Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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May 22 - 23, 2020

Vegetable Feature:
Look at All These Greens!

By Chef Andrea

"Food is the most intimate connection we have with our Earth, as we literally become the food that we eat…..It is not a coincidence that certain foods give us what we need during specific times of the year: high-water-content foods in summer, such as crispy cucumbers and tomatoes cool us down; sweetly rich, starchy, calorie-dense foods like pumpkins and beets to fuel us through the winter. By taking our cues from nature we align ourselves with the rhythms of the Earth, and consequently our bodies' needs, meanwhile sensually tuning in to the exquisite yet fleeting deliciousness of each cycle."—Sarah Britton from *My New Roots.*

This is the time of the year when leafy greens are abundant and make up a large portion of a seasonal Midwestern diet. As we come out of winter, you may find your body craving green vegetables. Thankfully, nature's design provides us with nutrient rich greens bursting with vitality to bring us out of our winter dormancy. Some greens, such as nettles and sorrel, are perennial or wild crops that just come up in the spring on their own. Then there's the overwintered spinach that was planted last fall, spent the winter under a cover in the field, and now we're harvesting the new growth this spring. These crops help us get a jump start on the season providing fresh vegetables ahead of other crops that we have to plant and wait for in the spring. However, some crops such as the baby arugula, saute greens and mini heads of lettuce in this week's box grow to harvestable size in just 4-6 weeks. These crops are also more cold hardy and thrive in cooler temperatures. All of these greens are an important part of our spring diet both because they are available but also because they have valuable vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that benefit our bodies in many ways, especially in the spring!

What's In The Box?

OVERWINTERED SPINACH: This is the last of this year's crop. Next week we'll transition to spring-planted spinach. I'd recommend cooking this week's spinach as the leaves are more mature than in past weeks.

CHIVES: If you're lucky enough to find a purple blossom in your bunch, eat it! The flowers are edible as well and are packed full of onion flavor!

GREEN GARLIC: Green Garlic is simply an immature garlic plant. Use both the lower white portion along with the green tops. You may substitute green garlic for bulb garlic and/or onions in recipes.

ASPARAGUS: We're thankful for the warmer temperatures we saw over the weekend which helped accelerate asparagus growth! We've seen much stronger harvests this week. Store asparagus in the refrigerator, upright with the base of the spears in a glass with water or wrapped with a moist towel.

SORREL: This is the bright green vegetable with arrow shaped leaves and a citrusy flavor that is packed in a small, clear Ziploc bag. Check out **last week's vegetable feature** article to learn more about how to use this vegetable.

RED RADISHES AND/OR DIANA RADISHES: Don't throw away the tops! Of course you can eat the beautiful radishes from these bunches, but you can eat the greens too! They have a bit more of a coarse texture, so are best enjoyed in cooked dishes such as soup, stir-fry.

BABY ARUGULA: This green has a bit more of a spicy kick to it. If you find the flavor of arugula to be on the strong side when you eat it raw by itself, give it a chance. The flavor mellows when cooked and/or combined with other ingredients. Use it as a salad green or wilt it in pasta dishes or on top of a pizza!

SAUTÈ MIX: This is the bag of mixed greens packaged in a large, clear Ziploc bag. This is a flavorful mix including baby kale, tat soi, baby bok choi and red mizuna. It's a slightly spicy mix that may be eaten raw as a salad or lightly cooked.

RED OR GREEN LITTLE GEM HEAD LETTUCE: This class of lettuce resembles romaine lettuce, but has more of the texture of butterhead lettuce. We planted these in our tunnel greenhouse earlier in April so we could have head lettuce for your box early in the season!

CHOICE: DECORATIVE WILLOW—If you took a bunch of willow last week, please do not take one this week. We plant curly willow and pussy willow trees in between fields and around property perimeters both as a buffer and to provide habitat and a food source for birds, wasps, bees, and other beneficial creatures. We trim them every year and have bundled the clippings so we can share their natural beauty with you! They don't require water and will last for years. Put them in a vase indoors or as part of an outdoor patio arrangement.

CHOICE: GARDEN HERB PACKS—This week we have sent ONE herb pack for every vegetable share. If you are a member of a sharing household, please only take one pack this week. If you would like a second pack for your share partner, please email *csa@harmonyvalleyfarm.com*. Include your name and CSA Pickup site and we will send another pack for you to pick up on May 29/30.

Sage	German Winter Thyme	Winter Savory
Greek Oregano	Chervil	Italian Parsley
Basil	Basil	Curly Parsley

Garden Herb Packs….Notes of advice from Farmer Richard

Plant your herbs in a garden space or in pots to keep on your patio, porch or kitchen window sill if you're limited on space. Choose good, loose garden soil mixed with lots of compost (up to 1" mixed into the soil if you're planting into a garden space). The plants will do best in well-drained soil with full sun. If you don't have a space with full sun exposure, partial sun will be ok too. If you have rabbits or other little herb-loving critters in your yard, you might need to fence your herbs to protect them.

Refer to this diagram to identify the different plants in your pack. You can also find more information about each herb on our blog. Check out the post we did on **May 23, 2018** which includes pictures as well as more information about planting and using your herbs!

So this week we're not going to talk about a specific vegetable, but rather a more generalized approach to embracing this class of vegetables we're going to simply refer to as "greens." For starters, lets embrace the fact that greens are nature's fast foods! They are tender enough to eat raw, but may also be lightly steamed or sautéed. Either way, they can become a meal in a very short period of time..like minutes! Toss the greens with a light vinaigrette and you have the base for a salad. It could be just a simple salad of greens and vinaigrette or you can add anything you want to turn it into more of a substantial salad that could serve as your entire meal. Raw or cooked vegetables such as asparagus, radishes, carrots, etc along with dried or fresh fruit, nuts, seeds, croutons, hard-boiled eggs, grilled beef, shredded chicken, fish or cooked beans. The combinations of ways you can build a salad are limitless and the greens serve as the base upon which to build your masterpiece!

Cooked greens can be very simple or may be incorporated into a wide variety of other dishes and preparations. You don't really need a recipe to cook greens. Basically, put them in a pan with either a little bit of oil and/or a little liquid. The liquid could be a little bit of water, fruit juice, wine, broth, cream or milk, or even just a splash of soy sauce. You just need to create some steam with heat and liquid. Put a lid on the pan for a minute or two just until the greens wilt down. Once wilted, take the lid off and you're done. Eat them on their own or incorporate them into a wide variety of things including quesadillas, grain dishes, pasta, eggs, casseroles, smoothies, soups—so many options. The other thing about cooking greens is that they go from a big fluffy pile that looks like a lot, maybe even too much for you to ever eat your way through, to a pile that will fit in the palm of your hand once they are cooked. You'll go from saying "What am I going to do with all these greens" to "Where did all my greens go? As I've said so many times before, don't be intimated by a vegetable, especially a bountiful pile of leafy greens!

Quinoa Salad with Asparagus, Arugula & Citrus

Yield: 4 servings as a light meal or more as a side

- 2 cups water
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup green garlic, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 cup quinoa
- 12 ounces asparagus, woody ends trimmed, sliced into 1-inch lengths
- Finely grated zest of ½ large orange
- ½ cup toasted almonds, roughly chopped
- 1 cup finely chopped chives
- 1 cup roughly chopped baby arugula
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Citrus Dressing

- Juice of ½ large orange
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tsp honey or maple syrup
- 3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

1. Begin by boiling about 2 cups of water in a kettle. Heat remaining 2 Tbsp olive oil in a saucepan, add green garlic and cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly until translucent. Add sesame seeds and quinoa and cook for 1-2 minutes, stirring often until lightly toasted. Add 1 ½ cups boiling water, reduce to a gentle simmer, cover pan, and cook for 10-12 minutes until all the water has been absorbed and quinoa is tender. Remove from heat. Leaving the lid on, set aside to steam for another 5 minutes before fluffing up with a fork. Cool to room temperature.
2. Meanwhile, blanch asparagus in a saucepan of salted boiling water for 1-2 mintues or until just tender. Drain and refresh in cold water.
3. To make the citrus dressing, simmer orange and lemon juice in a small saucepan until reduced by half. Remove from the heat, add honey or maple syrup, then pour in olive oil in a steady stream, whisking constantly to form a lovely emulsified dressing. Taste and season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
4. Transfer quinoa to a large bowl and stir in orange zest, almonds, chives, asparagus, arugula, feta cheese and the dressing. Toss well and adjust seasoning if needed.

Recipe adapted from Emma Galloway's book, *My Darling Lemon Thyme.*

Easy Crust-less Spinach and Feta Pie

Yield: 4-6 servings

- 1 pound fresh spinach and/or other leafy greens (10 oz frozen spinach or greens)
- ½ cup chopped green onions, chives or green garlic
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh dill
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup crumbled feta
- 2 Tbsp grated Asiago or Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ⅔ cup milk
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- ½ tsp salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Lightly grease a pie pan with oil.
3. If using fresh spinach and/or greens, you need to cook them first. Heat a medium size pan over medium heat. Add a few tablespoons of water and the greens. Cover the pan and simmer for a few minutes or until the greens are wilted. Put the greens in a colander and rinse with cold water. Once cooled, squeeze the excess water out of the greens and roughly chop them with a knife.
4. Mix the spinach and/or other greens along with the green onion, dill, parsley, and feta cheese. Spoon the mixture into the pie dish.
5. Sift flour and baking powder in a medium bowl.
6. Add remaining ingredients to the bowl and blend well. Pour into pie dish.
7. Bake for 28-33 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Let the pie stand for at least 5 minutes before serving.

This recipe was adapted from *www.skinnytaste.com* and was shared by a member in our private Facebook group this year as well as in previous years. I figured a recipe that makes a return appearance in the group is worth sharing with others! It's also a great recipe for using a large quantity of greens. Don't be afraid to mix and match whatever leafy greens you have available.