Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

June 15 - 16, 2018

Celebrating & Growing Strawberries at Harmony Valley Farm

By Farmer Richard

Strawberry Day is upon us and we hope you are making plans to visit our valley to celebrate this year's strawberry harvest. We are only in our first week of strawberry picking, which is about 10-14 days behind our "normal" strawberry season due to the cold, wet spring. This year's strawberries are looking good, and taste great! In most years our Strawberry Day is near the end of the season whereas this year we're just beginning the season. Before we go any further, I want to mention a few important things for this year's Strawberry Day event. Normally we don't worry too much if the kids (or adults) crawl, roll or run through the patch. They are having a great time and we're usually done picking most of the berries so there isn't too much harm that can be done. This year, we need to limit the amount of frolicking through the field. We are proud of this beautiful field and really need to make sure we treat the plants gently and tread lightly so we don't damage the plants or the immature berries that we want to preserve for picking over the next few weeks. We'll limit the traffic to our early varieties including Earliglow and our new early variety called Galletta. These two early varieties will be in full production. Some of our mid-season varieties are starting to produce some beautiful berries, but we need to try to stay out of this section of the field so we can continue to have abundant berries for two more weeks!

As you prepare for your trip to the farm this weekend, please remember to pack your ballet shoes (tutu not required) so you can walk gracefully through the field like a ballet dancer and watch where you step! While I understand many members really enjoy participating in the "Heaviest Berry Contest," we will not be able to host this activity this year. Many of the big berries that are going to be tempting to pick will be in the part of the field that will not be open for picking. The competition can get pretty intense some years and we often have excited participants leap off the wagon so they can run through the field in search of the winning berry. Remember, ballet dancers don't run. While they do leap, we ask that you only do maneuvers such as these if you are professionally trained to do so. Aside from the professional ballet dancers in attendance, we should all consider ourselves amateurs and limit our activity to gentle walking. Please, do not run through the field this year! Thank you in advance for your attention to these details. If we all work together and treat the field with respect, we'll be able to maximize our harvests this year and preserve the field for another great year in 2019!

*See our **blog** for the rest of this article*!

What's In The Box?

PURPLE SCALLIONS: These are the first of our spring planted scallions. They'll add delicious flavor and a bit of purple pizzazz to your dishes this week! Don't forget to use the green tops as well.

FRENCH BREAKFAST RADISHES: This spring radish is long and slender with pink shoulders and a white bottom. This is an excellent radish for sandwiches when sliced lengthwise.

HEAD LETTUCE: This week's boxes will have red oak and/or red Boston. Red oak is the dark burgundy lettuce that has soft, rounded leaves that resemble oak leaves. The red Boston lettuce has burgundy blush on green leaves. Both are appropriate for salads, wraps, on sandwiches, or just roll up the leaves and dip them in your favorite dressing for a fun snack.

CILANTRO: With both avocadoes and limes in this week's fruit share, we had to include cilantro in the vegetable boxes! While many recipes call for using the leaves only, the stems have a lot of flavor as well. Chop them finely and add them along with the leaves.

GARLIC SCAPES: This is the crazy, curly green vegetable in your box. Read more about it in this week's vegetable feature.

SPINACH: Start the day off right with spinach for breakfast. Add it to your morning smoothie or green drink, mix it into your scrambled eggs, or make a breakfast casserole with spinach in it!

BABY ARUGULA OR SAUTÈ MIX: This week's sautè mix contains green mizuna, red mizuna, pac choi and tat soi. It may be eaten raw or lightly cooked. The arugula is a spicy green that may be eaten raw in salads or lightly wilted alongside pasta dishes, on top of pizza, etc.

BABY WHITE TURNIPS: Last week we featured this vegetable in our newsletter and on our *blog* post. Check it out and find storage and use information as well as recipes such as a **Turnip Pesto Pizza.**

HON TSAI TAI: This is the bunched green in your box that has purple stems, green leaves and yellow flowers (which are also edible). This was our feature vegetable two weeks ago. Check out our *blog*!

ZUCCHINI: We just started picking, so the portion is small this week and we may not have enough for all boxes. Don't worry, there will be more to come!

STRAWBERRIES: Keep them cold and eat them soon. Our strawberry varieties were bred for flavor, not for their long shelf life.

Featured Vegetable: Garlic Scapes

By Chef Andrea

Garlic is a staple item in our kitchens, but bulbs of garlic to use in the form of cloves are hard to come by this time of the season. It's too early for fresh bulbs of garlic and if you have any garlic remaining from last fall, it is likely sprouting by now. Even with a staple ingredient like garlic, we can continue to eat seasonally and locally when we are willing to consider garlic in it's other forms. For the past several weeks we've enjoyed green garlic. Green garlic is best when it's young and tender, but as it continues to grow the base starts to become a bulb and the layers of the plant become tough and less than desirable to eat. That's just the way the garlic grows. Just as we outgrow green garlic, garlic scapes start to form and we take the next step in our seasonal garlic journey.

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this vegetable feature article!)*

Cooking With This Week's Box!

This week I'd like to start off by welcoming the Peak Season CSA Vegetable Share members! And just in time for the peak season….strawberries! We're really excited to be kicking off strawberry season this week and want to remind you that this weekend is our annual Strawberry Day event at the farm. The strawberry ice cream is scheduled to arrive on Thursday and Richard's planning the tour route. We hope you'll plan on joining us!

This is a busy week, so I'm really looking for quick, easy dishes to prepare. That's how this **Thai Coconut Soup with Spinach & Garlic Scapes** (see below) evolved. I haven't made cream of spinach soup…well, ever. For some reason it sounded good to me this week, but I didn't have extra cream and I wanted to avoid that overcooked spinach flavor. I ended up going with a Thai coconut soup concept, but I blended fresh, raw garlic scapes and spinach into the flavorful coconut milk broth. This soup is easy and fast to make as well as being flavorful and filling. Garnish it with scallion greens and some of the fresh cilantro in this week's box and your set.

Several years ago we featured a recipe for **Spicy Ginger Pork Noodles with Bok Choi**. This is the perfect week to make this recipe using hon tsai tai which is an acceptable substitute for the bok choi. You'll make use of some of the garlic scapes, scallions and cilantro in this recipe. This will make a simple dinner and leftovers are equally as good!

*(See our **blog** for the rest of Chef Andrea's suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)*

Thai Coconut Soup with Spinach & Garlic Scapes

By Chef Andrea

Yield: 2 quarts

- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 can coconut milk (15-16 oz can)
- 2 Tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 2 tsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp maple syrup
- ¼ tsp red chili flakes
- ½ tsp salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 8 oz baby spinach
- 3-4 garlic scapes, cut into 1 inch pieces
- Zest of one lime
- Cilantro, chopped, to garnish

1. Put the chicken stock and coconut milk in a medium sized sauce pan along with the minced ginger, fish sauce, soy sauce, maple syrup, chili flakes, ½ tsp salt and black pepper. Bring the liquid to a simmer over medium to medium high heat. Simmer for about 10 minutes, uncovered, to infuse the flavors.
2. After 10 minutes, remove the coconut milk mixture from heat. The next step is to puree the soup in a blender. If you have a large blender container, you may be able to puree the whole batch of soup at one time. Otherwise you may need to blend the soup in two batches. First put about half of the spinach and the garlic scapes into the blender. Pour the hot coconut milk mixture over the spinach and add the lime juice. Secure the lid on the container and turn the blender on, starting on low speed and gradually increasing. If you are blending everything in one batch, stop, remove the lid and add the remainder of the spinach. If blending in two batches, blend the first batch until the spinach is chopped finely, but there is still a little texture to the mixture. Pour the soup into a bowl and then repeat the process with the remaining spinach.
3. Once the soup is blended, stir in the lime zest and taste it. Adjust the seasoning to your liking with more salt, pepper and lime juice as needed.
4. Serve the soup hot with chopped cilantro as a garnish.

Garlic Scape Herb Butter

Yield: 1 cup butter

- 1 cup (2 sticks) good-quality unsalted butter, softened
- 1 garlic scape, minced
- 2 ½ Tbsp minced parsley
- 2 ½ Tbsp minced dill
- ½ tsp fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp sea salt

1. Using a hand mixer or a small food processor, beat together the softened butter, garlic scape, herbs, lemon juice, and salt until well combined. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed.

This super-simple recipe was borrowed from Andrea Bemis's book, *Dishing Up the Dirt*. She serves this butter as a spread for a fresh vegetable platter. This spread would be delicious on a radish sandwich, spread it on toast, use it for your morning eggs, or use it to cook other vegetable in such as sautéed spinach or sautéed baby white turnips with their greens.