

# Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter June 28-29, 2016

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

Greetings,

I couldn't run this farm without good helpers. We have three employees that form the regular field crew: Laura, David, and Karl. They work with me on greenhouse seeding, transplanting, field maintenance (weeding, trellising tomatoes, applying or removing row cover, etc.), and harvest, wash, and pack for CSA and market.

This week, I was happy to be joined by another—my friend and former graduate school lab mate Jen. She is staying with us and helping out on the farm for several days before she leaves on a 3-month bicycle-powered music tour around western Europe with her friend Paul. (Do a web search for "Freedom From Fuel Tour" to learn about their next endeavor!)

It's amazing what having just one extra set of hands around can do for productivity. We had a banner day last Friday! Five of us, each armed with a hoe, cruised down bed after bed, field after field, and weeded pretty much the whole farm! After weeks with the same "to weed" list, it was an amazing feeling to free up the time and labor to get it done. Working in a large group is so energizing, making a typically arduous process rather fun.

*Sugar snap vs shelling peas.* As I mentioned in the description for sugar snap peas, it appears as though the seed we ordered was contaminated with shelling peas. This is a pretty benign (and delicious) form of contamination, but nonetheless requires attention. While we would have preferred to be able to sort out the shelling peas, so you wouldn't have to, it just wasn't feasible. Hand harvesting peas is already a very time-consuming process, and inspecting every pod would have taken all day!

First, what's the difference between the two? When you buy frozen peas, you are

## What's in the box?

**Asian eggplant:** Asian eggplant's long, skinny shape makes it well suited to grilling, as described for zucchini in last week's newsletter. It can also be prepared for baba ghanoush by roasting whole until the skin is charred, then just scraping off the skin before blending with other ingredients. Eggplant is best stored around 55°F.

**Red leaf (full shares) or green leaf (half shares) lettuce:** Chop up and toss with snow peas, green onions, and strawberries or cherry tomatoes for an easy salad.

**Napa cabbage:** Napa cabbage has tender leaves with crispy, mild flavored petioles (the white "stem" that connects the leafy part to the base of the head). It is commonly used in Asian stir fries, and is the type of cabbage traditionally used to make kimchi. See this week's recipe for a tasty way to use this cabbage.

**Green onions:** Trim off the roots and chop up the whole onion, including the leaves, for a pungent addition to your salad, stir fry, or the cabbage slaw (see next page).

**Cilantro:** Cilantro is a great complement to the cabbage and green onions in the cabbage slaw.

**Strawberries or cherry tomatoes:** Finally! While most of you are receiving strawberries this week, a few of you will receive cherry tomatoes instead. We'll make sure that those who didn't receive strawberries this week receive them next week, and (hopefully, depending on size of tomato harvest) vice versa. You may find that some of the strawberries have seeds that protrude slightly from the fruit—this may be a varietal characteristic, but also partially caused by the dry weather we've had over the last 10 days during fruit maturation. We have found the flavor and texture of these berries to be superb! You may want to give the berries a rinse before eating, as there tends to be a bit of soil on them. The cherry tomatoes are a mix of Sun Gold and red cherry tomatoes.

**Sugar snap peas:** Sugar snap peas have sweet flesh with edible pods. These are great on salads or as a fresh snack, straight out of the bag. Remove the stem end and peel off the "string" that runs the length of the pea to minimize any fibrousness. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** We discovered that there are some shelling peas mixed in with the snap peas. We don't even grow shelling peas, so our seed must have been contaminated before it was shipped out to us... The pods of shelling peas are very fibrous and not good to eat, but the peas inside are super sweet and delicious. See the farm update on the left to learn how to distinguish the two.

**Red Russian kale:** Our favorite type of kale. We find this to be the most tender variety of kale, but more prone to wilting, which is why you will rarely see this in a grocery store. We bagged it in an attempt to mitigate this.

**Bulb fennel:** One of the more unusual offerings of our CSA, fennel has a flavor like licorice. Slice the bulb across the short dimension; cut lengthwise into 1/2" thick slices; toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper; and roast at 400°F for an hour, flipping the slices after 30 minutes. Sprinkle with parmesan before serving.

**Zucchini and summer squash (full shares only):** Ever tried zucchini crust pizza? It's a fun (and healthy) way to make a pizza crust. Google it for lots of recipe options.

**Snow peas (full shares only):** We hope you liked these last week and have an appetite for more. We want to try adding snow peas to our next batch of cabbage slaw. Try it!

**Kohlrabi (half shares only):** Kohlrabi has slightly sweet, crispy flesh that can be eaten fresh or added to a stir-fry. Be sure to peel off the outer, darker green layer before eating, as it is fibrous. The greens can be sautéed and eaten, too!

buying pre-shelled shelling peas. The pea seeds are sweet and tender, but they are formed inside a fibrous, nearly inedible pod. Snap peas, on the other hand, have been bred for sweetness and an edible pod. You don't usually remove the seeds from these; you just eat the whole thing.

As you go through your snap peas, you'll need to keep an eye out for shelling peas that may be mixed in. Here's how to tell the difference. Sugar snap peas are generally a bit shorter in length and more plump than the shelling peas. Sugar snap peas are often the same width from the front and side perspectives, whereas the shelling peas are more flattened. The color and texture of the pods are also a bit different—the shelling peas tend to be a bit darker and glossier than the snap peas. Lastly, when you attempt to shell the peas by pressing down on the "seam" of the pod with your thumbs, you'll find that the shelling peas pop open more easily.

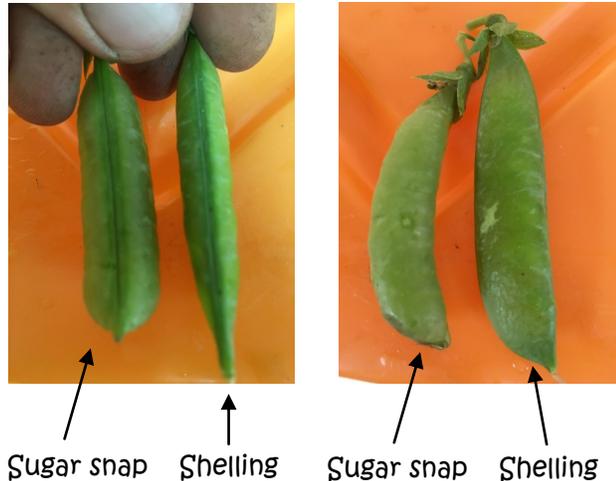
Until next week,

Dana

## On Deck

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

**Red beets — Cucumbers — Potatoes — Hot peppers — Basil**



## Karin's Cabbage Slaw

This has become a regular dish in our household. As with the broccoli salad from last week, it is "designed" to be a side dish, but we often get carried away and fill up on this stuff. We have presented the basic version of the recipe here, but in the past we have added other veggies, too, including carrots and bell peppers. I think snow peas might be a good addition, as well, though we haven't tried that yet. I'm giving you a doubled recipe that uses the whole head of cabbage, but it can certainly be halved, if you don't want so much. This recipe can also be made with other types of cabbage (green, red, savoy), which you will see in future boxes.

### Ingredients:

#### Dressing

- 1 cup oil
- 3/4 cup rice vinegar (can substitute apple cider vinegar)
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 3 tsp soy sauce

#### Slaw

- 1 head napa cabbage, thinly sliced (about 8-10 cups)
- 1 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 1/2 cup green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
- Sesame seeds for garnish

### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Spread out sliced almonds on a baking sheet and place in oven. Check almonds after 5 minutes and continue baking to desired brownness. Be careful, though, as they go from toasty brown to burnt pretty quickly.
2. Combine napa cabbage, green onions, and cilantro in a large bowl.
3. Add oil, vinegar, sugar, and soy sauce to a quart jar, and shake. Pour over the cabbage mixture and mix well.
4. Mix in toasted almonds before serving, and garnish with sesame seeds and more cilantro.