



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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

June 16-17, 2017

## How Quickly The Picture Can Change....Lets Talk Irrigation

By Farmer Richard de Wilde

Our last farm report was all about a six week run of cool and wet weather. Despite the challenges we faced, we planted all of our heat loving crops because we figured the warmer weather would come eventually! And it *did* come. We quickly changed course from chilly days and nights to three full weeks of 80's and 90's with NO RAIN! Our irrigation equipment, which had seen very little use for the last two years, has suddenly been needed everywhere! Our irrigation crew, under Vicente's guidance, became a full time job. This crew has worked long days, and has gotten up in the middle of the night to check pumps or turn off irrigation when it is finished. Many things can go wrong: Leaks, problems with pumps, etc. It takes a dedicated, diligent and determined crew to keep up with irrigation during a time like this.

Every crop has different water needs. Since we have a lot to water right now, we use sensors buried six inches deep in fields to help us monitor moisture in different crops so we can prioritize our watering schedule. They have to be "read" every day or two so we know how to plan our irrigation schedule.

We have three main types of irrigation we use. The first type is **Buried Drip Tape**. We've used this method for many years with crops that are planted on plastic mulch, such as tomatoes and onions. In recent years we've also started to use this tape on bare ground crops such as kale. The benefit of drip irrigation is that you can feed the plants water and fertilizer right at their roots. No evaporation loss, so it only requires 1/3 to 1/2 the amount of water needed with overhead methods. The other benefit is that the watering is more specific so you don't water as many weed seeds...

(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & pictures fresh from the fields)

## What's In The Box?

**SUGAR SNAP PEAS:** This variety has edible pea pods. Just peel off the string on the top and eat the whole thing!

**SCALLIONS:** We're moving into spring planted scallions. Scallion is just another name for green onion.

**GARLIC SCAPES:** The entire portion of the garlic scape is edible and may be eaten raw or lightly cooked.

**RED RUSSIAN KALE:** The Red Russian Kale has frilly-edged leaves and a purplish coloring on the leaves. Use it as you would any other cooking green!

**SPINACH:** This is our last spring spinach. We take a break from growing spinach during the heat of the summer, but we'll have more for you in the fall!

**BABY WHITE TURNIPS:** This is our last spring crop. Remember the greens and roots are edible and may be eaten raw or lightly cooked.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Strawberry season is winding down quickly. This will likely be the last week for strawberries, so savor each bite!

**RHUBARB:** Our rhubarb field is growing very slowly this year because we dug up some roots earlier this year to transplant into a new field. This week's rhubarb was sourced from Richard's friend, John Zehrer. John has maintained several acres of rhubarb for many years on his farm and you'll find his variety to be juicy with good flavor.

**GREEN BOSTON LETTUCE:** This lettuce is known for its soft, tender leaves. Separate the leaves from the core, wash, spin or shake off excess water and store in a plastic bag or air-tight container to keep it fresh.

**RED OAK LETTUCE:** This is a new variety we grew this year...and it's a beauty! Use it as you would use any other leaf lettuce.

**DILL:** Store dill in a plastic bag in the refrigerator until you're ready to use it or dehydrate it and store it in a covered jar.

## Cooking with This Week's Box!

Before we get cooking with this week's box, I'd like to welcome any new members who are just joining us for the start of our Peak Season Vegetable shares. Please take a moment to read your newsletter and "What's In the Box" email that accompany each delivery. This is where you'll find important information about your box contents, recipes, etc. This year we're trying some new things in the newsletter, including this section which is intended to provide you with some ideas about what you might make with your box contents and, when possible, we'll also provide you with a link to that recipe.

Ok, lets dive into this week's box. It's been a whirlwind of strawberry picking over the past two weeks so I've got strawberries on my mind and am thinking a batch of **Buttermilk Pancakes with Fresh Strawberries and Whipped Cream** sounds pretty good for weekend brunch! Farmer Richard always likes bacon with his pancakes, so we'll add that to weekend brunch as well. I'll set aside a few pieces of cooked bacon though so I can use it to make a **Tossed Bacon, Egg and Spinach Salad** with a honey-mustard bacon dressing. If you prefer a vegetarian spinach salad option, check out this recipe for a **Wilted Spinach Salad with Warm Feta Dressing** at [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com).

The featured vegetable in this week's box is garlic scapes. When you see garlic scapes, you know garlic harvest will be coming soon! Use this week's garlic scapes to make a **Creamy Garlic Scape Dressing**. This is a recipe flashback to one of our June 2003 newsletters, and can be made thick and used as a dip or thinned out and used as a dressing...

(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & our suggestions for utilizing every item in your box!)

## Featured Vegetable: Garlic Scapes

Garlic scapes are the long, skinny, green vegetable with a lot of curl that you'll find in this week's box. Up until the early 90's we used to remove scapes from the garlic plant and throw them on the ground! We were the first farm in the Midwest to start harvesting the scapes for use as a vegetable. In the early 90's there was a woman from Korea who asked us to save the garlic scapes for her so she could make pickles. We thought this was odd (remember we used to throw them on the ground), but saved some for her anyway. She shared a jar of pickled scapes with us and we realized how good they are for eating! We stopped throwing them away and started eating them!

Garlic scapes are a curly shoot that forms on a hardneck garlic plant, which is the only variety we grow, and grows up from the center of the plant in June. This is part of nature's plan for the plant to propagate itself. The scape extends from the middle of the plant and forms a small bulb on its end. If left to choose its own destiny, that bulb would eventually fall over and plant itself in the soil. Right now we want the garlic plant to focus its energy into producing a nice bulb of garlic, so we remove the scape from the plant.

Nearly the entire scape is edible and are best when harvested young and tender. You may need to trim off the skinny end near the little bulb as it is tough sometimes. Garlic scapes are very tender and do not need to be peeled....Easy! Scapes have a bright, mild garlic flavor. They can be used in any recipe that calls for garlic cloves, just chop them up and add them as you would clove garlic. They are a great addition to eggs, are tasty when mixed with butter to use as a spread, or toss them into a stir-fry. They'll keep in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks.

### Tempura Garlic Scapes

*Yield: 3-4 as an appetizer*

- 1 bunch garlic scapes
- 3 cups vegetable oil for deep frying
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 cup ice water
- 2-3 ice cubes
- 1 cup flour, cake or all-purpose



1. Prepare the scapes: Cut off the stringy tip from the flower end. Cut each scape in half or thirds, so that each piece measures about 4 to 6 inches in length.
2. Fill a heavy pot with tall sides (something with a wide opening is ideal) with the oil to a depth of at least one inch. Use a deep fry thermometer to gauge the temperature—it should be steady at 360°F. Maintaining a consistent temperature is important.
3. While the oil is heating, line a sheet pan with paper towels and set aside. Place the egg yolk in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Mix the egg yolk with 1 cup of cold water. Add the ice cubes.
4. Add 1 cup of flour. Hold four chopsticks with their tips pointed down and stab at the flour to combine it with the liquid until a loose, lumpy batter forms, about thirty seconds. Do not whisk, and do not use a fork—the batter should be barely mixed with pockets of dry flour visible. The liquid will be the consistency of heavy cream.
5. Dip a scape into the batter, then gently lower into the oil. Repeat until there are 5 or 6 scapes in the oil. It is important not to overcrowd the pan. Note: Do not rush through the frying process by crowding the pan—the scapes won't cook properly.
6. Cook until the batter turns golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes total. Remove the scapes from the oil using a slotted spoon, and place them on the paper towel-lined tray to drain. Season with a pinch of salt immediately, then repeat the dipping and frying with the remaining scapes.
7. Serve immediately with aioli. If you have garlic scapes remaining from last week, you can use them to make Garlic Scape Aioli. The recipe may be found at [food52.com](http://food52.com) as an accompaniment to this recipe.

*Recipe adapted from Alexandra Stafford's recipe featured at [food52.com](http://food52.com)*

### Garlic Scape Dressing or Dip

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4-5 garlic scapes, finely chopped
- 1 ½ Tbsp dried dill or 3 Tbsp fresh dill
- 3 Tbsp fresh basil, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp white wine vinegar
- Milk, as needed to thin it to desired consistency



1. Mix all ingredients except for the milk in a blender. Blend until all ingredients are well-combined.
2. Add milk as needed to thin it to the desired consistency. If you are using it as a dip or spread, you will want it to be thicker. If you want to use it as a salad dressing, thin it with a little more milk.
3. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Store in the refrigerator.

*This recipe may be found on our website in our recipe database. It was originally featured in our June 2003 newsletter and was created by Lee Davenport who was the farm chef!*