



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

[www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

August 26-27, 2016

## Late Summer Farm Update

By Farmer Richard

Wow! That was a hot one! July was the hottest month ever worldwide! Aside from a few hot days, it really was not so bad here. We did have two days when we changed our work schedule and started an hour early, but we worked carefully, drank lots of water, and all did fine. Even Jack, The Dog, survived....and he is one furry creature! He did learn (unintentionally) how to turn the air conditioning on in our new field truck. Easy, push the button! Turning up the fan speed is a little more difficult, but he asks nicely and I oblige!

The rains and storms have definitely kept us on our toes. We expected drought, at least that was what the prediction was for the summer. Instead, we got rain after rain...and even as I write this article the rain is falling again. Many of our crops get a fertilizer boost of fish/seaweed and other natural minerals through the drip irrigation system when we water them. This year many of these crops have had little need for water, but they still need the nutrients. It takes "discipline" to set-up and pump even minimal water just to deliver the nutrients. Nonetheless, we have persevered, have some nice crops still to come and are thankful for the decided turn to cooler fall weather. The weeds have slowed down, we've been able to do timely cultivation and the fall crops look great! Sweet potatoes are looking very nice and the winter squash will be ready to harvest soon. We already have a few specimens setting on the kitchen counter, and we'll sample them soon! The onion crop was fantastic this year, and we're thankful we got it all in. The week we harvested onions, we raced against the threat of rain. The crew finished the harvest and had the last few crates tucked away on the wagon just as it started to rain!! They are still curing in the greenhouse, but we take advantage of the wet days to work inside, trimming and cleaning onions.

We'll continue to pick peppers, tomatoes and eggplant, but we're approaching the point in the season where summer and fall collide. It's nearly time to start making the shift to fall leeks, potatoes, celeriac, turnips, sweet potatoes and winter squash. Some of the fall brassicas (cauliflower, broccoli Romanesco, etc) have succumbed to wet and heat and you likely won't see much of these in your fall boxes. Thankfully, the broccoli still looks good! We just started planting salad mix again last week and added spinach to our planting plan this week. We're looking forward to a short run of fall greens in September and October, our favorite time

## This Week's Box

**ITALIAN OR PORCELAIN GARLIC:** Soften butter at room temperature and add chopped garlic and herbs. Use on bread, pasta or to top meats or vegetables.

**SWEET OR RED ONIONS:** Thinly slice and sauté in a small amount of oil and butter, add minced garlic, fresh mushrooms and a splash of red wine. Cook until the wine evaporates. Serve as a topping for your grilled steak or fish.

**ZUCCHINI OR FLYING SAUCER SUMMER SQUASH:** Roast up some slices of squash with poblano peppers and sweet onions until tender. Place in taco shells and top with fresh salsa verde for a vegan taco.

**GOLD POTATOES:** Want to try a new recipe for these delicious potatoes? Check out the recipe for "Crash Hot Potatoes" at [thepioneerwoman.com](http://thepioneerwoman.com).

**RED OR YELLOW GRAPE TOMATOES:** Put these one-bite beauties on a skewer with chunks of onion & zucchini. Brush with olive oil and season with salt & pepper. Grill until vegetables are tender.

**MIXED VARIETY OF TOMATOES:** BACON, LETTUCE and TOMATO sandwich. One of Farmer Richard's favorites! He's had at least 4-5 of these sandwiches a week for the past few weeks and still isn't tired of them! While he likes all the tomato varieties, Black Velvet has won out as his favored variety for a delicious BLT. Don't be afraid to add a few variations to mix it up a bit....a few leaves of fresh basil, thinly sliced sweet onion or peppers or a handful of arugula.

**POBLANO PEPPERS:** These are the dark green, large, blocky peppers in your box. If you haven't tried the recipe in our database for Caramelized Poblano Chile and Onion dip, you should consider it! It's delicious eaten with the mini-sweet peppers.

**GREEN BELL PEPPERS:** If you have too many peppers around to eat fresh, these peppers freeze well for later use. Dice them and freeze on a cookie sheet. When frozen, break apart and freeze in bags for easy access to the amount you need.

**TOMATILLOS:** See this week's newsletter for more information and recipes.

**FRENCH ORANGE OR GREEN JAPANESE MELON:** Melon season is nearing the end, so savor every bite! The French Orange melon is delicious eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner...take your pick! The Green Japanese melon has a finely netted rind with a greenish hue in the background. The green flesh is smooth, sweet and delicious. Check out the "Chile Lime Melon Salad" recipe on [smittenkitchen.com](http://smittenkitchen.com) for a new delicious melon dish.

**RED SEEDLESS OR YELLOW SEEDED WATERMELON:** Cut up the watermelon and place in the freezer for a delicious addition to your smoothies. Watermelon can also be used in the recipe for "Chile Lime Melon Salad" listed above.

**EDAMAME:** See this week's newsletter for more information and recipes.

**JALAPEÑO PEPPERS:** If you are starting to get a stock pile of jalapeños, it is time for a batch of jalapeño poppers. Cut peppers in half, carefully (remember they are hot) remove seeds, stuff with softened cream cheese with a little cumin added to it. Wrap with bacon and grill or bake until peppers are soft and bacon is browned.

**MINI-SWEET PEPPERS:** These little gems are best when eaten fresh. Eat them alone or add to your favorite salads, along with grape tomatoes, peppers and sweet onion. Top with your favorite salad dressing.

**BABY KALE MIX OR BABY ARUGULA:** Baby Kale Mix is great sautéed with garlic and added to scrambled eggs. Baby Kale Mix or Arugula make a great salad when combined with sliced apple, onion, feta cheese and topped with a maple-balsamic vinaigrette.

**CHOICE - SWEET ITALIAN BASIL:** Take a handful home with you from the choice box at your site. Add it to a pizza topped with fresh tomatoes, prosciutto and arugula!

of year to grow these crops. Yes, they grow a little more slowly, but the colors are intense and the cool temperatures lend to a sweet, pleasant taste. Our fall fennel and head lettuce crops look great as do the fall radishes.

We're hoping to dig the remainder of our potato crop later this week. Despite the fact that we reduced the acreage we planted, the yield looks to be quite abundant! Our fall carrot field looks great, rows and rows of beautiful green tops. Even

our crop insurance adjustor commented on how good they look and snapped a few pictures to show his wife! Needless to say, we love fall!

Every year of farming holds both triumphs and disappointments. Last week we had a short, yet violent, storm that managed to flatten our last two crops of sweet corn. There aren't as many ears in your box this week, but the corn has been so good this year we didn't want to count it as a total loss! It's a little more

challenging to pick, but we managed to salvage the good ears and hope you will enjoy the last few tastes of fresh sweet corn this summer. The edamame field experienced a similar fate, and about 40% of a beautiful sunchoke crop lays with flattened stalks and exposed roots. Neither are a total loss though...there are still 60% of fantastic looking sunchoke plants standing proud and tall in all of their 12 foot glory! The edamame is slow to pick, but the pods have filled out and the beans are sweet and delicious. "Hope springs eternal!"

We win some; we lose some. That's just the game of life for farmers. We put forth our best efforts, make the best decisions we can, work diligently and proactively, and try to play the hand Mother Nature deals us as gracefully and successfully as possible. In the end, we always consider ourselves very blessed and always have plenty to keep us busy. When we have done all we can in the fields, we go to the woods to pick hickory nuts, clean up dead trees and turn them into beautiful things such as bowls and furniture we can enjoy. These are the late season projects I look forward to.

We just started to get our loads of fall compost this week with the first few arriving today. We'll take advantage of every dry moment to spread compost and plant cover crops. Yes, it's time to put the fields to bed for the winter. As we wrap up one season, we're already getting ready for a new year!

### Vegetable Feature: Tomatillos

By Chef Andrea

One of our featured vegetables this week is the tomatillo... which technically is a fruit! Tomatillos, while most similar to a tomato, are very unique in their own way. The fruit is hidden inside a husk that looks like a little paper lantern. Tomatillos are ready to pick when they've nearly filled out their husk.

Tomatillos have a mild flavor that is slightly tart and sometimes fruity. They can be eaten raw or cooked and are most commonly used in southwestern or Mexican cuisine along with ingredients such as jalapeños, poblano peppers, cilantro, onions, garlic and limes. Salsa verde is probably the most common use for tomatillos, but they have a wide variety of other uses as well. Tomatillos may be added to soups or stews as well as blended into dressings or sauces where their natural pectin acts as a thickener. Chunk them up and add them to a raw pepper and tomato salad or make a chunky fresh salsa along with other summer vegetables and serve it with grilled chicken or fish.

Tomatillos are best stored at about 50°F, but can be stored on your counter for several days or in a paper bag in the refrigerator. Remove the husk before using and wash to remove the sticky film on the fruit. If you aren't ready to use your tomatillos this week, you can remove the husk and pop them in the freezer in their raw form.

### Quinoa Bites with Kale & Edamame

Yield: 2 dozen mini bites

Unsalted butter  
2½ cups cooked quinoa, at room temperature  
4 large eggs, beaten  
scant ½ teaspoon fine grain sea salt  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
½ cup crumbled feta  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 cup very finely chopped kale  
½ cup shelled edamame  
¾ cup breadcrumbs  
To serve: avocado, chives

1. Preheat oven to 375°F with a rack in the top third.
2. Butter mini-muffin tins generously. Line each muffin cup with a strip of parchment paper in each indent, this makes popping the bites out of the pan after either baking or freezing simple.
3. Combine the quinoa, eggs, and salt in a medium bowl. Stir in the onion, feta, garlic, kale, and edamame. Stir in most of the breadcrumbs, and let sit for a few minutes so the breadcrumbs can absorb some of the moisture. Fill the prepared muffin tins with the quinoa mixture, pressing the mixture down, and then sprinkling with the remaining breadcrumbs. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until baked through and deeply golden crusted.
4. Remove the quinoa bites from the pans after a few minutes. Enjoy either hot, or at room temperature spread with salted avocado and lots of chopped chives.

Recipe borrowed from Heidi Swanson's blog, [101cookbooks.com](http://101cookbooks.com).

### Vegetable Feature: Edamame

By Chef Andrea

Edamame is a fresh soybean that has grown in familiarity and popularity in the United States over the past few years, but has been a part of Japanese and Chinese cuisine for much longer. True edamame intended for fresh eating is quite different than oil-seed soybeans used for making tofu and other processed soy products. The edamame varieties we grow were developed specifically because they produce a sweet bean that doesn't have a "beany" aftertaste.

Edamame resemble a small lima bean encased in a pod. The beans are sweet and tender and best eaten lightly cooked. It is easiest to cook edamame in its pod and then remove them from the pod. Edamame is hard to shell when it's raw. To cook edamame, first rinse the pods thoroughly with cold water. Boil in heavily salted boiling water for 5-6 minutes, then drain under cold water to cool immediately. After the beans are cooked squeeze the pod to pop the beans out. **Please note the pod is not edible and should be discarded!**

You can also roast edamame in their pods. Toss the edamame pods with oil and seasonings of your choice. Spread the seasoned edamame on a cookie sheet in a single layer and roast in the oven until the bean is tender. Serve the beans whole with their pods still on. While you won't eat the pod, you can use your teeth to pull the edamame out of the pod and in the process you'll pick up the seasoning on the outside of the shell!

If you are interested in preserving edamame for later use, simply follow the cooking procedure above, cool and freeze the beans either in their pods or remove them and freeze just the bean. You can store the edamame for up to a week in the refrigerator, but it is best to eat them soon for the sweetest flavor and best texture.

### Roasted Tomatillo & Apple Salsa

Yield: 3 ½ cups

1 pound tomatillos, husked and rinsed  
2 green apples, such as Granny Smith, quartered  
2 whole cloves garlic, unpeeled  
½ of a medium onion  
2 jalapeño peppers, stem removed  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the tomatillos, apples, garlic, onion and jalapeños on a baking sheet. Toss with the olive oil, 2 tsp salt and 1 tsp black pepper. Roast in the oven until the tomatillos are softened and slightly charred, about 20 minutes.
2. Peel the garlic. Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Taste and season as needed with additional salt and pepper.

We sampled this recipe at our Harvest Party last fall, compliments of a Madison CSA member who was willing to share the recipe with us!