



# THE RED HILL ROOT



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

Volume V, Number 12

27 July 2008

## Farm and Member News



**Save the Date!!!**—We’re having a casual *potluck lunch* at the Farm on *Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug, at 1:00 pm*. This will be a light lunch and snacks, so the dish you bring needn’t be elaborate! As Mira says, “We just wanted to finally have an event for those who haven’t met the farmers, or each other.” Sounds like fun!

### **“Runs with Scissors” & the Problem of Cutting Flowers & Herbs**



At the moment, *all our scissors have “run off”* with Farm members who use them for cutting flowers or herbs! We know this isn’t intentional, but we haven’t got budgetary funds for replacing scissors continually. So unless you have “Scissorhands, (!)”

*you’ll need to bring your own scissors for harvesting flowers & herbs*. Meantime, check your bags and if you mistakenly left w/ our scissors, please do bring them back! **Thanks!** (photo: Johnny Depp as *Edward Scissorhands*)

**Corn-Picking Methods**—Farm members have noticed other members pulling back corn husks to check which ears they want, then throwing some of the ears back in the box. As Mira notes, “*All members deserve the same quality of food, and the corn doesn’t keep as well when peeled back. Please take 12 ears and move on. There may be a [small area on the occasional ear] that you have to cut out, but that’s all part of growing and eating organically.*” We really appreciate your cooperation!



[Melinda’s “factoid”]: Did you know that all ears of corn have about 600 kernels, arranged in 14 to 16 rows? And all have a small area of undeveloped kernels at the flower end of the ear, where the silk is. Nothing to worry about!]

**Veggie Bins**—Please don’t dig through the boxes looking for the “best” veggies! As with the corn, it damages the remaining items in the bin. Mira & Aby say, “*We expect members to be fair and pick randomly.... Vegetables are tender & we try to provide you with the highest quality*

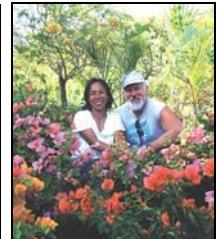
*produce.*” Thanks for your thoughtfulness to others!!!!

**Your Veggie Bin Questions Answered**—Yes, we have a “*seconds*” bin in the Barn. *Seconds* are slightly overripe or slightly damaged items that we do not include in your share but that are perfectly good for cooking (for example, tomatoes that make fabulous sauce when roasted!). The seconds bin is on the bottom shelf near the gate into the back part of the barn. Also, you’ve asked for a **surplus bin**, and the good news is, we already have one!!! Again, it’s on the bottom shelf near the gate. ***Both bins are labeled.*** You can put any veggies you don’t want into the surplus bin and take any veggies you do want out of it, above & beyond your CSA share. As Mira says, “*This is a good ol’ fashioned veggie swap; have fun with it!*”

## News from the Furrow

*Mira Kilpatrick’s Report*

“Aby and I were in St. John. It was wonderful. We snorkeled a LOT, swam with sea turtles, ate tropical fruits, etc. We tried to find a local farmer we read about, Josephine.... We walked around the perimeter of the farm but no one was around. Maybe next time. We didn’t rest *per se*, because we were so active swimming, hiking, & snorkeling, but it was still a wonderful break for...us.



Left: photo by Mira of Coral Bay Garden Center and Organic Farm; right, Josephine and Hugo Roller, owners of the Center and Farm ([source](#)); for a YouTube video of Josephine and her famous organic greens, see [here](#).



***“While we were away, the rest of the farm crew held down the fort for us. Thank you so much, Marcy & Emily; you are phenomenal and trustworthy workers and friends. Thanks to all the workshares and anyone else who chipped in while we were gone.***

“We got 2 more groundhogs, taking us to somewhere around 12. There was a lot more weeding done, and work done stringing tomatoes in the hoopouses and fields. Got



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

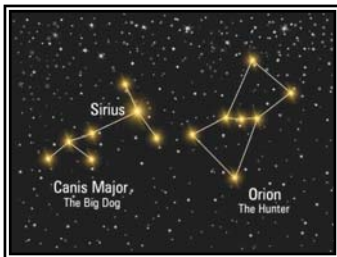


a lot of mowing done as well. We've been focusing on insect control in our hoophouse eggplant crop; in general they're doing pretty well though. Tomatoes finally started coming in a little better, as well as u-pick crops such as flowers, cherry tomatoes, and okra.

"We came home to a crazy storm, downpours and lightning. Still glad for the rain, and nice weed-pulling conditions. Can't get any tractor work done until it dries again. Catch 22." *Thanks Mira!*

## Tidbits—Food News—Gleanings

We've been in the Dog Days of summer since early July, the super-hot days that the poet Dante called "the great scourge of days canicular." The reference is to *Canis Major*, the constellation including Sirius, the so-called "Dog Star." (Remember Sirius Black in *Harry Potter*, who transforms into a dog?) In ancient times, Sirius rose in the sky during the day beginning in July. Because Sirius is



the brightest object in the sky barring the Moon, the Greeks and Romans believed it actually added its heat to the Sun's heat, resulting in much hotter days when they were in the sky simultaneously. (Sirius no longer rises with the sun

in the summertime in the US, but rather in February.) Dante referred to the Dog Days as a scourge due not only to the heat, but also because heat and drought brought sickness and starvation in his day. (Today the blame seems to lie with global warming and the political and commercial corruption that cause it). The Dog Days officially end around mid-August.

Speaking of global warming and its myriad causes, *NYT's* food writer **Mark Bittman** lectured on links between our food and effects on the environment. As he notes, "*after energy production, livestock is the second highest contributor to atmosphere-altering gasses, ... more than transportation.*" His talk (see [here](#)) is extraordinarily compressed yet articulate. His message: "Eat less meat and save the earth." Do watch it if you can! (Bittman also authored *How to Cook Everything Vegetarian*, and has a blog, *Bitten*, [here](#).)



Finally, Stephanie Sedgwick, *In Season* columnist for the *Washington Post*, is writing a weekly series called *The CSA Chronicles*, documenting her experiences as a first-time CSA member. Especially if you're also new to CSAs, it's fun to read her reactions and compare them to your own. Here's [Week 1](#), [Week 2](#), and [Week 3](#).

You may be wondering "*What the heck is amaranth?!*" Well, it could be the saving grace of the world. It's one of the highest protein-content plants, is filled w/ other nutrients, and is incredibly drought-resistant (think climate change here). Both the leaves & the grain that the plant produces are edible, healthy, and tasty! See these articles in *Mother Earth News* ([here](#) and [here](#)) & Wiki, [here](#). Amaranth greens are called callaloo, Chinese spinach, etc.

**Beet and Avocado Salad**—Speaking of Bittman's veggie book, here's a lovely beet recipe from it that serves 4.

- ❖ 3 or 4 medium beets, roasted or boiled [boiling takes less time & heats the kitchen less. To boil beets, trim off the greens, leaving about an inch of stem. Boil till you can easily pierce beet w/ knife tip. Drain & run under cold water. Chop off root. Skins then slip off easily.]
- ❖ 2 ripe but firm avocados, peeled, pitted, & chopped
- ❖ 1 small onion, chopped
- ❖ ½ cup lemon vinaigrette [mix ½ cup olive oil, ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, salt & pepper]
- ❖ a few fresh tarragon leaves, minced, or a pinch of dried [we have tarragon in the perennial herbs]
- ❖ salt & pepper

Chop the beets & mix in bowl w/ avocado, onion, tarragon & vinaigrette. Season w/ salt/pepper & serve immediately.

**Refrigerator Dill Pickles**—Use cukes, zucchini, yellow squash, etc. in this fridge pickle. It's great and SO EASY!! You can halve the recipe. It also freezes well.

- ❖ For pickling solution: 6 cups water, 2 cups vinegar, ½ cup canning salt [any salt without iodine or anti-caking additives]
- ❖ Fresh cukes, zukes, etc. to fill a gallon jar [or several smaller jars]
- ❖ 1 bunch fresh dill weed
- ❖ 1 large onion, sliced
- ❖ 2 whole cloves [or substitute a tbs of pickling spices]
- ❖ 2 tsp sliced garlic

Wash your veggies. Bring pickling-solution ingredients to a boil. Turn off heat but leave on stove. Quarter your cukes & zukes lengthwise (cut in half across if too long). Layer veggies w/ onion, spices, garlic, & dill. Pour vinegar solution over top; let set on counter for 3-4 hrs. Refrigerate. Ready to eat the same day. Good keepers.



(This is my modified recipe from [www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com).) To hear Charles

Johnson's 1906 *Dill Pickles Rag* (see picture), click [here!](#)

## Crunchy Corn Guacamole—4 servings

- ❖ 1 lime
- ❖ 1 cup corn kernels, preferably fresh but frozen ok
- ❖ ½ tsp minced garlic
- ❖ ½ cup chopped scallion
- ❖ 1 serrano or jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, & minced [use peppers to your taste]
- ❖ salt
- ❖ 2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- ❖ ¼ cup rough-chopped toasted pumpkin seeds
- ❖ 3 medium Haas avocados, ripe

Grate lime zest & reserve. Cut lime into wedges. Put zest, corn, & garlic in food processor; squeeze in half the lime wedges & pulse till a chunky purée. Put corn mix, chile, scallion, & large pinch salt into medium bowl & mash till well combined. Add cilantro & pumpkin seeds & mash a bit more. Cut avocados in half lengthwise & reserve pits if not eating guacamole right away. Scoop avocado flesh into bowl & mash. Squeeze in juice from remaining lime wedges to taste. Season w/ salt to taste & serve, or tuck pits back into mix & cover surface w/ plastic wrap (the pits help keep the guacamole from turning brown), & refrigerate for up to 4 hours. Remove pits before serving. ([source](#); *Melinda factoid*: peppers' heat is measure by Scoville Heat Units. A jalapeño has 2500-8000 Scoville units; a serrano has 10,000-23,000. The hottest pepper is the *bhut jolokia* of northeast India: 1,001,304 Scovilles!]

## Haluska—Hungarian comfort food; serves 6-10 as a side

- ❖ ¼ cup butter or oil
- ❖ 1 medium head cabbage, shredded or thinly sliced
- ❖ 1 large onion, halved & sliced
- ❖ 1 lb egg noodles
- ❖ 1 lb carton sour cream (reduced fat or vegan ok)
- ❖ salt & pepper

Begin heating large pot salted water for noodles. Melt

butter in large heavy pot or Dutch oven on medium. Add cabbage & onion & sauté, stirring often, till cabbage is limp & tender, ~10 min. Cook noodles in boiling water till tender, ~7-9 min (try one). Drain well. Add noodles to cabbage mix & stir well. Add sour cream & stir till mixed throughout dish. Season & serve. (from Andrea Chesman, *Serving Up the Harvest*, 2007)

## Tomato- Cabbage Soup—serves 4-6 as main course

- ❖ 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 lb sweet or hot Italian sausage, removed from casings & crumbled [vegans substitute defrosted & chopped Tofurky Italian Sausage; add chile pepper as desired to approximate hot sausage. Alternatively, vegans can use cooked chickpeas added when you add the broth & tomatoes]
- ❖ 1 small head cabbage, quartered, cored, & thinly sliced
- ❖ 1 onion, halved & thinly sliced
- ❖ 3½--4 cups diced fresh tomatoes
- ❖ 6 cups chicken or veggie broth
- ❖ 1 tsp ground cumin
- ❖ salt & black pepper [white pepper optional]

Heat 2 tbsp oil on medium in large soup pot. Add sausage & sauté till browned, ~10 min [less for Tofurky sausage]. Remove from pot w/ slotted spoon & set aside on plate lined w/ toweling. Add remaining oil to pot; add cabbage & onion & sauté till golden, ~ 8-10 min. Add tomatoes, broth, cumin. Return sausage to pot. Bring to boil, then reduce heat & simmer ~1 hr [less for Tofurky] or till cabbage is really tender & flavors are blended. Season w/ salt, black pepper (& white pepper if desired). (from Andrea Chesman, *Serving Up the Harvest*, 2007)

## Chickpea & Eggplant Purée

- ❖ 3 cups cooked or canned, drained chickpeas
- ❖ 1 medium eggplant
- ❖ 1 cup veggie stock
- ❖ 3 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ❖ salt, pepper, & chopped parsley for garnish

Roast in 500° oven the whole eggplant, pierced w/ knife a few times, till soft & blackened, 20-30 min. Let cool, split skin, scoop out flesh, & purée in food processor w/ cooked beans, 3 tbsp lemon juice, & enough stock to make smooth purée. Put in saucepan w/ oil & heat gently till oil & beans are hot. Garnish & serve hot or at room temp as spread or dip. (Bittman, *How to Cook Everything Veg*)

*"Grass is the cheapest plant to install, and the most expensive to maintain."*

Pat Howell