



THE RED HILL ROOT



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

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Farm & Member News



***Very Important News from Aby & Mira—
“The last share pickups will be Tuesday,
November 11th & Friday, November 14th!***



**GRACIAS, MERCI, DANKE, GRAZIE, OBRIGADO,
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR A
GREAT FIRST SEASON (for us)!!!** Due to a week of early frosts in October and some deer munching, we are ending one week before planned. We still have a great last share for you and hope that some of the food will make it to your holiday tables. There is some sadness around the end of our first season at Red Hill, but we are looking eagerly towards planning for the next season.

We hope to see all of you again and get to know more of you as the years pass. As our working hours on the Farm are becoming less and less, it leaves time to reflect on the whirlwind season. It becomes apparent how lucky we are to be doing what we do and that we couldn't be here without the support of all of you. ***Have a great Thanksgiving!*** [All thanks to you too, Aby & Mira!]

Turkey Pick-Up, 25th November—Turkey pick-up will be



Tuesday, 25th November, from 1 to 7 at the Farm. Those who ordered made a \$25 deposit at the start of the season and will be responsible to pay the remainder of the cost, based on a per-pound price, when they pick up.

Milk Delivery—This is the last week for raw milk, which was delivered Saturday, 8th November. Folks need to get it this week, as it is the final pick-up week. If Friday people want to come early for theirs, they are welcome. The gates are open 8 am to 2 pm, M-F.

News from the Furrow

By Mira Kilpatrick



“This week we’ve harvested and washed most mornings. It’s slower with two people. Lots of turnips and carrots.

We’ve started seeing evidence of deer on the Farm. People have reported that they’re just shimmying under the fence. We might work on resolving that issue this winter. Overall, we’re pleased they didn’t come knocking until this late. Their damage was miniscule. The one sad loss was the last escarole in the field... We would have shared that out this and next week. Now the greens we wanted to provide in the final shares will be reduced. Some of you are probably pleased =), some disappointed. Next year, when we get into October, we will likely start covering more things with row cover, to protect the crops from frost and the deer.

The rain is delaying the leveling that we need to do to continue work on raising the tunnel. We are also unable to spread some more compost due to the rain. It’s just too wet to be taking machinery into the fields.... It results in compaction.

I’m sure there’s more, but I cannot recall for the life of me what else we’ve been up to this week. Aby and I have cut back our hours a bit, so we’re enjoying cooking more at home. The last eggplant! The first and only spinach! A final tomato sauce! We’re processing, freezing, taste-testing, soaking it all in, knowing we’re near the end. Gerard and I still try to keep sourcing local through the winter.... Most commonly, we go to the Saturday farmers’ market at Clark Park in West Philadelphia (10 am-1 pm on Saturdays Dec. through April) and the Fair Food Farmstand in Reading Terminal Market in Center City (<http://www.whitedogcafeoundation.org/farmstand.html>). Check them if you’re craving fresh produce, local dairy, eggs, and meat in the winter months.” ***Thank you Mira!!***

Good News and Bad

The good news is that in California, ***Prop 2, providing improved living conditions for farmed animals, passed by a 63% majority!*** It isn’t as much change as most animal



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advocates hope for, but it's certainly a start! As the group Compassion over Killing (COK) notes, California is the first state in the nation to ban battery cages, the third to ban veal crates, and the fifth to ban gestation crates. Think what it would be like to be born as a battery hen, an animal slave. For a discussion of avian intelligence, see [here](#). For COK's website, see [here](#).

The bad news is a new report from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) detailing **38 different pollutants & toxins found in every brand of bottled water tested**. This is above and beyond the toxicity of the plastic itself, and reflects the fact that there is no regulation on where bottled water can be sourced (e.g., near nuclear plants or toxic-dump sites). At this writing, the EWG report itself seems unavailable on the web, but here are two good blogs discussing it: [Non-Toxic Kids](#) and [Fanatic Cook](#).

Thanksgiving's Original "Movability"



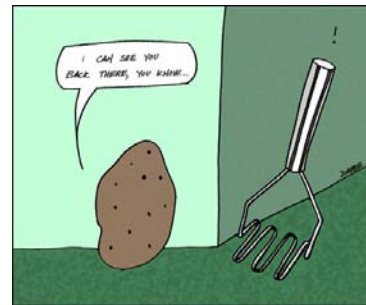
Over the centuries, Thanksgiving—27th November this year—occurred on many different dates, morphing from a European harvest celebration, to a religious service, to a military/political holiday, and ending finally in today's commercial frenzy of buying, preparing, and consuming food. Originally in Europe, it resembled or was conflated with *St. Martin's day (11th Nov)*, when animals like geese & pigs were slaughtered for the winter. It also was linked in some cases to *Michaelmas*, the Feast of St. Michael (29th Sept), which was closer to the Autumn Equinox, a time of feasting both for St. Michael and for the harvest.

In this sense the "Martinmas Thanksgiving" was the end of the old year and start of a new one—in Europe, schools and legislative bodies opened, contracts were renewed, etc. Waverly Fitzgerald suggests this may be why U. S. Election Day is held in early November (see [here](#)).

In this country, two Thanksgivings preceded that of the Pilgrims, the first a thanksgiving mass celebrated in September 1565 by 600 Spaniards thankful to have landed safely at St. Augustine, Florida (see [here](#)). Next came the 1619 "day of thanksgiving" at the Berkeley Hundred in Virginia, when 38 English settlers arrived safely. Finally, the one we know better, which was a harvest festival, occurred at the Pilgrim's Plymouth Plantation in 1621, after their first harvest, aided by the Wampanoag tribe. Subsequently, both the Pilgrims & Puritans celebrated various "thanksgivings" throughout the year, all of which

were religious observances. By 1789, George Washington declared Thanksgiving to be a national celebration on 25th November, commemorating the Revolutionary War and turning Thanksgiving into a military/political holiday.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln changed the date to the last Thursday of November, but it was Franklin Roosevelt who made it commercial: in 1939, Thanksgiving would have fallen on 30th Nov, as there were 5 Thursdays that month.



Because people at the time didn't start Christmas shopping till after Thanksgiving, merchants were afraid people wouldn't have sufficient time to spend money, so Roosevelt made Thanksgiving a week earlier!! Due to

public uproar over this (some states defied the change, meaning extended families from various states couldn't celebrate together), Roosevelt finally designated the 4th Thursday of November as the official national holiday. Whew! What a long strange trip it's been! (See [here](#).)

THANKSGIVING RECIPES:

Carrot Fennel Soup—serves six

- ❖ 2 medium fennel bulbs with a few fronds
- ❖ 1 lb carrots, quartered lengthwise
- ❖ 1 medium onion, quartered
- ❖ 1 garlic clove
- ❖ 5 tbsp olive oil, divided
- ❖ ½ tsp sugar
- ❖ 2½ cups reduced-sodium chicken [or veggie] broth
- ❖ 2½ cups water
- ❖ 1 tsp fennel seeds



Preheat oven to 450 w/ rack in lowest position. Chop enough fennel fronds to make 1 tsp. [Save the rest for another use.] Slice bulbs ¼" thick & toss w/ carrots, onion, garlic, 3 tbsp oil,

sugar, ½ tsp salt, & ¼ tsp pepper. Spread in 4-sided baking pan & roast, stirring a bit, till browned & tender, ~25-30 min. Blend half the veggies in blender w/ broth till very smooth; transfer to medium saucepan. Repeat w/ remaining veggies & water. Thin to desired consistency w/

more water & simmer 2 min. Season to taste. Meanwhile, finely grind fennel seeds in coffee- or spice-grinder & stir into remaining 2 tbsp oil. Serve soup drizzled w/ fennel oil & sprinkled w/ chopped fronds. ([source](#))

Turkey—This is too long to reproduce in the *Root*, but for those who eat meat, here is *Gourmet*'s expert advice on cooking easy, delicious turkey. [Click here](#). For three vegetarian Thanksgiving menus, see [here](#).

Butternut Squash—How to peel & cut: 1) Cut off blossom and stem ends; 2) cut squash in half lengthwise; 3) scrape out seeds & stringy stuff w/ a sturdy, pointy spoon (grapefruit spoons work well, but few folks have them any more); 4) lay squash halves cut-side down on cutting board & use a sharp vegetable peeler to peel off the outer skin; 5) cut squash lengthwise into strips of the width called for in recipe; 6) turn long strips 90° and cut the other way into chunks. Bingo! For an illustrated guide, see [here](#).

Butternut Squash & Hazelnut Lasagna—serves 8; a wonderfully fancy vegetarian Thanksgiving main dish!

For squash filling:

- ❖ 1 large onion, chopped
- ❖ 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- ❖ 3 lb butternut squash, peeled, seeded, & cut in ½" chunks
- ❖ 1 tsp minced garlic
- ❖ 1 tsp salt
- ❖ ¼ tsp white pepper [or regular]
- ❖ 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- ❖ 4 tbsp chopped fresh sage
- ❖ 1 cup hazelnuts, toasted in pan, loose skins rubbed off w/ kitchen towel, & coarsely chopped

For sauce:

- ❖ 1 tsp minced garlic
- ❖ 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- ❖ 5 tbsp all-purpose flour
- ❖ 5 cups milk
- ❖ 1 bay leaf (not California)
- ❖ 1 tsp salt
- ❖ 1/8 tsp white pepper [or regular]

For assembling lasagna:

- ❖ ½ lb fresh mozzarella, coarsely grated
- ❖ 1 cup finely grated Parmesan
- ❖ 12 (7- by 3½") sheets no-boil lasagna (½ lb)

To make filling, cook onion in butter in heavy skillet on moderate heat, stirring a bit, till golden, ~10 min. Add

squash, garlic, salt, & pepper & cook, stirring a bit, till squash is just tender, ~15 min. Remove from heat & stir in parsley, sage, & nuts. Cool. Make sauce while squash cooks: cook garlic in butter in 3-qt heavy saucepan on medium-low, stirring, 1 min. Whisk in flour & cook, whisking, for 3 min. Add milk in a stream, whisking. Add bay leaf & bring to boil, whisking constantly, then reduce heat & simmer, whisking a bit, 10 min. Whisk in salt & pepper & remove from heat. Discard bay leaf. To assemble lasagna, preheat oven to 425. Toss cheeses



together. Spread ½ cup sauce in buttered 13- by 9- by 2" glass baking dish (or other shallow, 3-qt baking dish) & cover w/ 3 pasta sheets, leaving

spaces between sheets. Spread w/ 2/3 cup sauce & 1/3 of filling, then sprinkle w/ heaping ½ cup cheese. Repeat layering 2 more times, starting w/ pasta sheets & ending w/ cheese. Top w/ remaining 3 pasta sheets, remaining sauce, & remaining cheese. Tightly cover baking dish w/ buttered foil & bake in middle of oven 30 min. Remove foil & bake till golden & bubbling, 10-15 min more. Let stand 15-20 min before serving. (Filling & sauce can be made a day ahead, kept in fridge, & brought back to room temp before assembling.) ([source](#))

To Roast Butternut (or other winter) Squash—easier than peeling & cutting! Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scrape out seeds & stringy stuff. Put halves, skin-side-down, on foil-lined baking sheet. Brush w/ melted butter or oil (mixed w/ maple syrup if desired) & season w/ salt & pepper. Roast in 450° oven till tender, ~30-35 min. For creamier interior, start them cut-side-down, cook halfway, then flip, brush w/ butter, & finish. Cool, then scoop flesh from skin & cut in chunks or wedges. One 3-lb butternut is enough for 6 servings (3 cups puréed or cooked squash). See [here](#) for these directions & great recipes for *Butternut Apple Soup, Harvest Penne with Chicken, Butternut, & Pine Nuts, & Butternut Crème Caramel!!*

*"Give me the end of the year an' its fun
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,
See the old table with all of its chairs
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers."*

Edgar A. Guest, Thanksgiving