



THE RED HILL ROOT



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

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Farm News



Upcoming Food Demo on Sat. Aug. 7th at 3 p.m.—We have an upcoming **Indian Cooking Demo** on Sat., Aug. 7th, at 3 p.m.! Run by members Rahul and Shital, it gives you tips for learning to cook scrumptious ethnic specialties using our Farm produce! Rahul and Shital's demo last year was fabulous; the food was so rich and delicious. See you there! **Thank you Rahul & Shital!**

Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick



“We hope you are all enjoying the U-Pick garden this year; we have been trying to put in extra time to stay better on top of the weeds and we think with all the flowers coming in, it's quite smashing right now! It has been really hot, so if you're not



bringing a container with water for your flowers, you're probably finding they aren't holding up that well. In this heat, even if you are, they might be wilting sooner than they would. Get them in water, and back home as soon as possible. They'll do better in AC, for those of you that use it. (Above, *Amy & Aby in the U-Pick*; photo by Mira)

And we're so happy for how the cherry tomatoes are coming in also; last year with all the rains, we didn't get much of a harvest out of them. I have experimented with oven-dried cherry tomatoes (and regular tomatoes) and they're quite delicious. We're even growing one cherry tomato that is known for being a good sun-dried (or oven-dried) variety... the *Principe Borghese*. Those are the shorter plants, with a more oval red cherry tomato. You can google instructions for how to oven-dry your maters, or better yet, build a solar dehydrator!

The Children's Garden needs a little more help. The soil there is not very good so we have a lot of weed pressure and the plants we put in aren't necessarily thriving. We are



hoping to amend the soil this fall or next spring, and get better control of that garden. But when I was sitting there the other day, I saw 4 gold finches and tons of pollinators enjoying the flowering plants in there which made me so happy. Although it is a little unkempt, it is truly a beneficial habitat to have on the farm to attract a diversity of wildlife. And slowly slowly slowly, the beans are climbing up the teepee. I never seem to get the thick mat of beans I'm going for, but I'm keepin' the faith. See you next week!” (Mira's photos of light and dark swallowtails)

[For directions on drying tomatoes in a dehydrator, [see here](#)—you also need to check specific instructions on your dehydrator; to oven-dry tomatoes, see [here](#) or [here](#) or [here](#). [Here's a simple solar oven](#) kids can build from a pizza box; [here are instructions](#) for a slightly more complex solar oven. Finally, [here's a video](#) showing how to build a cardboard solar cooker. If none of these appeal to you, google your own! Go green!]

Tidbits

Canning Salsa—Member *Gina Shatney* kindly sent along these instructions for the correct way to can salsa, should you be so inclined. It's important to use these directions if you're going to use hot-water-bath canning, as salsa combines a number of low-acid foods with high-acid tomatoes (and low-acid foods usually need a pressure-canner to be put up safely). So the trick here is to use the right proportion of high-acid tomatoes to other, lower-acid ingredients to ensure your safety with hot-water canning. Here are the instructions in PDF format:

<http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/B3570.PDF>
Thanks Gina!!

Pennsylvania Wheat—It's hard to imagine in today's oh-so-hot climate, but August 1st was the “first harvest” (aka Lammas) in older North Europe & America! Generally



Farmers: Abygail Ollila and Mira Kilpatrick, aollila@osfphila.org
Newsletter writer/editor: Melinda B. Parsons, m.boydp@gmail.com
Newsletter Archive: <http://www.osfphila.org/red/news>
Red Hill Farm, 609 Convent Road, Aston, PA, 19014 (610) 558-6799



grains—*wheat and barley*—were harvested first. “Second harvest” was at the end of the grain season at Autumn Equinox; it often included grapes & was sometimes called Harvest Home or the Ingathering. For more, see *Chambers’ Book of Days*, 1869, [here](#) and [here](#).

Pennsylvania wheat was long a staple crop here (e.g., it was grown at what’s now Tyler Arboretum), but after the Erie Canal was built, it was cheaper to grow wheat in the Midwest & ship it East by barge & railroad. For some history of PA wheat, see [here](#). Today there’s a renaissance of grain-growing in PA—e.g., there’s organic *Daisy Flour* near Lancaster; see [here](#). And you can buy Daisy Flour online! Another source for PA grain is the *Mill at Anselma*, near Chester Springs: [see here](#).

Sicilian Eggplant Caponata—a great Italian dip/spread!

- ❖ 1 large eggplant
- ❖ olive oil for frying
- ❖ 2 medium onions, chopped
- ❖ 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ❖ 3 celery stalks, chopped
- ❖ 1 lb or slightly more chopped tomatoes
- ❖ 10 brined green olives, pitted & quartered
- ❖ 3 tbsp pine nuts
- ❖ ¼ cup largish capers
- ❖ ¼ cup wine vinegar
- ❖ 2 tbsp [or to taste] sugar

Wash eggplant; do not peel. Cut in 1-in. cubes, season w/ salt/pepper, & fry in heated oil till tender. Add garlic, celery, tomatoes, & olives. Cook slowly for 10 min. Add eggplant, pine nuts, & capers. Heat vinegar, stir in sugar, & add to veggie mix. Season to taste w/ salt/pepper. Cook 5 min. longer. Serve chilled or at room temp as appetizer or relish. ([source](#))

Curry of Eggplant and Peas—serves 4

- ❖ 1 large eggplant, at least 1 lb.
- ❖ 1 large russet potato
- ❖ ½ onion [or more to taste]
- ❖ 3 tbsp butter or ghee [clarified butter] or oil
- ❖ ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ❖ 1 tsp powdered turmeric
- ❖ ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ❖ ½ tsp mustard seeds
- ❖ 1 cup water
- ❖ 1 ½ cups shelled fresh peas [or frozen]
- ❖ ½ cup yogurt [drained or Greek would be good]

Slice unpeeled eggplant in ¾-in. thick slices. Salt slices heavily & set aside for at least ½ hr. Excess water will

work its way out of eggplant. Peel & cube potato & chop onion. Rinse eggplant slices quickly & press out water. Cut into large cubes. Heat butter or oil in large skillet & add ¼ tsp salt & all spices. When they’re hot, stir in onion & potatoes, toss a bit, then add water & cover tightly. After ~20 min, remove cover, add eggplant, peas, & yogurt & stir well. Continue simmering for another 10-15 min, stirring often. (Anna Thomas, *Vegetarian Epicure*)

Baba Ghanoush—yummy Middle Eastern eggplant dip!

- ❖ 1 eggplant
- ❖ ¼ cup lemon juice
- ❖ ¼ cup sesame tahini (available at markets)
- ❖ 2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted
- ❖ 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ❖ salt/pepper to taste
- ❖ 1½ tbsp olive oil

Preheat oven to 400. Lightly grease baking pan. Put eggplant in pan, pricking its skin w/ fork in several places (to let steam escape). Roast eggplant for 30-40 min, turning occasionally, till soft. Remove from oven, let cool, & scrape flesh out of skin, discarding skin. Put eggplant, lemon juice, tahini, sesame seeds, & garlic in blender or food processor & purée. Season w/ salt/pepper. Transfer to serving bowl & slowly mix in oil. Refrigerate 3 hrs. before serving w/ pita bread wedges or sliced veggies. ([source](#))

Barbara Kafka’s Moroccan Tomato Soup, Revised—

serves 4; feel free to multiply & freeze some—you’ll thank yourself this fall or winter!

- ❖ 5 garlic cloves, minced
- ❖ 2½ tsp sweet paprika
- ❖ 1½ tsp ground cumin
- ❖ large pinch cayenne pepper
- ❖ 4 tsp olive oil
- ❖ 2¼ lbs tomatoes, cut in 1-in. pieces
- ❖ ¼ cup packed chopped cilantro leaves & more for garnish
- ❖ 1 tbsp white-wine vinegar
- ❖ 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ❖ kosher salt

In small saucepan, stir together garlic, paprika, cumin, cayenne, & oil. Put on medium-low heat & cook, stirring constantly, 5 min. Remove from heat & set aside. Put chopped tomatoes w/ their juice in large bowl & pass immersion blender thru once or twice to break them up. Stir in the cooked spice mixture, the cilantro, vinegar, and lemon juice. Taste for salt. Eat immediately. ([This source](#) makes a recipe for one; amounts above are for four.)