Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com October 15 - 16, 2021

What's In The Box?

SPINACH OR BABY ARUGULA: This week's spinach is a bit on the delicate side, which made it difficult to spin it dry without damaging the leaves. We recommend you place a clean paper towel inside your bag of spinach to absorb any extra drops of water and store it in the refrigerator. This will help to maximize the shelf life. If you're cooking with the spinach, a little extra water on the leaves will actually help to steam and wilt it down.

SALAD MIX: A few handfuls of salad mix help to create a healthy vegetable wrap in just a few minutes. Spread something tasty on a tortilla, such as mayonnaise, cream cheese, pesto, etc. Add some chopped fresh vegetables, a piece of cheese and a big handful of salad mix greens. Roll it up and you have a light lunch or snack!

ITALIAN GARLIC: Make a batch of **Garlic and Herb Buttermilk Dressing**. Use it as a salad dressing with this week's head lettuce or spinach. Of course, you can also use it as a dip or sauce with other vegetables such as this week's German Butterball potatoes!

RED SUMMER CRISP LETTUCE: This is the last of our fall lettuce varieties. Soon we'll be shifting gears to fall chicories including some gorgeous heads of escarole. Read more about this variety of lettuce in **this week's vegetable feature article**.

YELLOW ONIONS: Check out this recipe for **Cider Braised Chicken with Apples and Onions**. It's the perfect way to highlight fall flavors!

MINI SWEET PEPPERS: Pepper season is almost finished, so savor each bite of these sweet peppers! Stuff them with cream cheese, roast them with squash or potatoes, or freeze them for use during the winter!

JALAPEÑO PEPPERS: There are two jalapeños in your box this week. Check out this week's Cooking With the Box Article for a recipe for **Grilled Jalapeño Burgers**.

RAINBOW CHARD: Frost will be coming soon and this is one vegetable that will not survive a frost. Enjoy the final taste of this nutrient and flavor-packed green as its season comes to a close. You can also chop the leaves and steam them just enough to wilt them down. Cool and freeze them for use this winter in soups, casseroles, etc.

GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE OR BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER: Your box will contain one of these selections from the brassicas family this week. This family of vegetables is part of nature's medicine cabinet to help keep us healthy and well as they are packed with powerful nutrients including antioxidants that protect our cells from being damaged by toxins, etc. Cheers to filling your plate with health and vitality!

GERMAN BUTTERBALL POTATOES: This is a longstanding beloved variety by many. It has gold skin and tasty gold flesh. It's mostly waxy which makes it good for potato salad, soups & stews, frying, gratin, roasting. It has a touch of dryness to it as well so you can usually get away with making smashed potatoes, just don't overwork them.

BUTTERSCOTCH BUTTERNUT SQUASH: Our butternut squash are not storing as well as we have seen in some years, so we recommend you eat this squash sooner than later. That shouldn't be a problem as there are so many different ways you can use this very versatile squash! Head over to our **blog** or the archives on our **website** for recipe ideas.

SUGAR DUMPLING OR JESTER SQUASH: These two varieties are tasty & sweet with flesh that is more light and lean than butternut. Cut in half and roast or bake them. You can enjoy them simply with salt, pepper and a pat of butter or stuff them with a mixture of rice, sausage, fruit, etc. Because they are naturally very sweet, they will not store for very long so eat them soon!

ORANGE CARROTS: This week's carrots come from our friend John Peterson's Farm, Angelic Organics. Our fall carrots are coming in late and are still pretty small. John had an abundant carrot harvest this year beyond what he needed for his own CSA. We decided to work with John to give his carrots a home and get some carrots back into your CSA box! Cross your fingers that ours will have a growth spurt so we can harvest them by the end of the month!

VEGETABLE FEATURE: SUMMER CRISP LETTUCE

By: Chef Andrea Yoder

Description: We grow many varieties of head lettuce here at Harmony Valley Farm, each of them carefully selected with specific characteristics we're looking for at different times in the growing season with their own special flair to keep things interesting and diverse. Lettuce can be a tricky crop to grow. In general, lettuce is best grown in the more mild, cool temperatures of spring and fall. During the heat of the summer it bolts very quickly and typically does not taste good. While spring and fall are more conducive times of the season for growing lettuce, it is still very vulnerable to field and weather conditions. There are many varieties of lettuce, but they are not all created equally. We have tried to select varieties that have greater disease resistance, are beautiful with good flavor, and have good field-holding ability which gives us a longer window in which to harvest them.

So with that background, I want to introduce this week's head lettuce. It's a unique variety called "Magenta." This variety is classified as a Summer Crisp lettuce, also known as Batavia lettuce. It's a unique type of lettuce that is kind of a mix between leaf lettuce, iceberg and romaine. The heads start out similarly to a leaf lettuce, which is loose and open, but as they mature the inner leaves start to wrap into more of a compact head. The texture of the leaves is kind of a cross between iceberg and romaine. There are several things we like about this lettuce. First of all, it is tolerant to heat so it does well even in the heat of late summer and early fall. It also has a longer harvest window whereas some varieties can quickly go "over the hill." Lastly, it tastes pretty good, lacking the bitterness that Romaine can develop sometimes. You will seldom see this variety of lettuce in a regular grocery store, but over the past few years this has become one of our favorite varieties of head lettuce to grow and eat!

Preparation & Use: When you are ready to use your head lettuce, cut out the base of the stalk and pull off the leaves. Gently swish around in a bowl of water or a clean sink of cold water to loosen any dirt, especially the lower part of the leaves near the base. Put the washed leaves in a wire basket or colander, hold it by the handle and shake vigorously over the sink so the water is spun out. If you do not have a basket, you can wrap the lettuce in a clean cloth and blot out the water, a salad spinner also works well and is relatively inexpensive.

This variety of lettuce has enough structure to the leaf to hold up to thick, creamy dressings such as a a Caesar dressing as in this week's featured recipe. You can use this lettuce in any recipe or use that you may normally reach for iceberg or romaine lettuce. Of course, you can also dress it lightly with a vinaigrette.

Storage: Store these heads loosely wrapped in a plastic bag or stored in a covered container in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it. When storing, add paper towels to the plastic bag to keep lettuce fresher longer. Do not store near ethylene-producing fruits, like apples or bananas, to avoid rapid decay.

Caesar Salad

Yield: 4 servings

"In this version of a Caesar salad, raw eggs are replaced with plain yogurt. Otherwise, the flavors are authentic, combining tart lemon juice, briny anchovies, and savory Parmesan cheese with crunchy lettuce and crisp garlic-scented croutons."

1 head of Summercrisp or Romaine Lettuce

3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus ½ cup

2 cloves garlic

3 or 4 slices French or Italian bread each ⅜ inch thick, crusts removed and cut into ½-inch cubes

Salt and ground pepper, to taste

6-8 good-quality anchovy fillets in olive oil, drained

1 ½ tsp dry mustard

2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

1 ½ Tbsp plain yogurt

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Break off the leaves from the lettuce core. Wash and dry well. Tear into bite-sized pieces. Place in a salad bowl, cover with a damp kitchen towel, and refrigerate to keep crisp.
2. In a large frying pan over low heat, warm the 3 Tbsp olive oil. Using the flat side of a chef's knife, smash 1 of the garlic cloves and add it to the oil. Saute for 1-2 minutes. Add the bread cubes and fry, stirring and tossing, until crisp and golden on all sides, 4-5 minutes. Discard the garlic. Sprinkle the bread cubes with a little salt. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain. Set aside to cool.
3. Chop the remaining garlic clove and combine with the ½ cup olive oil in a blender. Puree until smooth. In a small bowl, using a fork, mash the anchovies until they form a paste. Add to the oil and garlic in the blender along with the mustard, lemon juice, and yogurt. Blend at high speed until smooth. Add 2 Tbsp of the Parmesan cheese and blend again. Season with a little salt, remembering that anchovies are salty, and a little pepper.
4. Add three-fourths of the dressing to the lettuce and toss to coat well. Add about half of the remaining cheese and toss again. Taste and add more dressing or more seasonings to taste. Sprinkle with the toasted croutons and the remaining cheese. Serve right away.

Recipe borrowed from *Cooking At Home*, a Williams-Sonoma cookbook by Chuck Williams.