



# THE RED HILL ROOT



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

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## Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick



We've had a great week on the farm. A lot of the same old things: seeding, planting, weeding, etc. And a lot of pretty lovely harvests.

Aby is back, and we're happy to see her! And her dog, Buda, who keeps the groundhogs at bay a bit. They have become particularly bold... it's been almost circus-like with them knocking over traps and climbing on top of them!

Surprisingly, many of our fall crops are already started in the greenhouse or planted in the fields by this time of year. Even in mid-June, or earlier... our minds are on the fall cabbages, broccolis, cauliflowers, etc. We are constantly having to plan ahead and figure out what beds in what fields are going to be open. It's both fun, to be thinking about what's on the horizon, and overwhelming b/c we're still dealing with spring and summer crops too.

See you all next week!

## Correct Way to Cut Herbs! Please Read!



*If you're still uncertain how to harvest, just ask one of the farmers!*

**Basil:** "Always cut basil by taking off stem tops, down to an intersection of new leaves. This will indicate to the plant to start growing the tiny new leaves into branches of more leaves." ([source](#))

**Parsley:** "Harvest parsley leaves any time during the growing season; cut them off at the base of the plant. Leaves should always be picked from the outside, allowing new leaves to grow from the middle of the plant." ([source](#)—also has tips on growing, storing, etc.)

**Coriander (Cilantro):** You can pick stems from the plant anytime after it's at least 6" high.



When a central stem w/ more feathery fronds and a flower head begins to grow from the center, cut that off—it too can be used in cooking, and you'll keep the plant going a little longer. ([source](#))

**Lavender:** Harvest flowers just as they open; preserve by drying. Wrap several flower stems together with rubber bands and hang upside down, they should dry in ~2 weeks depending on the humidity level. You also can cut & use lavender stems w/ leaves in cooking (see member-contributed recipes in the next *Root!*). ([source](#))

**Thyme:** Both leaves and flowers can be cut "anytime" (ooh, did I make a pun?!) in amounts needed. It regrows well. It's used in salads as garnishes and as flavoring for poultry, fish, beef, lamb, soups, herb butters, vinegars, beans and vegetables. ([source](#))



**Sage:** Pinch off leaves as needed; be sure to leave at least half the plant there, or it will stop growing. Stop pinching in early fall so plant can harden off for winter. ([source](#))

**Rosemary:** You can pinch off individual leaves (which look like needles) or cut small bits from tops of branches. Do not cut any parts that look woody, as it damages the plant. ([source](#))

**Oregano:** Pinch off individual leaves or cut short bits of stem tops. Cut back (and use) stem tops when they begin to flower; this keeps the plant growing. ([source](#))



**Dill:** Snip off feathery leaves or young flower heads for use in soups or salads. For pickling, cut whole stalks when plant is more mature. If the flower dries on the plant, gather mature seeds for

planting or drying. ([source](#))

**Chives:** Cut tips of leaves, or cut individual leaves from the base. You can freeze chopped chives, or here are other ways to preserve: "To dry, tie them in small bunches and hang them upside down in a warm, dry, dark place. Do not crush or cut them until ready to use. Store the stem whole if possible. If harvested with the flower, chives can be stored whole in white vinegar to make a pretty, light lavender-colored vinegar for gifts. Another storage method is to alternately layer 1" of kosher salt and with 1" of chives in a glass jar. Pack down each layer with a spoon. Use these chives in any dish, just as you would fresh chives. They're said to be especially good in soups. As an added bonus, the brine can also be used to flavor soups and other dishes." ([source](#))



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**Garlic Scape Pesto**—Red Hill member *Sue Stark* sent this & the next recipe for pasta along. Thanks Sue!

- ❖ 1/3 cup walnuts
- ❖ ¾ cup olive oil
- ❖ ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- ❖ salt & black pepper to taste
- ❖ 1 cup garlic scapes, top flowery part removed (the pointy part above the bulge [I didn't remove mine, & it was fine—ed.]), cut in ¼ in. slices

Place scapes & nuts in bowl of a food processor; whiz till



well combined & mostly smooth. Drizzle in oil; process till integrated. Scoop pesto out of processor into mixing bowl. Add cheese, salt/pepper to taste.

Makes ~6 oz of pesto. Keeps for

a week in an air-tight container in fridge. For ½ pound short pasta such as penne, add about 2 tablespoons of pesto to cooked pasta and stir until pasta is well coated.

[We'd use more at my house!—ed.] ([source](#))

**Pasta w/ Peas, Prosciutto, & Lettuce**—4 servings. This is part of Mark Bittman's "meat as a garnish" campaign.

- ❖ 3 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 2-3 oz thinly sliced prosciutto, cut crosswise into ½ in. strips
- ❖ 1 lb pasta
- ❖ 2 tbsp butter
- ❖ 1 shallot, minced [or substitute garlic to taste]
- ❖ 2 cups peas, fresh or frozen [or cross-sliced snow peas]
- ❖ 1 head Bibb or Boston lettuce (~6 oz), cored & leaves cut in ¾ in. slices
- ❖ ½ cup chicken, veggie stock, or white wine
- ❖ 1 cup grated parmesan [or pecorino] cheese

Bring large pot of water to boil & salt it. Put 1 tbsp oil in small skillet on medium-high. Add prosciutto & cook, turning occasionally, till crisp, ~4-5 min; set aside. Add pasta to boiling water & cook till just tender; drain, reserving some cooking



water. Melt butter w/ 2 tbsp oil in large skillet on medium. Add shallot, salt/pepper to taste; cook till shallot softens, ~5 min. Add peas, lettuce, & stock & cook till peas are bright green & lettuce wilted, ~5 min. Add pasta to pan & cook/stir till everything is heated thru; add extra liquid if needed. Toss w/ cheese and serve. ([source](#))

**Mystery Veg of the Week!—What's Fennel?**—Fennel



(aka Florence Fennel or Finocchio) is a flattened, bulb-like veggie w/ layers like an onion. To prepare, cut off stalks from the top of the fennel (you can save the feathery parts to chop & put in sauces), & trim off root end. Fennel is good raw or cooked. To eat raw, slice bulb in half vertically, cut out core, & slice crosswise,

separating layers like an onion. As you see in photo, fennel can also be grilled or roasted till soft & fragrant, or it can be stewed w/ other veggies (squash, tomatoes, etc). For several recipes for roasting fennel/squash, [see here](#).

**Member-Inspired Cooking Blog!**—Red Hill member *Gina Shatney* shares a share w/ a friend who's started a cooking blog, featuring our produce, called *One Season at a Time*—[see here](#). Fabulous recipes that track our harvest! Check out that *Zucchini-Lasagna Tart*--yummy!

**Fennel & Orange Salad for 2**—sent by *Jeanne Wordley*

- ❖ 1 fennel bulb
- ❖ 1 orange
- ❖ 1 scallion
- ❖ 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ❖ 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Use knife to cut peel & outer white membrane from orange, then thinly slice. Put orange slices & any juice produced in shallow bowl. Thinly slice fennel bulb & stem pieces, add to orange slices, & mix. Stir together oil, lemon juice, salt/pepper to taste, pour over salad, toss, top w/ thinly sliced scallions, & serve. *Thanks Jeanne!*

**Escarole & Beans**—*Mira* sent this—*thank you!* Serves 4.

- ❖ 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- ❖ 2 large heads escarole, cleaned & chopped
- ❖ ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- ❖ 1 clove garlic, minced



- ❖ 2 (16 oz) cans cannellini beans, undrained

- ❖ 3 sprigs parsley, chopped

Heat 2 tbsp oil in large skillet on medium. Toss in escarole & turn to coat w/ oil. Season to taste w/ salt/pepper/red pepper. Cook, stirring a bit, ~10 min, till tender. In separate skillet, heat 1 tbsp oil on medium. Stir in garlic. Pour in beans w/ juices & simmer till creamy, ~10 min. Stir in escarole & parsley & simmer 10 min. ([source](#))