



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

September 16-17, 2016

Harvest Party 2016:

An Official Invitation from Your Farmers

By Farmer Richard & Andrea

Our Harvest Party is coming up in just a little over a week! We hope you'll join us for the festivities on Sunday, September 25...it's going to be a lot of fun! In our late summer newsletters we've been talking about forming a connection with nature and learning more about the source of your food. Well...now is your chance to visit your farm and see for yourself! The festivities will start at noon and will wrap up by 5 pm...leaving enough time to journey home and tuck the kiddos in for a good night's rest before school the next day (trust us...they'll sleep well after an afternoon at the farm). If you'd like to make a full weekend out of it, we'd love to share our campground with you! Spend a night under the stars in our valley. Listen to the flow of the river, the croaking bullfrogs, the owls talking in the distance and maybe even a little chatter from the coyotes.

So what's on the agenda? Pumpkins, of course! Our field tour will end in the pumpkin patch where you will find more than enough pumpkins for everyone. We have an assortment of pumpkins including warty knuckle-heads, Jack-O-Lanterns with nice handles, and even some pie pumpkins. But before we get to the pumpkins we have a few other stops. The Harvest Party is never complete without a stop in the sweet potato field. We have been checking them and they look pretty good...but still a little small. I'm anxious to see what we find after another week of growing. We'll have to strip the vines and dig down to find them, so be ready to get your hands dirty! We'll make a stop in the pepper and eggplant field as well. Here you'll have the opportunity to pick the final fruits of the season. Make sure you bring a bag to carry away your vegetable treasures! In between the peppers and pumpkins we have a beautiful field of fall carrots. If you've never eaten a carrot just pulled out of the ground, then you are in for a treat. You might even find some yellow and purple ones!

We always enjoy spending time with our CSA members as we tour the fields. Over the years we've engaged in some very interesting conversations about farming, eating local foods, etc. This is your time to pick our brains, ask questions about the things you are seeing in the fields or anything else that's on your mind. Several weeks ago Bobbie wrote an article about our area, referred to as The Driftless Region. We encourage you to read that article before you come to the farm and pay attention to the landscape as you approach. It truly is a unique region with beautiful landscape and some real treasures, such as the effigy mounds we found last fall on our own land!

This Week's Box

PORCELAIN GARLIC: Use a few cloves of fresh minced garlic to make a creamy garlic dressing to drizzle on the Iceberg or Red Boston lettuce.

PURPLE VIKING POTATOTES: Purple Vikings are a great all-purpose potato, they are both waxy and slightly starchy. Try them in the potato and leek soup recipe on the back.

ORANGE CARROTS: Carrots (and onion/potato) are a great addition to a beef pot roast!

EDAMAME: Edamame is easy to preserve for the winter. Simply cook in salted boiling water for 5 minutes, then drain and rinse with cold water. Freeze them in their pods or pop the beans out and discard the pods. They'll make a nice addition to fried rice.

ICEBERG HEAD LETTUCE OR GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE: Enjoy the head lettuce as a fresh salad with some mini sweet peppers, onion, carrots and a creamy dressing. Turn green savoy cabbage into creamy cole slaw.

JALAPEÑO PEPPERS: There are two jalapeños in your box. They are mostly green but you may find one that is turning red. They are packed loose in the box, so make sure you keep them separate from the colored mini-sweets that are in a paper bag. Remember jalapeños are hot, so handle with care.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS: You will find these little gems in a paper bag in your box. They are red, yellow and orange and oh, so sweet! Eat them fresh while you can or freeze them whole to enjoy later.

BROCCOLI OR PURPLE CAULIFLOWER: Either is a great addition to beef or chicken stir-fry along with garlic, carrots, bell peppers, summer squash and onion. Add teriyaki sauce and serve with rice.

LEEKs: See this week's vegetable feature for recipes and storage ideas.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH: To cook this squash, simply cut it in half, scrape out the seeds and place cut side down in a baking dish with a little water in the pan. Bake until it is tender when poked with a fork. Using a fork, scrape out the strands of squash and serve with butter and herbs or a traditional spaghetti sauce.

GREEN/RED BELL PEPPERS OR GREEN/RED ITALIAN FRYING PEPPERS: Identify your pepper first! There are several different red and green peppers in the box today. The bell peppers will be wide and blocky on the top and bottom. The frying peppers have wide shoulders but taper to a point. They are more narrow and slender than the poblano peppers and taper to a more definite point. They also have a thicker wall than the poblanos. Both bells and italian frying peppers are sweet peppers..

POBLANO PEPPERS: Poblano peppers have a medium level of heat, so it's important to identify which pepper they are in your box. They will be dark green or red and have a blocky top that tapers to a blunt point at the bottom. They are delicious roasted and used to make the Carmelized Poblano Chile & Onion Dip from our recipe database.

BABY BOK CHOI: Baby bok choy is delicious sautéed with sliced garlic and shallots. Add a splash of sesame oil at the end of cooking. Keep in mind that the leaves cook faster than the stems so add the leaves last.

CHOICE - BASIL: Please only take a handful of basil per share.

We'll have plenty of activities for you to take part in and enjoy. Sonic Love Child, a group of musicians from the Twin Cities will share their talents as they play a variety of music including American folk, classic country, vintage pop and some originals. Sandy Syburg will be here from Purple Cow Organics with his SoilMobile. We introduced you to Sandy in last week's newsletter. We encourage you to visit him and his SoilMobile to learn more about just how important soil is to our well-being. He'll have veggie tattoos for the kids and you can even take a selfie with his Purple Cow mascot!

Of course we'll have plenty of delicious food to enjoy. We'll have some light snacks before we head to the field including our favorite Caramelized Poblano Chile & Onion Dip. We have a special batch of Watermelon Kombucha to share with you, courtesy of NessAlla. Back by popular

demand, we'll be mixing up a batch of Iced Maple Latte featuring Kickapoo Coffee, milk from Castle Rock Organic Dairy and maple syrup from Alvin Miller. After we work up an appetite in the fields, we'll return to the home farm for a potluck! It's always fun to see our vegetables come back to the farm in the form of delicious salads, casseroles and such prepared by our members. We'll also be serving HVF pulled pork and a big pot of vegetarian black beans featuring some of our late summer peppers and onions.

Over the years we've heard a lot of positive comments from members who've visited the farm. Their day at the farm has left them with fond memories of playing in the fields, interacting with the animals and enjoying picking and eating vegetables right out of the fields. Children have changed their eating habits after they have had the opportunity to form a connection with

“THEIR” farm. The experience of digging in the dirt, harvesting their own food and sitting on the tractor with their farmer are formative experiences that have a lasting impact. If nothing else...Farmer Richard has 7 new ducks including 2 setting hens who have eggs that should hatch around September 20. Richard’s pretty proud of his ducks and is hoping to have some ducklings to show you at the party!

Vegetable Feature: Leeks

By Chef Andrea

I like the way Deborah Madison opens the section on leeks in her book, *Vegetable Literacy*. “Leeks embody the delicate side of the allium tribe, adding more of a whisper and less of shout when it comes to the onion flavor.” While leeks are in the same family with onions, shallots, etc, they have a more subtle flavor and softer aroma. They have less sugars than onions do, so they really don’t caramelize like onions. Rather, leeks should be cooked more delicately using lower heat and a longer cooking time to soften the leek. It’s better to sweat the leek gently which will yield a soft, silky texture.

Leeks have a long white shank with a bluish-green “flag” like top. The shank is made of many thin layers and is the portion of the leek most often used. However, the green portion on top is equally edible and at the very least should be added to stock for flavor. Throughout the growing process, dirt is hilled up on the leeks to cover and blanch the shank. As a result, dirt may get between the layers. While you need to take care to carefully clean the entire leek, the upper portion may have a bit more dirt between the layers and may need a little more attention. I find it easiest to wash the exterior of the leek and then slice it. Place the leeks in a sink of clean, cold water and swish them around to remove any dirt. Remove the leeks from the water and place in a colander to drain. If there isn’t much dirt between the layers, you may also just place the sliced leeks in a colander and rinse them.

A traditional use for leeks is to make Leek & Potato Soup, of which there are many variations. Leeks pair well with potatoes, fennel, cabbage, celery, celeriac, apples, lemons, thyme, parsley and tarragon to name a few. Other ingredients that complement leeks include butter, olive oil, hazelnuts, walnuts, cream, eggs and cheese. Leeks may be used in soups, gratins, as a base for roast chicken or simply poached or sautéed and eaten as a side dish or drizzled with a simple vinaigrette for a nice fall or winter salad. Store leeks in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

Spaghetti Squash and Leek Skillet Gratin

Serves: 4-6 servings

3 ½ cups thinly sliced leeks
2 cups cooked spaghetti squash
1 tsp dried thyme
1 Tbsp olive oil
2-3 garlic cloves, minced
2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
2 Tbsp butter
¾ cup diced sweet peppers
½ cup white wine
¼ cup heavy cream
2 oz cheese (smoked cheddar, gouda or sharp cheddar), shredded
Salt, 1 tsp plus more to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. First, preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Next, place the thinly sliced leeks in a colander and rinse thoroughly. Shake off as much excess water as you can. Set aside.
3. Prepare the spaghetti squash. Place the cooked spaghetti squash flesh in a bowl and mix in 1 tsp dried thyme, ½ tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper. Set aside.
4. In a 10-inch oven proof skillet, heat 1 Tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and mushrooms and saute until the mushrooms begin to soften.
5. Once the mushrooms are soft, add 2 Tbsp butter to the pan and allow it to melt. Add the leeks, sweet peppers, ½ tsp salt and freshly ground black pepper. Stir to combine and continue to cook. Keep the heat at medium-low and slowly sweat the leeks and peppers until they are soft and there is little moisture in the pan.
6. Add the white wine and increase the heat just a tad. Simmer until only a small amount of moisture remains in the pan.
7. Once the wine has reduced, add the heavy cream to the leek mixture and bring it to a simmer.
8. Spread the spaghetti squash mixture evenly on top of the leeks. Sprinkle the shredded cheese on top.
9. Place in the oven for 10-15 minutes or until the cheese is golden on top. Remove from the oven and serve warm.

Variations:

Add Eggs: After you spread the spaghetti squash on top of the leeks, make 4 shallow indentations in the squash. Crack an egg in each and then sprinkle the cheese on top. Bake in the oven until the cheese is golden, the egg whites are cooked through, but the yolk is still soft.

Add ground pork: Brown 8 oz of ground pork in the skillet first. Remove it from the skillet and set aside. Proceed with the recipe as written. After you add the heavy cream (Step 7), mix the ground pork into the leek mixture. Proceed with the rest of the recipe as written.

Add chicken: Mix 1-2 cups cooked, diced chicken into the leek mixture after you add the heavy cream (Step 7). Proceed with the rest of the recipe as written.

Recipe by Andrea Yoder

Leek & Potato Soup

Serves: 6 servings

2 pounds leeks
3 Tbsp olive oil or butter
1 Tbsp chopped thyme
1 bay leaf
1 pound potatoes
6 cups chicken stock
Salt, to taste
Champagne or white wine vinegar (optional)
Freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbsp chopped Italian parsley or chives

1. Prepare the leeks: Trim off the root ends and the tough upper green tops. Halve the white part of the leeks lengthwise and then, without cutting through the root end, cut lengthwise into ¼ inch-wide strips. Then cut the leeks crosswise into ¼-inch dice. Wash the diced leeks thoroughly in a large basin of cold water. Once the dirt has settled, scoop them out with a sieve or strainer. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat a heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the olive oil or butter, followed by the leeks, thyme and bay leaf. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are tender, about 10 minutes. Peel the potatoes and cut them into ¼-inch dice or slices. Add the potatoes to the pot and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Pour in the chicken stock, season with salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a low simmer, and continue cooking until the potatoes are tender, but not falling apart. Taste for salt and adjust as needed. Let the soup cool to room temperature, and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.
3. Before serving, remove the bay leaf and reheat the soup over medium heat and taste again for salt. If you like, add a splash of champagne or white wine vinegar to sharpen the flavors. Ladle the soup into warm serving bowls. Finish with a few grinds of the peppermill, and garnish with chopped parsley or chives.

Author’s Notes & Variations:

- Vegetable soups often taste best several hours later or the following day. If time allows, make ahead and reheat gently before serving.
- Remove the bay leaf and puree the soup before serving. Garnish with small fried croutons along with the herbs.
- Stir in ½ cup heavy cream before serving.

Recipe borrowed from Alice Waters’ cookbook, *In the Green Kitchen*