



THE RED HILL ROOT



The Seasonal Weekly Newsletter for Members of the Red Hill Farm CSA, Aston, PA

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Farm News



Peeled Eyes!! (as in “keep them peeled”)—We will be sending a mailing out in the coming weeks. It will contain your receipt for payment, off-farm product info/order forms, a flyer about our plant sale/orientation in May (the first event of the season!), etc. Keep your eyes peeled. Thanks!

New Email—Our farmer Aby is now Aby Ollila. Her new email address is aollila@osfphila.org.

Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick

Here’s an update on our winter work. All of our seeds are ordered, and our onion plants have just started to sprout in our greenhouse. Today we seeded our early spring cabbage in the greenhouse. We still have supply orders to make, such as drip tape for irrigation, a small amount of plastic mulch for weed suppression/moisture control, some tools, etc. We have been doing a little bit of work in the tunnels at the farm, clearing out old plants, weeding, etc. We will be composting in there soon as well. We have begun interviewing candidates for our two seasonal positions; many great prospects... we'll keep you posted!

The biggest news since we last wrote of course, were the 2 huge snowstorms we had!



This is good cover for the ground and will result in ample moisture in the spring, but it prevents us from starting some of the outdoor work we'd like to be doing: pruning berries, installing the secondary fence, spreading compost, etc.

We'd like to get going on these projects so we can begin prepping beds and direct-seeding near the end of March or beginning of April. But if the ground is too wet, it's too wet. We don't want to damage our soils by working the beds before they've dried out enough. Here's hoping we don't have any more two-foot snowfalls until next winter! (Above: [Punxsutawney Phil](#) predicting 6 more weeks...)

Tidbits



Workshops at Our Sister CSA, Westtown—Sally & Jim Hammerman of *IMBY Misty Hollow CSA* are offering a



range of workshops this year, starting in early April. There are 3 “What is it, What do I do With it?” workshops (the “3 Ws”) focusing on produce items available seasonally (spring, summer, fall) & how to cook them—great for beginners to fresh, local produce!

There are also workshops on preserving foods (canning, drying), making flavored vinegars & oils, making herbal home remedies, making fresh pizza, and two holiday workshops: “Gifts from the Garden” and “Gingerbread House in the Garden.” Sound interesting? Call the Hammermans at **610-455-0981** or email them for more information at IMBYmistyhollow@mac.com.

Deeply Rooted—the Book—As Mira notes, Lisa Hamilton, who spoke at PASA’s convention earlier this month, has published *Deeply Rooted—Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness* (that’s Red Hill too—we’re unconventional in this sense!). The nonfiction narrative tells the tale of 3 different farmers in 3 different parts of the country, focusing on the character of their novel contributions to farming and food practices. For info, a slide show, and more, see [Lisa’s website here](#).

Farm Art—An old friend, a folklorist, used to tell me, “*Art ain’t all paint!*” At that time,



“field patterns” used by farmers (ie, their patterns of plowing, planting, or mowing) were considered an expressive if radical form of vernacular art. A newer development in farm-art is found in Japan, where rice of different colors is planted so that it forms recognizable images when viewed

from the proper perspective. (In fact, the use of mathematical perspective is one of the most remarkable aspects of this field art.) For more examples & info, [see here](#). Thanks to Aby for sending this link!



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Recipes Using Local Winter Produce



Dandelions w/ Peppers & Goat Cheese—dandelion greens currently are available in stores (and soon enough in your unsprayed yard!)—serves 6

- ❖ 3 tbsp lemon juice
- ❖ 3 tbsp minced shallots
- ❖ 1/3 cup olive oil
- ❖ 1 large red bell pepper [or preferably some sweet red pepper you roasted/fried & froze last summer!—remember to “shop your freezer”!]
- ❖ 2 bunches dandelion greens, stems trimmed off & leaves torn
- ❖ 5 oz plain soft goat cheese mixed w/ 2 tsp honey & crumbled

Combine lemon juice & shallots in small bowl; gradually whisk in oil & season w/ salt/pepper. Char bell pepper [if using a fresh pepper] directly over gas flame or in



broiler till blackened on all sides. Enclose in paper bag 10 min. Peel, seed, & cut pepper in thin strips. Toss greens & peppers in large bowl w/ dressing to coat. Sprinkle w/ salt, pepper, & goat cheese. ([source](#))

Green Potatoes for St. Patty's Day—6 servings

- ❖ 1 large bunch Italian parsley, stems removed
- ❖ 1/3 cup cold water
- ❖ large pinch salt
- ❖ 1½ cups (or more) whole milk
- ❖ 4 large green onions, minced
- ❖ 2½ lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, scrubbed
- ❖ ½ cup (1 stick) butter

Cook parsley in saucepan of boiling salted water 1 min. Drain. Immediately transfer parsley to blender, add 1/3 cup cold water & pinch of salt. Blend till very smooth. Combine milk & onions in medium saucepan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer till onions are tender, ~5 min. Put potatoes in large pot of salted water. Bring to boil; reduce heat to medium, cover & cook till potatoes are tender, ~35 min. Drain. Return potatoes to pot. Add butter, parsley purée, & hot milk mix. Mash potatoes w/ skin till smooth. ([source](#))

Parsnip Soup w/ Corned Beef and Cabbage—Another St. Patty's Day specialty—makes 2-4 servings

- ❖ 3 slices cooked corned beef, sliced 1/8th-inch thick (trim fat off, chop fat, and reserve 3 tbsp)
- ❖ 2 Turkish bay leaves
- ❖ 2 large parsnips, peeled, coarsely chopped
- ❖ 2 cups chopped onions
- ❖ 3 cups or more low-salt chicken broth
- ❖ 3 large Savoy [or other] cabbage leaves, center ribs removed
- ❖ ¼ cup heavy cream

Sauté 2 tbsp corned beef fat & bay leaves in saucepan on medium-high till fat renders [melts], ~2 min. Stir in onions & parsnips, add 3 cups broth, cover, & simmer till parsnips are tender, ~10 min. Meanwhile, cut cabbage & corned beef slices crosswise into very thin strips. Melt 1 tbsp fat in skillet on medium-high. Add cabbage & corned beef. Season w/ salt/pepper. Toss till cabbage wilts, ~3 min. Working in batches, purée soup w/ bay leaves & cream in blender till smooth. Return to same pan. Rewarm soup, thinning w/ more broth if necessary. Ladle into bowls; mound corned beef & cabbage in middle. ([source](#))

Vegetarian “Beef” & Guinness Stew—If you're gluten-sensitive, substitute sautéed tofu strips for seitan.

- ❖ ~14oz seitan [or tofu] cut in thin strips
- ❖ 2 tbsp Tamari soy sauce
- ❖ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 tbsp steak sauce
- ❖ 3 tbsp butter or margarine
- ❖ 1 onion & 3 ribs celery, diced
- ❖ 2 carrots, chopped
- ❖ 2 potatoes, chopped in 1" pieces
- ❖ 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ❖ two 12-oz bottles Guinness Stout OR one bottle & 1½ cups veggie broth
- ❖ 2 tbsp flour
- ❖ 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- ❖ 1 tsp brown sugar (optional) & salt/pepper to taste

Sauté seitan [or tofu] in olive oil & soy sauce till slightly browned, ~5 min. Reduce heat, add steak sauce & stir to coat seitan. Remove from heat & set aside. In large pot, sauté onions, celery, carrots, potatoes, & garlic in butter for 3-5 min, till onions slightly soft. Reduce heat & add Guinness; stir gently to combine. Add flour, thyme, sugar, salt, pepper & stir well. Add seitan & allow stew to simmer till Guinness reduces & stew thickens, ~40-50 min. ([source](#)) **NOTE:** Guinness is not vegan & should be avoided by celiacs. [For gluten-free beer see here.](#)