



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

August 5-6, 2011

This spring we had the opportunity to hire not one, but two great people! Jenny and Logan joined our packing shed crew within weeks of each other. They've both fallen into their roles here based on their varied skills and interests. While they both share the job of packing shed supervisor, they also have their own responsibilities. They have been a tremendous help with maintaining inventories, receiving product, managing pest control, monitoring and enforcing food safety procedures and records, managing seeds, ordering supplies, and much, much more! We're glad to have them both as part of our team. We asked them to interview each other for this profile, so Jenny got to know Logan & Logan learned a bit more about his co-worker Jenny!

## Jenny Cesar by Logan Peterman

Jenny was educated in art at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, so you might find yourself wondering how she came to work on an organic vegetable farm. Originally from Fond Du Lac, she was trained in art education but was doubtful that teaching was the right move after graduation. She opted to move out of the Midwest and experience some of the country. Her wanderlust led her to Colorado where she worked at a wide variety of places from a Dude Ranch outside Fort Collins to the slopes of Vail. There, in the midst of all her travels she bought a CSA share for a season and the seed of curiosity was planted. She wondered what the farm looked like. What was farm work like? Her questions and curiosity eventually led her to apply to Harmony Valley this spring and now she is a part of the team!

She is not only a packing shed supervisor, but also specializes in the organization and inventory of all the supplies that make the rest of our jobs possible. From bags to bleach, boxes to bouffant caps, there are a tremendous number of different materials that each worker on the farm needs in a given day to successfully carry out their job. Jenny has taken on the daunting task of cataloging, sorting, organizing, reorganizing, and constantly replenishing all of these supplies. She does brilliant work and has already restructured some of the farm's storage systems into more efficient arrangements.

In her spare time Jenny has found ways to continue with her art even if it isn't in the classroom. She is an avid photographer, both on the farm and off. She also frequently vol-

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**GREEN TOP CARROTS:** If you feel the carrots are starting to pile up, make a carrot puree to freeze. Rough chop the carrots, cover with water in a medium pot, cook on medium low until tender. Puree in a blender until smooth, cool and transfer to a freezer container. You can then use the puree in soups, sauces or casseroles. **Chewing the green tops helps to refresh your breath and has antiseptic properties that can help heal injuries in the mouth.**

**ITALIAN FRYING PEPPERS:** These are one of our favorite green peppers. When sautéed, toasted or grilled, you'll find they have a pretty complex flavor for a mild green pepper.

**GOLD POTATOES:** With a flesh that ranges from buttery yellow to golden, the Gold Potatoes have a moist succulent texture and can be cut, unpeeled, into bite size chunks and roasted till just tender then used in potato salad.

**EGGPLANT:** See Vegetable feature and recipes on the back

**SWEET CORN:** What can one say about sweet corn; it is by far a seasonal favorite whether boiled, steamed, or grilled. Grill in the husks or peel for a charred flavor. Cooked sweet corn can be cut from the cobs and used in salsas, pancakes, or mixed with your burger before making into patties and grilling.

**GREEN TOP GOLD OR RED BEETS:** The leafy green tops are edible and highly nutritious; cook as you would spinach. The gold beet, although not the traditional red color, is just as flavorful and lovely on the plate. Enjoy your beets buttered, pickled, roasted, boiled, or shredded raw and added to your summer salad.

**SUMMER SQUASH:** Cut into small cubes, dredge in flour, then egg, then coat in cornmeal and fry in oil. Serve on top of salads as croutons.

**CUCUMBERS:** Crisp juicy cucumbers are a great addition to raw salads, or to add to your gazpacho soup. If you have extra cucumbers and would like to save them as pickles you could try this simple method: Place 3 cups of sliced thin cucumbers, 1 medium onion sliced thin, and ½ green pepper sliced thin in a large bowl and sprinkle with ½ tablespoon salt. Let stand 2 hours then drain. Make a syrup of 1 cup sugar, ½ cup white vinegar, ½ teaspoon celery seed, do not cook, just let stand for 2 hours; stirring from time to time. Pour over cucumbers and let stand in refrigerator for two days. They will be ready to eat in two days and can be stored in the fridge.

**SWEET SPANISH ONIONS:** A mild flavored onion, the sweet Spanish onion is popular sliced fresh for use on burgers, diced for hot dogs or added to summer salads.

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Mauve-colored skin and somewhat milder flavor, this garlic can be roasted whole. Remove the cooked cloves to add to mashed potatoes or sauces.

**BROCCOLI OR CAULIFLOWER:** Broccoli pairs well with anchovies, garlic and lemons, the three main components in Caesar salad. Add broccoli (raw, par cooked or even tempura fried) to any salad!

**SESAME GREENS:** Young leaves have a unique flavor between mint and basil and are used in sushi, garnishes, and soup. In Korean cuisine, they often form little rolls similar to a dolma, using the sesame leaf as the wrapper and stuffing them with a variety of fillings, including rice, cucumbers, carrots etc. Check out these websites for recipe ideas:  
<http://www.kitchen caravan.com/recipe/sesame-leaf-cigars-salmon-ceviche>  
<http://franlife.blogspot.com/2008/07/recipe-fresh-rice-bundles-in-sesame.html>

**MELONS:** Sweet Sarah's (cantaloupe type melon), Butterscotch (personal mini size melons) or Sun Jewel are each sweet and refreshing fruits that can be sliced or cut into chunks for a fruit salad. Very juicy and sweet and just right for one or two people.

**Sungold or Red Grape Tomatoes:** The Sungold tomatoes are a great addition to a summer salad or roast them to enhance their flavor even more and use on pizza or in a vegetable dish. Both varieties make a great quick snack if you pop them right in your mouth.

**GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE:** This mellow-flavored cabbage is considered to be one of the best of its genre for cooking. The full head of crinkled leaves varies from dark to pale green. Because of the effects of heat on these cabbages, you may find the leaves to be a bit thicker and best suited for cooking.

**CHOICE-ITALIAN BASIL:** One portion per Veggie share, not per household. Choice boxes are self-regulated by the members at each site. If there is a lot left at the end of the day, help yourself to more than one portion; the goal is to have little or none left at the end of the day. If you pick up late, there may be none left.

unteers her time at a local horse rescue facility. One day she hopes to find time and space to rekindle her skills in ceramics. During her art education training she studied nearly all types of artistic expression, but found a real niche in pottery. Perhaps one day she'll be able to eat Harmony Valley produce out of her own handcrafted stoneware!

#### Logan Peterman by Jenny Cesar

Logan grew up on an orchard in Waupaca, WI so he has been around agriculture from a young age. He has a bachelor's degree in biology from UW Madison but was also interested in ecology. Knowing that Richard is a mogul in the Midwest he had talked with Richard seasons ago about a job, but pursued a position in an ecology lab in Madison, while he was in school.

Logan's interest in farming started with his own gardening and slowly turned into a larger part of his life. Last year Logan and his wife started their own organic farm called Laughing Sprout on  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre outside of Reedsburg, WI. It was his first year farming and he loved it. The farm provided a good variety of vegetables and had a 15 member CSA. Logan and his wife moved further into the Driftless region and recently bought a house near La Farge, WI where they have an orchard of their own.

Logan is interested in combining his education and his hobbies in permaculture, an approach to designing human settlements and agricultural systems modeled on the relationships found in natural plant communities. He hopes to build up his orchard and turn it into a business.

You can also find Logan from time to time teaching at the Youth Initiative High School in Viroqua. Last May he taught a class with Jane Siemon and Vicki Ramsey on Biomimicry in Agriculture. The course was about different approaches in agriculture to lower the impact on the environment. The class learned ways to look at nature to find solutions to problems such as filtering sewage like a marsh without the use of chemicals.

At the farm Logan specializes in seeds. He manages the seed cooler making sure the temperature is correct and keeping a close inventory on the different brands, varieties, and species. Numerous times a week you can find Logan sterilizing seeds to prevent bacterial diseases. He diligently watches to make sure the seeds reach a certain temperature in the water and that they get dehydrated correctly so they don't start to sprout. He also provides germ tests, and dabbles in green house management. This is a very important job; our very business relies on the seeds he keeps a close eye on.

### Vegetable Feature: Eggplant

Eggplant is not a wildly popular vegetable here in the United States, but in Italy, Greece, Turkey, France, Asia and India eggplant is a cultural staple. Eggplant, or *aubergines*, are actually one of those tricky fruits parading around as a vegetable! They are part of the nightshade family; kin to tomatoes, bell peppers and potatoes. The plants are very pretty with broad leaves and beautiful lavender flowers.

We grow several varieties including the traditional dark purple globe eggplant, an Italian variety often referred to as "*Black Eggplant*." This season you may also see the purple and white striped globe, another Italian variety called "*Listada di Gandi*", as well as two Asian varieties: "*Dancer*" is an elongated bright purple tear drop shape, and the long slender "*Lilac Bride*".

Eggplant can be prepared in a variety of different ways including steaming, sautéing, oven roasting, broiling, and grilling. It works well in appetizers, salads, soups, sides and main dishes and it pairs very well with tomatoes, garlic, and onion. Due to a small amount of toxic solanine, which is destroyed when cooked, eggplant should always be cooked before eating. Cut off the ends and eggplant is ready to be cooked whole, halved or cut into any number of smaller pieces. After chopping or slicing, the flesh will oxidize fairly quickly. If you have experienced soggy or overly oily eggplant in dishes, like eggplant parmesan, it may be that there was too much moisture present when it was cooked. To reduce the moisture in eggplant slices, sprinkle with coarse salt, and place in a colander to drain. After 20-30 minutes, rinse the slices, and pat dry with a paper towel. The salting technique removes some of the moisture before cooking and helps them become resistant to absorbing the oil as they are cooked.

Eggplants store best at a temperature between 50-55 degrees. Store on your kitchen counter and use within a few days. Eggplants are very susceptible to chill injury and can be damaged easily. They also have a relatively short shelf life, so plan to use them soon after you receive them. If you are looking to add some diversity to your eggplant repertoire, try these recipes!

#### Eggplant and Basil Pesto Pasta Serves 3

1 cup fresh basil leaves	$\frac{1}{2}$ pound penne pasta
$\frac{1}{8}$ cup pine nuts toasted (see note)	1 small eggplant cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cubes
1 small clove garlic	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra virgin olive oil
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt	Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper	
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra virgin olive oil	
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated parmesan cheese, divided	

#### For the pesto

In a blender or food processor, pulse the basil, pine nuts, garlic,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon black pepper until finely chopped. With the processor running, gradually add the  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup olive oil until the mixture is smooth and thick. Add the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup parmesan cheese and pulse until just incorporated. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Set aside.

#### For the pasta

-Bring a large pot of water, with 1 teaspoon of salt, to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook until tender but still firm to the bite, stirring occasionally, about 8-10 minutes. Drain and reserve about 1 cup of the pasta water. Put the pasta into a large serving bowl and add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup parmesan cheese and toss to combine.

-In a large skillet, heat  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil over medium heat. Add the eggplant and season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cook stirring frequently, until the eggplant turns golden brown, about 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Add the pesto and toss until the eggplant is coated.

-Add the eggplant mixture to the serving bowl with the pasta and toss until all the ingredients are coated. Thin out the sauce with a little pasta water, if needed, season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cheese and serve. **NOTE:** To toast the pine nuts, place a single layer on a baking sheet, bake at 350°F for 5-6 minutes.

#### Curried Grilled Eggplant and Summer Squash Serves 3

1 medium eggplant, cut crosswise into 1 inch thick rounds (unpeeled)	
1 medium or 2 small summer squash, cut into 1 inch thick rounds (unpeeled)	
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sesame oil	
2 tablespoon curry powder	
salt and freshly ground black pepper	
2 tablespoons Thai basil leaves, chiffonade	

-Prepare grill to medium high heat.  
-Rub the eggplant rounds and summer squash rounds on both sides with sesame oil. Sprinkle with curry powder, salt and pepper. Grill until slightly charred, about 6 minutes per side.  
-Sprinkle with chiffonade of basil to serve.