



# Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter August 23-24, 2016

[www.sognvalleyfarm.com](http://www.sognvalleyfarm.com)

Greetings,

Karin and I had a wonderful trip to VT, catching up with extended family, meeting members of my new “in-law” family, and witnessing a very moving and love-filled ceremony. The farm crew kicked butt while we were gone, and everything went smoothly here.

Taking my usual Sunday field walk, I noticed lots of great looking crops (winter squash almost ready to harvest, sweet potato vines thick and healthy), but also some that are not doing so well.

## Melon Woes

One of the most disappointing crops for us this year has been melons and watermelons. I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that one of our melon varieties came down with bacterial wilt disease, which caused the entire planting to die within a matter of days. There was also a new variety we tried, called Savor, whose fruits were sweet and delicious but rotted in the field at a ridiculously high rate—probably 95%. So, nearly no harvest.

Our watermelons also came down with bacterial wilt, causing premature vine death and leaving many watermelons at 2/3 of normal size and maturity. And those that did size up had a high rate of two physiological conditions: hollow heart and vivipary. Hollow heart is somewhat self-explanatory—hollow cavities inside the fruit. Vivipary is a rare condition which causes seeds to germinate within the ripening fruit. We also received a lot of rain during fruit ripening, which dilutes the sugar and flavor, thus reducing quality.

Screening for these defects is a challenge, since I can't cut open every fruit to check for problems. I have developed some indicators, such as the sound made when the watermelon is tapped. But these aren't foolproof, and it's possible some are ending up in your boxes. If you received a watermelon with issues this week or last, we're sorry! For those who haven't yet received a watermelon, there's a

## What's in the box?

**Slicing tomatoes:** More tomatoes from our high tunnel—great for a BLT. Ever tried grilling tomatoes? Halve tomatoes and coat the cut side of the tomato with olive oil, salt, pepper, and some garlic, then grill, starting with the cut side up.

**White sweet onions:** Sweet onions are very versatile—use in any recipe calling for onions, including this week's red pepper spread recipe!

**Red bell peppers:** Use in this week's red pepper spread recipe.

**Curly parsley:** Use in this week's red pepper spread recipe.

**Carrots:** These are young carrots from our fall planting—a bit smaller and more tender than the larger storage carrots you'll receive this fall.

**Watermelon, muskmelon, or 'Striped German' heirloom tomato :** Some, but not all, of the members who didn't receive a watermelon last week are receiving one this week. See narrative to the left for more background on this year's melon challenges. 'Striped German' is a tomato variety that you haven't received yet. They develop more red color as they ripen, and are sweet with a light flavor.

**Beans:** Try steaming these and topping with caramelized sweet onions.

**Chard:** These bunches are a combination of green chard and rainbow chard, which has colorful stems.

**Poblano and Anaheim peppers:** We have been really enjoying roasting and skinning these peppers and using them in a multitude of ways—in eggs, tacos, and even layered with tomato, cheese, and crackers. See this week's chiles rellenos recipe for a classic way to eat these peppers. Anaheim peppers are the traditional chile relleno pepper in Mexico, but poblanos are also used. Try using both and see which you prefer!

## Cucumbers

**Savoy cabbage:** This is the first harvest out of our fall brassica planting, which includes green, red, and savoy cabbages, cauliflower, and a few broccoli successions. Savoy is more tender than green or red cabbage. It will store for several weeks in a plastic bag in your refrigeration, but not as long as green and red cabbage.

**Zucchini and summer squash (full shares only):** These fruits got a bit big while the crew was shorthanded (thus missing a harvest) during my trip to VT last week. These would be good candidates for zucchini bread.

## On Deck

*Some of the items you'll likely see in your box over the next 1-2 weeks.*

**Winter squash — Sage — Yellow potatoes — Eggplant**

chance we'll have one for you next week, but I'm not terribly optimistic. We plan to try different varieties next season, and take other precautions to reduce chances of the issues we had this year. Thanks for your understanding!

Best,

Dana

## Red Pepper, Parsley, and Walnut Spread

### Ingredients

2-3 red bell peppers, whole  
1 cup walnuts  
3 cloves garlic, peeled  
1/2 C chopped sweet onion  
1 teaspoon salt (plus more if necessary)  
1 bunch curly parsley, rinsed  
1 tablespoon smoked Spanish paprika  
olive oil

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to broil. Place whole bell peppers on a cookie sheet in oven and broil, turning frequently, until skin is blackened and blistered, about 10 minutes. Place blackened peppers in large lidded container and let steam and cool for 15 minutes. Use your hands to peel the peppers (leaving just a bit of the charred skin), also removing the seeds and core.
2. In the base of a food processor or blender, combine the peeled and seeded roasted peppers, the cup of walnuts, the 3 cloves of garlic, the onion, salt, parsley, and smoked paprika and puree until smooth. Drizzle in about 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and puree again. Taste and adjust salt as needed.
3. Serve immediately as a dip, use as a spread in sandwiches, toss with pasta, etc. Will keep in an air-tight container in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.

Modified from <http://www.alwaysorderdessert.com/2011/04/red-pepper-parsley-and-walnut-spread.html>

## Chiles Rellenos

*While you are in pepper-roasting mode, why not roast up your Anaheim and poblano peppers for this chiles rellenos recipe? It may not be a health food, but it sure is a treat!*

### Ingredients

6 fresh Anaheim or poblano peppers  
1 (8 ounce) package queso asadero (white Mexican cheese), cut into 3/4-inch thick strips  
2 eggs, separated  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
3/4 cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup vegetable shortening for frying

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven's broiler and set the oven rack at about 6 inches from the heat source. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Place peppers onto the prepared baking sheet, and cook under the preheated broiler until the skin of the peppers has blackened and blistered, about 10 minutes. Turn the peppers often to blacken all sides. Place the blackened peppers into a Tupperware container or a bowl sealed tightly with plastic wrap. Allow the peppers to steam as they cool, about 15 minutes.
2. Rinse cooled peppers under cold water to peel off the skins, and cut a slit along the long side of each pepper to remove the seeds and core. Rinse the peppers inside and out, and pat dry with paper towels. Stuff the peppers with strips of the cheese.
3. Whisk the egg yolks in a bowl with the baking powder. In a second metal bowl, beat the egg whites with an electric mixer until the whites form stiff peaks. Gently fold the beaten egg whites into the yolk mixture. Place flour into a shallow bowl.
4. Heat the vegetable shortening in a skillet over medium heat. Roll each stuffed pepper in flour, tap off excess flour, and dip the peppers into the egg mixture to coat both sides. Gently lay the coated peppers into the hot shortening. Fry peppers until lightly golden brown and the cheese has melted, about 5 minutes per side.

Modified from <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/219646/authentic-mexican-chili-rellenos/>