



# Red Hill Farm Member Handbook



## Welcome, Farm Member!

This handbook has been compiled to help orient you to the benefits of your farm membership as well as to serve as a guide to your responsibilities on the farm.

## Who grows my food?

Lilley is your head farmer. Year round she manages all aspects of running the farm and is joined by two seasonal workers in the spring through the CSA season. Additional help is provided by workshare members and volunteers.

- *We strive to be good stewards of the land by utilizing sustainable farming practices.*
- *We believe healthy soils are integral to healthy food and healthy people.*
- *We use compost, cover crops, and crop rotations to build soil fertility.*
- *We grow without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides.*
- *We encourage an ecosystem of native wildflowers, birds, and pollinators.*
- *We encourage a sense of place by reconnecting people with the land and with each other through community events on the farm.*

## What are my responsibilities as a member of Red Hill Farm?

The single most important thing you can do during the season is to read the newsletter, *The Red Hill Root*, and email updates. Email updates will inform you of upcoming events as well as what to anticipate in your share each week. The newsletter is a way to communicate general happenings on the farm and to share recipes as well as information pertaining to sustainable farming practices. You are invited to submit recipes, farm poetry, etc. to Lilley at [mlilley@osfphila.org](mailto:mlilley@osfphila.org). Old *ROOT* newsletters can be viewed on our website <http://www.osfphila.org/red/what>.



- **Park in the designated parking area** below the two sheds at the end of the driveway. *Do not park on grass, in driveways, or in front of the sheds or barn.* We will be working while you pick up your share and need access to these areas. If there is not enough room for all members to park at the farm during special events, the convent parking lot is available to members. If you have special needs/limited mobility, please let us know so we can make arrangements for you to park closer to the barn.
- **Parents are expected to know where their children are at all times and to keep them away from dangerous areas.** Tool sheds and the tractor area of the barn are off limits to children at all times. Hoop houses are off limits to children unless accompanied by a farmer or adult.



## How do I pick up my farm share?

The share room is located immediately inside the barn doors. Simply sign in, reference the large white board, and gather the designated amounts of each vegetable. Check the white board for items available in the U-Pick garden and head out to the field.

Share pick-up responsibilities include:

- **Sign in on the sign-in sheet each week.** The total harvest each day is equally divided among the members picking up so it is important to stick to your day. Share items and amounts will be posted on a large board as well as on each bin so you know how much of each crop to take. U-Pick quantities are also listed on the board. A farmer will be in or near the share room to help answer questions, restock bins, and sell off-farm products.
- **Bring your own bags/containers.** Paper, plastic, and cloth all work great or even a box will do for picking up your produce. If you have an abundance of bags at home, feel free to bring them for other members to use. We don't supply bags. U-Pick pint/quart containers are provided but we ask that you transfer items to a bag so other members can reuse them. If you take them home by accident, just bring them with you the next week. Some members like to bring a cooler to keep vegetables cool and crisp. Others bring a vase to fill with water for flowers.
- **Pick up only on your designated days between the hours of 1 P.M. – 7 P.M.** In the event that you are unable to pick up on your scheduled day, we invite you to find someone else to pick up your share for the week. If you are unable to find someone, it is not necessary to contact us. Your share will simply be donated to one of our local food pantries. Give yourself plenty of time for U-Pick and remember that the farmer locks the farm up at 7 P.M.



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**NO SMOKING!** Tobacco Mosaic Virus is a prolific fungal disease that affects tomato plants and can wipe out an entire crop. It is transferred by physical contact of tobacco residue with a wound on the plant. Wounds happen naturally and frequently when harvesting or brushing up against plants. Smoking is not permitted anywhere (including the parking lot) on the farm. **Smokers, WASH YOUR HANDS before entering the U-Pick area.**

## Additional share pick-up responsibilities:

- **If you share a farm share, pick up your share in its entirety at one time.** You may not leave half a share in the share room for your partner to pick up. Some people come together to split the share; others alternate weeks. It is your responsibility to communicate with your share partner in regard to pick up scheduling. If you are the primary shareholder, please remember to relay any information that you may receive throughout the year to your share partner.
- **Pick only in the designated U-Pick areas and only the designated amounts.** U-Pick crops are all in one area behind the barn near the Children's Garden. When a crop is ready to harvest, it will have a white stake and label in front of it. U-Pick crops and quantities will be posted in the share room on the white board. Please walk carefully in the aisles when harvesting U-Pick crops. Please use scissors/clippers for cutting the stems to avoid injuring the plants and pick evenly from many plants rather than taking a lot from one plant.



## What else is in the share room for me?

- **Surplus Shelf:** If there is more produce in a share than you need or particular crops that you dislike, place them on the Surplus Shelf. Feel free to take items you'd like from this shelf as well. Any surplus that is left at the end of the day is donated to local food pantries.
- **Off-Farm Products:** Local products such as meat, dairy, and fruit are available for purchase in the barn. Please find the farmer in charge of the share room to make your purchase.
- **First Aid Kit:** Bees and other stinging insects help pollinate. If you locate a nest or notice aggressive behavior, let us know. There is a first-aid kit with sting supplies as well as bandages in the barn. Please ask a farmer for help if needed.



## How do I learn about farm events and programs?

Joanne Rosenbaum, our farm education coordinator, is responsible for developing and organizing member education, events, and community outreach including school tours.

Joanne may be reached at (610) 558-5396 or [rosenbaum@osfphila.org](mailto:rosenbaum@osfphila.org).

- **Events:** You will receive an event listing at the beginning of each season. We ask that you RSVP for each event so we can plan accordingly.
- **Children's Garden:** This little garden next to the sand pit and shade tarps contains a variety of raised beds among the flowers that are devoted to children's educational activities. A job board will be posted in the garden or the share room to let your children know what garden chores need to be completed. Upcoming garden education sessions and volunteer opportunities will also be listed.
- **School Tours:** The farm is currently working with an underserved school in Chester through classroom sessions and tours at the farm. *If you know of any local schools that would be interested in a tour, please contact Joanne.*

## How do I volunteer?

If you are interested in setting up a volunteer shift to weed in the fields, please contact the farm office at (610) 558-6799. If you would like to volunteer with our farm education program or assist with farm events, please contact the farm education office at (610) 558-5396. We enjoy connecting and sharing the farm with you through the joys of farm work done together.



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## Vegetable Storage Basics

*The following are general tips for storing the vegetables you will receive throughout the season. There are many techniques; this is merely one way to guide you to keep your farm goodies delicious.*

**Leafy Greens:** (*lettuces, salad mix, arugula, spinach, kales, collards, Asian greens, etc.*) These are best eaten within a week. To maintain their succulent nature before they sit upon your dinner plate, store them in plastic bags or containers within your fridge. This will help keep the moisture in their cells so you will be eating a vibrant green life source.

**Cabbage:** Use within two weeks. Keep unwashed inside the refrigerator.

**Roots:** (*carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, parsnips*) Remove tops (see Leafy Greens for storage of tops). Place roots in plastic bag, closed container, or refrigerator compartment to maintain moisture for storage up to two weeks.

**Onions, Garlic, Shallots, and Potatoes:** Put in a well ventilated area, ideally around 40-50 degrees. Check them periodically for sprouting or softness. Because of our latitude, we only grow hard-neck garlic which does not store as long as the typical store-bought soft-neck garlic. Use garlic within four months. The onions, shallots, and potatoes may store up to six to eight months.

**Tomatoes, Eggplants:** Store on countertop and use within two weeks. Do not refrigerate unless necessary to prevent extras from ripening further.

**Peppers:** These are best used within a week. Store unwashed peppers in the refrigerator. No bag is necessary.

**Cucumbers:** Use as soon as possible! They will hold their crispness in the fridge but the flavor diminishes quickly. Eat or pickle as soon as possible or enjoy cucumbers sliced into cold water for a refreshing drink.

**Sweet Corn:** Eat as soon as possible! The moment they are harvested, sweet corn's sugars begin turning to starches. To slow the process down, store them with husks on in the refrigerator for up to two days or cut the kernels off the cob and freeze for future use (no need to blanch).

**Broccoli, Romanesco, Cauliflower, Summer Squash:** These are best eaten within a week. Store in a plastic bag or container inside the refrigerator.

**Herbs:** Use fresh herbs within a week. Store in a little water on the counter or in a plastic bag in the door of your refrigerator. Dry or freeze herbs for use later.

**Winter Squash:** Store in a dry well ventilated area, ideally around 50 degrees. Winter squashes are still alive and continue to sweeten with time. They may be stored up to six to eight months. Keep an eye on them and eat them if they start to go soft. You can also puree and freeze the soft ones for future use.