCE: It's exciting to see lettuce again! Toss lettuce with grape tomatoes, shredded carrots and chopped peppers for a simple and refreshing salad dressed with oil & vinegar.

ORANGE CARROTS: Puree roasted carrots with lemon juice, cloves, coriander, cumin & paprika for a quick and delicious spread. The roasted carrot spread makes a unique dip or sandwich topping.

you've been enjoying the mini-sweet peppers. These are a special little pepper and we are happy to share them with you this year.

As soon as we finish harvesting a field towards the end of the summer, Dad gets antsy to chop the remaining plants, spread compost on the field, and then plant a soil-improving cover crop mix. This is very important so we can ensure there are nutrients going back into the soil for next year's crop. When you come to the farm for the party, I can show you some cool fields with different cover crops on them.

While summer crops are winding down, more fall crops are coming. Last week we finished digging all the potatoes and also started harvesting the winter squash. We're getting them in as fast as we can

because they are ripe and ready to go. One problem we have right now is that we still have a lot of onions in the greenhouse where we also need to store the squash! We're trying very hard to finish trimming the onions and put them in the cooler so we have more room for all the beautiful winter squash. Just a few more weeks and it will be time to dig sweet potatoes!

Around here, fall means serious root crop harvesting. When it's time to harvest root crops for winter storage, you'd better stay out of the way. Nothing holds my Dad or Rafael back! Last weekend we started harvesting burdock root, which is not something we usually include in CSA boxes, but it's a very important crop for our farm. Later this week we're going to start digging sunchokes and next week's box will

definitely reflect the transition from summer to fall. Celery root, leeks, potatoes....time to make soup!



We have many more tasty vegetables to harvest for you though before we get into the heavy root crops. Jicama, lemongrass, celery, Portuguese kale and I almost forgot the fall cabbages! Dad loves creamed cabbage and creamy cole slaw. I don't care for these dishes, but we usually have these things with cheeseburgers...which I do like!

Well, I know I forgot some things, but you get the jist that there's a lot happening around here! Dad and I have been checking the pumpkins, which should be ready just in time for the party. Have I mentioned we're having a party? Just a reminder that I'm a dog and will need help at the party to get my pumpkin out of the field and onto the wagon. Usually there are plenty of children who are willing to help, but I thought I'd be proactive and ask in advance so you can put this event on your calendar and make plans to attend. It's going to be a fun day and we hope you'll join us!

Vegetable Feature: Mini-Sweet Peppers

by Sarah Janes Ugoretz

A few weeks ago at our farmer's market stand, Chef Patrick DePula of Salvatore's Tomato Pies was perusing our pepper selection. He paused in front of the mini sweets and, picking one up, asked, "What are these?" "Try one," we said. He did. We waited for his reaction, which came in the form of a question: "Can I have another one?"

We feel exactly the same way about these oh-so-scrumptious little peppers. Despite their size, they are one of the most flavorful sweet peppers we've ever tasted! One of the most common questions we get from newcomers is: "How hot are they?" While the variety we grow did originate in Mexico, where small peppers typically equate to high heat, you won't find a trace of hotness here. Just crispy, crunchy sweetness.

Mini Sweet Peppers have an interesting history at Harmony Valley Farm. About 12 years ago, a long-time CSA member tipped Richard off to this little snack pepper. He told Richard how he'd picked up a package of tiny peppers from his local co-op. They had been grown organically in Mexico, and he'd never before seen anything like them. Richard was sufficiently intrigued, so he stopped at the co-op and picked up a package of those little peppers. He ate every last mini sweet, while carefully saving the seeds from each one. And so began HVF's adventure with mini sweet peppers.

Over the past 10-12 years, Richard and the crew have continued to save seeds from peppers growing on plants that exhibit ideal characteristics. From a modest beginning of saving and planting under 20 seeds from that original package of mini sweets, we have now worked our way up to saving an average of 8,000 seeds per year!

When we first started growing them, mini sweet pepper seed stock was not widely available—you couldn't find them in any seed catalogs and you'd be hard pressed to locate any producers growing them for market—not just in Wisconsin but across the country! It was only a matter of time before mini sweet seeds became commercially available. Seed catalogs began advertising a variety called "Yummy." Thinking about all of the time and energy that HVF puts into selecting and saving seeds from year to year, Richard decided to try out this new variety. As the peppers matured, we taste-tested them side-by-side with our mini-sweet variety. It was very clear from the first few bites that the "Yummy" peppers were a far cry from our variety. And so, when you bite into your next HVF mini sweet pepper, you're biting into a fruit that embodies over a decade's worth of painstaking seed selection—not to mention a fruit that reflects HVF's unwillingness to exchange high quality for ease and convenience.

When it comes to eating these little peppers, the easiest thing to do is just pop them in your mouth—they're perfectly snack-sized and contain only a small amount of seeds. If you want to take it up a notch, slice them lengthwise and stuff them with soft cheese. Either toss them onto the grill or into the oven for that nice "melty" effect. You can also freeze these little guys whole & raw—no blanching required. Just put them in a freezer bag and stash them away until the winter. Your only concern should be making sure you freeze enough...

End of Summer Vegetable Ragout with Fettuccine

by Chef Andrea Yoder

Yield: 4-5 Servings

2 tsp olive oil
8 oz ground beef or pork (optional)
2 medium onions, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 cups diced fresh tomatoes (skin, seeds and all)
1 cup diced carrots
½ cup white wine
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar, plus more to taste
1 ½-2 cups diced zucchini
8 oz mini-sweet peppers (approximately 10-12 peppers), diced
Salt & Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
8-12 oz fettuccine noodles, cooked according to package instructions
½ cup fresh herbs, coarsely chopped (parsley, oregano, basil, or other as available)
Parmesan cheese, for garnishing

1. Heat a medium sized sauce pan over medium-high heat. Add the oil and ground beef or pork (if you choose to include meat). Cook the meat until lightly browned, then add the onions and garlic. If you are not including meat, simply heat the oil and add the onions and garlic to the pan. Saute the mixture until the onions are fragrant and starting to soften.
2. Add the diced tomatoes and carrots. Cover and simmer for 5-6 minutes, or until the mixture becomes juicy. Remove the lid from the pan and add the white wine and 1 Tbsp of balsamic vinegar. Simmer for about 10 minutes.
3. Next, add the zucchini & mini sweet peppers. Season the mixture with salt and black pepper. Simmer for an additional 6-8 minutes or until all the vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened to the consistency you prefer (it should be thick, yet juicy enough to coat the fettuccine).
4. Remove the pan from the heat. Adjust the seasoning to taste by adding salt, pepper and an additional 2-4 tsp balsamic vinegar. Gently stir in the fresh herbs.
5. Serve the fettuccine topped with the ragout and garnished with Parmesan cheese.