



HIGH ALTITUDE HARVEST

Community Supported Agriculture

July 15, 2015 —

Treating the Soil Right

by Susan Payne of Harmony Acres

Harmony Acres is located in the very center of Indian Valley and is bordered by a musical wetland area. It's delightful to listen to all the wild-life as I am planting, harvesting or just dealing with those never ending weeds. I have gardened here for six years and have expanded the growing space three fold in that time. Because I share this land with an active gopher community most of my gardening is done in raised beds lined with hardware cloth. This keeps those rascals at bay (along with the help of some neighborhood cats who sneak into the garden early in the morning to unearth their breakfast).

My seventeen raised beds are three or four feet wide, two feet high and from ten to fourteen feet long. Herbs, veggies, flowers and berries are growing in the garden – though not all are in beds.

My first rule is don't step on the soil in a planting bed. When you do, the soil is compacted which reduces aeration and slows the activity of soil microorganisms. I work hard to keep the soil, and all its living organisms, healthy and in balance. Compost is added in the fall and the beds are all covered with a layer of straw and manure from the chicken coop. This not only nourishes the soil, but protects it from the ravages of the winter weather.

In the spring, I remove what is left of this straw blanket (depending on the weather, a portion of it will have decomposed into the soil) and check the soil levels in the beds. Soil, compost and a balanced organic fertilizer are added, as needed, and the bed is left to rest for several days. Often weeds come up during this time and are easy to pull and toss to the chickens. Before planting any crops, I install drip tape in each bed. By trial and error I have found this to be the best way to provide consistent water to the garden. It's economical too.

Then I plant my crops – for you, our CSA members. I hope you enjoy eating them as much as I enjoy producing them!

Susan is an active member of the local food and farming movement. She currently serves as a Steering Committee member for the Plumas-Sierra Master Gardeners and is on the Digging In garden education program committee, which serves Greenville and Quincy Elementary Schools.



Snap peas on the vine at Harmony Acres

Full Share

- Basil
- Blueberries
- Carrots
- Chives
- French Breakfast Radishes
- Mesclun Mix
- Snap Peas
- Spring Mix
- Sunflower Sprouts
- Tomatoes

Half Share

- Blueberries
- Cabbage
- Lemon Cucumbers
- Head Lettuce
- Green Onions

What Grows Where

DAWN GARDENS

head lettuce, chives, basil

FIVE FOOT FARM

sunflower sprouts, carrots, snap peas, cabbage, green onions, radishes, mesclun mix

GREEN CEDAR FARM

blueberries

GREENVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

lemon cucumbers

HARMONY ACRES

snap peas

SASQUATCH FARMS

spring mix

SHOOFLY FARM

tomatoes

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Bread Share Flavor

Mushroom & Swiss Cheese

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Blueberry Cornmeal Pancakes (gluten optional)

In case anyone's blueberries are actually making it till the next morning these days, here's a way to use a few to make an extra special breakfast treat. Press the blueberries into the pancakes as they cook.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup finely ground cornmeal or corn flour	1 tablespoon melted butter or coconut oil,
1/2 cup flour (wheat, rice, chickpea, sorghum)	plus more for the pan
1/2 teaspoon baking powder	1 egg, lightly beaten
1/4 teaspoon baking soda	3/4 cup plain yogurt
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom	1/2 cup blueberries
2 tablespoons brown sugar	Butter and maple syrup for serving (optional)
1/4 teaspoon salt	

DIRECTIONS

Whisk together in a medium bowl the cornmeal/flour, other flour, baking powder, baking soda, cardamom, sugar, and salt. In another bowl, whisk together the butter, egg, and yogurt. Stir the wet into the dry until the dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened.

Preheat a cast iron or non-stick griddle or frying pan and lightly butter or oil. When the griddle is hot, drop enough batter to form a 3-inch pancake onto the griddle. Repeat with another two to three pancakes, making sure not to crowd the griddle. Press 5 or 6 blueberries into each pancake, and then cook for 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat, until the underside is golden brown and the pancakes have small bubbles. Flip the pancakes, and cook another 2 to 3 minutes on the second side. Add a bit more butter or oil to the griddle and repeat with one or two more batches, until all of the pancakes are cooked. Serve hot with your favorite toppings. Makes 2-3 servings or 9-10 little pancakes.

Source: adapted from www.myfoodmyhealth.com

CAPRESE SALAD

Tomatoes AND basil? You know what that means, folks. It is officially caprese salad season! This simple, quintessential summer salad is drizzled with a balsamic reduction in this recipe. This is a great trick to turn inexpensive balsamic vinegar into a delicious syrupy glaze. If you are using a high-end balsamic to begin with, I say skip the reduction.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups balsamic vinegar
3 whole ripe tomatoes, sliced thick
12 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese
Sliced thick fresh basil leaves
Olive oil, for drizzling
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



In a small saucepan, bring balsamic vinegar to a boil over medium-low heat. Cook for 10 to 20 minutes, or until it has reduced to a thicker glaze. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl or cruet. Allow to cool. When you're ready to serve, arrange tomato and mozzarella slices on a platter. Arrange basil leaves between the slices. Drizzle olive oil over the top of the salad, getting a little bit on each slice. Do the same with the balsamic reduction, making designs if you want. Store extra balsamic reduction in fridge for a later use. End with a sprinkling of kosher salt and black pepper.

Source: adapted from www.thepioneerwoman.com

Crop Updates

Mesclun Mix — This spicy salad greens mix is in this week's Full Shares. The name comes from the Provençal in Southern France, *mesclar*, to "mix thoroughly," and literally means "mixture." According to local lore, mesclun originated with the farmers around Nice,

France, who would each bring their own unique and prized mix of baby greens to the farmers' markets.

Lemon Cucumbers — Half Shares are getting the first lemon cucumbers of the season from teacher Dan Brown of Greenville High School. Dan and his kids have been growing for HAH from the get go, and they're our resident cucumber experts. These lemon cucs are great sliced on salads or sandwiches, or eaten by themselves for a snack. Enjoy!