



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

September 1 - 2, 2017

Learning to Farm Better, Lessons from the Pepper Field

By Farmer Richard & Chef Andrea

When we start to see more color in the pepper field, we know we're approaching a transition point in the season. This usually happens towards the end of August or first part of September. The days are getting shorter, nights are a bit more cool, and we start thinking about when the first frost might nip us. While we're still harvesting many summer vegetables, we're also starting to move into fall vegetables such as celeriac and winter squash. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, there are peppers. They won't take a direct frost, but we can cover them to protect them from frost damage or we can pick them really hard before the first frost and just hold them for a bit in storage. Sometimes, after the first frost, we get lucky and have a few more weeks of warm weather which pushes any green peppers along so we can continue harvesting into the end of September or first of October! From a culinary perspective, peppers handle the seasonal transition well. They pair well with summer vegetables, but they also play nicely with fall and winter vegetables too. They really do play an important part in our progression through the seasons and are a reliable mainstay in our Midwestern diets.

Peppers have a long history at Harmony Valley Farm. Over the years we've grown a lot of different types, both hot and sweet. Our pepper selection has evolved over the years, partly because of changes in what our customers want, but also as a result of changes within the seed industry and as we learn more about growing them. In fact, peppers have taught us some very valuable farming lessons over the years. Some years ago, we discovered what bacterial leaf spot (BLS) is and how devastating it can be when it infects your crop.

(See our [blog](#) for the rest of Andrea and Richard's article)

What's In The Box?

SWEET ONIONS: Cut these onions into thick rings, dip them in batter and deep fry them for homemade onion rings!

GARLIC: Store garlic at room temperature and out of direct sunlight.

EDAMAME: If you just have too much to eat this week, this is one vegetable that is easily preserved. Blanch the edamame in salted boiling water, then cool in cold water. Now the edamame is ready to freeze---pod and all!

ITALIAN/GREEN ZUCCHINI OR SCALLOP SQUASH: Our zucchini field is starting to slow down, just a few more weeks of harvest at most.

BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER OR BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR GREEN BELL PEPPERS: Each box will have one of these bonus items included.

JALAPEÑO PEPPERS: This is the small, dark green pepper in your box. This is a hot pepper, so handle carefully. For a little different flavor, roast it before using!

SMALL TOMATOES: Packing a school lunch for the kids? Add a few of these little tomatoes!

ORANGE UKRAINE PEPPERS: This is a sweet pepper that resembles a small bell pepper. It is orange-red in color and has a blocky top that tapers to a point at the bottom of the pepper.

ORANGE ITALIAN FRYING PEPPERS: This is a sweet pepper that is dark red in color with a more elongated, slender shape that is pointy on the end. It may be eaten raw or cooked.

GREEN AND/OR SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS: Production in the cucumber field is slowing down. We may not be picking them for too much longer.

FRENCH ORANGE OR GREEN JAPANESE MELON: French Orange melons are small melons with a coarsely netted rind and orange flesh. Green Japanese Melons have a finely netted rind with green flesh. Both melons are very sweet and delicious!

VARIETY OF TOMATOES: Your tomatoes may need a few more days at room temperature to become fully ripened. Not sure what you have? Visit our blog and refer to a previous post including tomato descriptions and pictures.

YUKINA SAVOY: This is an Asian green related to bok choy. It is tender enough to eat as a salad green, both stems and leaves, or you may lightly cook it.

RED SEEDLESS OR YELLOW SEEDED WATERMELON: Store your watermelon in the refrigerator. After you have cut into the watermelon, eat the flesh within a day or two.

SWEET CORN: Wondering why there isn't more corn in this week's box? Please read Farmer Richard's newsletter article from last week for his explanation about the challenges of growing sweet corn this year!

CHOICE -EGGPLANT: Baba ganoush, ratatouille, eggplant Parmesan and moussaka. All of these dishes rely on eggplant to make them complete. If you haven't tried one of these dishes previously, take some eggplant from the choice box this week and do some exploring in the kitchen!

Cooking with This Week's Box!

This week we're focused on peppers, both in our main newsletter article and as our featured vegetable of the week! Depending upon the weather, we could have a few pepper-heavy CSA boxes coming up over the next few weeks. There are so many ways to use peppers, but if you start to feel overwhelmed, remember they are super-easy to preserve. Read this week's vegetable feature on our blog for details about how to preserve peppers. As for what to do with them this week, let's start with the **Whole Wheat Udon Noodle Salad with Summer Vegetables and Sesame Marinade**. (See Below) I actually made this recipe for the first time during the winter using edamame, corn and peppers that I pulled out of the freezer! This is an easy salad to make and incorporates several different vegetables from this week's box including edamame, an ear or two of corn, and lots of sweet, ripe peppers and onions. This recipe travels well, so this would be a great item to take to work for lunch. Add some baked tofu if you'd like or eat it alongside seared salmon, grilled chicken or steak.

(See our [blog](#) for the rest of this article & Chef Andrea's suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)

Featured Vegetable (Fruit): Peppers

Peppers are classified as either sweet or hot and can vary in size from just a small pepper that resembles a large bean seed to a big, blocky bell pepper. While it is common to eat green peppers, you'll find the flavor of a green pepper is more mild without a lot of sweetness. This is because green peppers are immature. All colored peppers start out as a green pepper. As the fruit ripens on the plant, it makes a transition from green to its fully ripe color. As this change occurs, natural sugars develop in the fruit making it not only sweet but also flavorful. As a pepper ripens, the nutrient content also changes. Colored peppers can contain as much as 60% greater levels of antioxidants and other nutrients including Vitamins C, A, E, K, B6 and folate.

(See our [blog](#) for the rest of this vegetable feature article to learn more about Peppers!)

Udon Noodle Salad with Summer Vegetables & Sesame Marinade

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1-2 ears sweet corn, husk and silks removed	1 clove garlic, finely minced
1—8 ounce pack udon noodles	2 Tbsp tamari (or soy sauce), plus more to taste
2 Tbsp unrefined, untoasted sesame oil or extra-virgin olive oil	¼ cup brown rice vinegar
3 cups thinly sliced sweet peppers	3 Tbsp toasted black sesame seeds, plus more to garnish (may substitute white sesame seeds)
½ tsp salt, plus more to taste	¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
¾ cup cooked edamame beans (out of their pods)	½ cup finely minced sweet onion or scallions
1 tsp dried red chili flakes	1 cup chopped cilantro

1. Boil a large pot of water. Add the corn on the cob and cook for 2 minutes. Remove the ears from the pot, reserving the water; set the corn aside to cool. Use a strainer to remove any stray corn silk from the boiling water. Add udon noodles and cook according to directions on package or until tender. Drain and rinse the noodles under cold running water; set aside to drain well.
2. Warm the unrefined sesame oil or olive oil in a wide skillet (with a lid) over medium heat. Add the peppers and saute for 10 minutes; stir in ½ tsp salt, reduce heat to low, cover skillet, and cook for 5 minutes. Remove the lid; raise heat to medium; and cook, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes more or until peppers are cooked through and beginning to brown. Stir in edamame and chili flakes. Set aside to cool.
3. **Make the marinade:** Add garlic, tamari, rice vinegar, and toasted sesame seeds to a salad bowl and whisk to combine. Drizzle in toasted sesame oil and whisk again. Add noodles; toss until evenly coated with marinade. Cut corn off cobs (you'll need about ¾ cup) and add to noodles along with the pepper mixture, onions, and cilantro. Mix well to combine. Season to taste with extra tamari or sea salt. Sprinkle with additional black sesame seeds and serve at room temperature.

Note: This recipe was adapted from Amy Chaplin's cookbook, *At Home In the Whole Food Kitchen*. While this salad is delicious to make in the height of the summer vegetable season, you can also make it in the winter. Thinly slice peppers and freeze them, raw. Cook the corn, cut it off the cob and freeze the kernels. Boil a pound of edamame pods and then remove the beans. Pop those in the freezer too. In the middle of the winter when you're missing the summer heat, pull out your frozen vegetables and make this salad again! Serve this on its own as a main dish item or as a side dish along with chicken, fish, tempeh or another protein of your choosing.

Marinated Roasted Red Peppers with Chickpeas

Yield: 4 servings as a side dish or small plate

3-4 red bell peppers, stems, seeds, and ribs removed	2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar	Handful of fresh, flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 ½ tsp coconut oil	2 pinches of fine sea salt	1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
3 Tbsp cold-pressed olive oil	¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper	3 ½ ounces feta cheese
	3 Tbsp raisins	

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Rub the peppers with the coconut oil and place them on a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil. Roast until blistered and blackened in a few places, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the peppers from the baking sheet, place them in a bowl, and quickly cover it with plastic wrap to steam the peppers, which makes the skin very easy to remove. When the peppers are cool enough to handle, remove and discard the skins.
2. While the peppers are roasting, in a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Mince the raisins and chop the parsley.
3. Tear or slice the skinned roasted peppers into large pieces and place them in the bowl with the dressing. Add the chickpeas, toss to coat, and let marinate for about 15 minutes.
4. Divide the mixture evenly among 4 plates. Sprinkle with the minced raisins and parsley and crumble the feta over top. Serve immediately.

Author's note: Make this a main dish by serving it over cooked quinoa. Recipe borrowed from *Naturally Nourished*, by Sarah Britton.