



# THE RED HILL ROOT



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

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## Farm News



**Red Hill Farm Shirts & Bags!**—Red Hill Farm has T-shirts and bags for sale! Brown T-shirts (made with organic and/or recycled materials!) and really nice red zippered tote bags, both with an image that includes the Children's Garden, and other farm highlights. If we run out of your size, we will be making additional orders throughout the season. [Melinda says "I bought a shirt & have gotten lots of compliments on it!"] T-shirts: \$15; Bags: \$20. Cash or check, purchase during pick-up!

## Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick



I thought it would be cool to feature some of the heirloom tomatoes we're growing. Some people have been asking what different varieties are, and been having tastings at home. Here's some more information about the heirlooms this year.



**Green Zebra:** A favorite of Alice Waters, of Chez Panisse, this unusual green and yellow striped tomato has that old-fashioned tomato flavor, sweet with a little zing too! (see photo at left)

**Persimmon:** Nice peachy tomato, it's rumored to have been grown by Thomas Jefferson. This large tomato is very flavorful and juicy. One of our favorites this season!



Above, left: *Persimmon*; above, right: *Zapotec Pleated*

**Zapotec Pleated:** These rare pleated tomatoes can be stuffed and baked like a pepper, or eaten raw.

**Virginia Sweets:** Stunningly beautiful and enormous, one of best tasting, sweet and rich flavor. Similar in appearance to Striped German tomatoes.



Above, left: *Virginia Sweets*; above, right: *Speckled Roman*

**Speckled Roman:** Paste tomato with orange stripes running down the length of the fruit. Thick and meaty, with a nice rich flavor.

## Tidbits

**Free Workshops at Selene Co-op in Media!**—Selene Co-op (305 West State St., Media, 19063; phone 610-566-1137; email: [selenecoop@verizon.net](mailto:selenecoop@verizon.net)) is sponsoring two workshops on two consecutive Saturdays. First is a **workshop in lacto-fermenting vegetables**, offered by Lydia of "Divine Health," a Co-op member and blogger ([www.divinehealthfromtheinsideout.com](http://www.divinehealthfromtheinsideout.com)). This is on

**Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> August, at the shop at 11:00 a.m.**



Learn to make sauerkraut, bread & butter pickles, ginger carrots, and more! Supplies are available for purchase at the Co-op. Lacto-fermentation is an

age-old process in which whey—filled with nutritious, beneficial, bioactive compounds—is used to ferment foods cleanly at room temperature; hence the foods retain more nutrients than if they had been canned in a hot-water bath. Plus the vegetables keep all their bright color and look beautiful in their glass jars! For lacto-fermentation, [see here](#). (above: [photo credit](#))

On **Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup>**, also at 11:00 a.m., Lydia will run a **workshop on kombucha-brewing at the Co-op**. Commercial kombucha has been less available of late;



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hence if you like kombucha, come learn to make your own! (Again, jars & supplies will be available at the Co-op.) **What, you may be asking, is kombucha?** It's a very healthful fermented tea made with a mix of yeast and beneficial bacteria. The culture that forms in the brewing process is sometimes referred to as a "mushroom" because of its mushroom shape, though it's not biologically related to mushrooms. The tea is considered a probiotic substance. For more info, [see here](#).

**Luisa Weiss's Tomatoes Filled with Rice**—This recipe was sent in by Heather Karlheim—*thanks Heather!*

- ❖ 4 large, good-tasting tomatoes
- ❖ 1 small yellow onion, diced
- ❖ olive oil
- ❖ 1/3 cup Arborio rice
- ❖ 1/3 cup water
- ❖ 5 fresh basil leaves
- ❖ salt
- ❖ breadcrumbs (homemade if possible)
- ❖ 2 medium, Yukon Gold potatoes, sliced 1/4-in. thin

Preheat oven to 350. Cut tops off tomatoes. Hold them over bowl & scoop out insides—flesh, seeds, juice—into the bowl. Pick the fleshy parts of the tomato out of the bowl & chop them, then return to bowl w/ juice & seeds. In medium saucepan, warm a glug of olive oil on medium. Add onion & cook, stirring often, till soft & translucent. Add rice & continue to cook, stirring, ~1-2 min. Add tomato flesh, juice, & seeds (it may look like a lot but add it all) & water. Tear basil leaves in small pieces & add, along w/ salt/pepper to taste. Reduce heat slightly, cover pot, & simmer 10 min. Adjust seasoning if needed. Spoon par-cooked rice mix into tomato shells. Top w/ sprinkling of bread crumbs. Arrange potato slices around tomatoes in pan. (Flip & rub potato slices a bit to be sure each is coated w/ oil.) Bake for 1 hr, 15 min. Tomatoes should shrivel a bit & release some juices, and potatoes cook thru. Cool ~15 min before eating, so tomato juices have time to settle. Makes 4 servings. Enjoy!

**Herbal Simple-Syrup Soda!**—This is *Mira's recipe!*

- ❖ 1 cup sugar
- ❖ 1 cup water
- ❖ 1 cup chopped herb of your choice (Mira made soda w/ holy basil, w/ lemon grass, & w/ chocolate mint, but you can experiment!)

For simple syrup, heat the sugar, water, & the cup of chopped herb in a pan, stir it, bring to a boil. Then remove from heat, keep covered 30 min, strain & refrigerate. The

herb-infused simple syrup keeps in fridge up to 2 weeks. To make sodas, mix 1-2 spoonfuls of syrup to taste w/ water, seltzer, club soda, or other beverage of your choice!

**Vegetable Lasagna**—serves 8

- ❖ 2 tsp olive oil
- ❖ 3 cups eggplant, unpeeled & diced
- ❖ 3/4 cup chopped onion
- ❖ 1 tsp minced garlic
- ❖ ~1½ lbs (or a bit more) tomatoes, chopped well, with juice (equivalent of 28 oz canned tomatoes)
- ❖ 1/4 tsp salt, divided
- ❖ 1/2 tsp sugar
- ❖ 1 tbsp chopped basil (or 1/4 tsp dried)
- ❖ 1 lb carrots, peeled & shredded
- ❖ 10 oz frozen spinach, thawed & drained (or substitute par-steamed chopped chard, kale, etc)
- ❖ 15 oz part-skim ricotta cheese
- ❖ 1 cup shredded, part-skim mozzarella cheese
- ❖ 1 large egg, beaten
- ❖ 1 pinch nutmeg
- ❖ 9 lasagna noodles, cooked
- ❖ 2 tbsp grated parmesan or pecorino cheese

Heat oil on medium-high in nonstick skillet. Add onions, eggplant, & garlic; cook, stirring, 5 min. Stir in tomatoes, 1 tsp salt [or to taste], sugar, & basil. Bring to boil; reduce heat to low, cover & simmer till eggplant is tender, 20 min. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375. Bring 2 qts water to boil in large saucepan. Add carrots & cook 1 min; drain. Combine & mix carrots, spinach, ricotta, mozzarella, egg, 1/4 tsp salt, & nutmeg in large bowl. Spoon 1 1/4 cups tomato sauce into 9x13 baking dish. Top w/ 3 lasagna noodles & half the spinach mix, 3 more noodles & 1 3/4 cups tomato sauce, then remaining spinach & noodles. Top w/ remaining tomato sauce. Sprinkle w/ parmesan & bake uncovered 30-40 min, till hot. ([source](#))

**Ground-Cherry Fruit Salad**—so yummy! I just made this up b/c I had grapes to use & I love the unusual taste of ground cherries.

- ❖ 1 pint husked ground cherries, washed
- ❖ 1 pint grapes
- ❖ several sliced bananas
- ❖ any other fruit you feel like adding!
- ❖ ~5 oz thick Greek-style yogurt
- ❖ sugar or honey to taste

Mix everything together. Adjust amounts of yogurt, fruit, sugar, whatever, to taste. EAT!!

And see [this recipe](#) for [vegan ground-cherry cupcake-pies!](#)