



# THE RED HILL ROOT



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

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## Farm and Member News



**Crops A'Coming!**—Mira tells us that we can expect *zucchini, kohlrabi, beans, purple scallions* [oh yummy!], *kale*, and *beets*. We'll feature prep instructions and recipes for these and some of the crops you already have, as well as links to previous *Roots* with useful recipes.

**U-PICK!!!!**—As Aby notes, “U-Pick has started at the Farm. So far we have raspberries and beans. Flowers are starting, and soon we will have Sungold cherry tomatoes, tomatillos, and much more. In order for us to make sure there is enough for everyone, we decide on amounts based on pint and quart containers. We have some left

over from last year, and we will order some more containers. But we need everyone to return the containers [to the barn] after picking so we don't run out. Transferring your share to a bag after picking is your best bet. If you happen accidentally to take them home, please just bring them back to the Farm on your next visit. Happy Picking!” (Illustration from *Canterbury Calendar*, ca 1280—in those days, all food was U-Pick!!!!)



## News from the Furrow

*Mira Kilpatrick's Report*

“We had a nice week on the farm, though we are still waiting on the rain!! There were forecasts, but all we would get was an occasional drizzle, not enough for the plants. It doesn't seem like we've had a good rain for two or three weeks now.



Speaking of water, we also had some work done on the well. We had a lot of iron, clay, and sediment clogging our filters and affecting our drip irrigation pressure. In times of drought, we especially can't have issues like that bogging us down. We are hopeful about the work they did; We hope the water flows well and we don't have to check and clean the filters as often.

Aby, Marcy, Emily and I all went on an organic strawberry U-Pick adventure which was really fun. We rarely do anything together outside of the farm; though it's funny we just ended up on another farm, harvesting another crop! Willow Creek Orchards in Collegeville, where Aby worked for a while, is one of the few local farms with organic U-Pick strawberries, as far as we know. It's pretty neat, because it was also during the time of June's full moon, which in biodynamic agriculture is the 'strawberry moon.' [From Melinda: see [here](#) for earlier *Root* discussion of biodynamics.] Don't worry guys, we hope to try for strawberries again at Red Hill next year!



On a recent harvest day, Bruce stopped by. Bruce is the man who helps the *purple martins* thrive and makes sure they're doing alright. Purple martins are birds, the largest of North American swallows, that migrate all the way from Brazil. Apparently they are very particular about where they live. (See our gourd birdhouses painted white the next time you're at the farm—[that's *Aby & Bruce* looking into one of the gourd houses at left; photo by our workshare, *Mary DeWitt*, known to all as an “amazing weeder!”—thanks Mary!].) He was checking the nests and counting the birds. One of the purple martins hatched and we all got to have a look at a 1-day baby bird. SO TINY! Fyi, it is a myth that handling baby birds prevents the mother from coming back and caring for the bird.”



*Bruce with Hatching Chick in Hand*, photo by Mary DeWitt



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



## Tidbits—Food News



*Stuffed and Starved; the Hidden Battle for the World Food System*, a new book by **Raj Patel**, explores the weird phenomenon that, as Mark Bittman puts it in his interview with Patel, “*worldwide,...the same number of people are starving as are overweight.*” (See [here](#) for Bittman’s interview with Patel.) “Stuffed and Starved” is also the title of Patel’s blog, where he addresses many aspects of food politics & the world food crisis. E.g., see [here](#) for his post contradicting the many food experts who blame the crisis on escalating meat consumption among increasingly large middle classes in India and China—on the contrary, says Patel, these two countries are still net exporters of both meat and grains, at least at the moment.



Another interestingly counterintuitive essay on the food crisis is **Stan Cox’s** essay “*Turning your Lawn into a Victory Garden Won’t Save You—Fighting the Corporations Will.*” (See [here](#).) Cox is very interested in home food-growing and edible landscaping and notes that, in itself, it has no downside (& you’ll save money & get good exercise!). But simple numbers show it won’t solve either the food crisis or global warming: veggies & fruits take up only 4% of the world’s cropland—most of the rest grows grains and oilseeds. So even if all U.S. homeowners (1 acre or less) cultivated half their land for a home garden, it would create ~5 million acres of garden, which, in contrast to 350-400 million acres of U.S. commercial cropland, is a drop in the bucket. In Cox’s words, “*Whatever its benefits, replacing your lawn with food plants will not give Big Agribusiness the...poke in the eye that it needs, nor will it save the agricultural landscapes of the nation or world. To do that, the big-commodity market must be not just modified but overthrown. Until then,...that 2/3rds or more of human calorie & protein intake that comes from grains & oilseeds (directly in most of the world or among Western vegetarians, largely via animal products for others in this country) will continue to be served up by a dirty, cruel, unfair, broken system....*” Cox makes some general suggestions for new directions, but his analyses of problems are fascinating; he provides good links too. Definitely a must-read, but don’t give up the garden! For an inspiring example of a self-sufficient home garden, see the ongoing story of the **Dervaes family’s “100-Foot Diet—Victory Garden”** [here](#), about which we’ve written before in the Root.



For the early June *U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization’s summit in Rome* (which many small-farm supporters feel was too pro-big-business), see [here](#); it also has many good links to other articles on the issues. For the *Pope’s address to the summit—which was admirably pro-small farmer & anti-agribusiness*—see [here](#). (Photo: *Mosaic of the Loaves and Fishes at Tabgha*, on the Sea of Galilee, where the multiplication of five loaves & two fishes to feed 5000 people was said to have taken place. See [here](#).)



Finally, for a great *NYT* essay about how weeds might save us as climate change escalates—the assumption being that weed-like ancestors of today’s cultivated crops may survive extreme conditions more easily—see [here](#)!



But the lovely crops we’ve been getting from Red Hill Farm are certainly NOT weeds! And members and staff have sent in some cool recipes! (For other escarole & endive recipes, see last week’s *Root*, [here](#).)

**Escarole Soup**—This was sent by **Pauline Harding**, who says “*it was yummy, & even the picky kids ate 2 bowls!*”

- ❖ 1 small onion, or equivalent in sliced scallions
- ❖ 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ❖ olive oil [a glug or so]
- ❖ 1 box chicken broth [or veggie broth]
- ❖ 2 red potatoes (to thicken the soup), cubed
- ❖ 1 head of escarole, roughly chopped
- ❖ basil leaves, about 5 sprigs worth
- ❖ salt & pepper to taste
- ❖ ~1/2 cup heavy cream [or veg substitute]

Sauté onions & garlic in oil till onion is translucent. Add broth, cubed potatoes, escarole, basil, salt/pepper. Simmer till potatoes are soft. Remove from heat & purée w/ immersion blender till no large pieces remain. Stir in cream. Serve hot or cold. **Thanks Pauline!**



**Kohlrabi**—Don’t be afraid of it! It’s cool-looking, mild-tasting, and easy to cook. Mira’s sent us some kohlrabi recipes from Brookfield Farm, where she and Aby worked together. As Mira says, it’s related to broccoli, but tastes like a cross between cabbage (kohl) and turnip (rabi)! Use the

leaves and stems chopped up like any greens, and give these recipes for the bulb a spin (also see [this Root](#), page 3, and [this Root](#), page 2, & future *Roots*; [photo credit](#)).

[Here](#) are some ideas from another CSA, Mariquita Farm.

**Sautéed Kohlrabi**—a nice, easy recipe! *Thanks Mira!*

- ❖ 2 kohlrabi, 3 if small
- ❖ 1 medium onion, diced
- ❖ 1 tsp salt
- ❖ 4 tbsp oil
- ❖ 1 tbsp fresh herbs (thyme, sage, chives, etc)

Grate kohlrabi, place in colander, & sprinkle w/ salt. Let stand 30 min to drain. Heat oil, add onions, & sauté a few minutes on medium. Stir in kohlrabi, reduce heat to low, cover & cook 2 min. Remove from heat & stir in herbs.

**Crunchy Red Devils**—Yummy! Also from Brookfield.

- ❖ 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- ❖ 2 shallots, minced
- ❖ ¼ cup hot red pepper sauce [Tabasco, etc]
- ❖ 1 tsp grainy mustard
- ❖ ½ tsp sugar or granulated fructose
- ❖ 3 medium-size kohlrabi bulbs

Whisk together all ingredients except kohlrabi w/ ½ cup water. Peel & thinly slice kohlrabi, stir into marinade, coating evenly. Cover & refrigerate 2-3 days, stirring occasionally. Serve cold or at room temp. *Thanks Mira!*

**Mira's Advice on Escarole, & a Recipe**—“*All you members who are afraid of escarole, don't know what to do w/ it, don't be! Escarole & endive are two nutritious, delicious Italian cooking greens (escarole is one of my favorites!). If you like bitter greens, you can use escarole or endive raw, in a salad, w/ warm, sweet dressings, like a 'wilted salad' [from Melinda: see [here](#) & [here](#) for wilted salad recipes]. But I like it this way. It's simple! Comes from a local farming friend with Italian roots.*”

- ❖ 2-5 cloves garlic, chopped
- ❖ 2 heads escarole, chopped
- ❖ 1 head frisée endive, chopped (optional)
- ❖ 1 can white cannellini beans (or equivalent of dried, cooked beans)
- ❖ a goodly amount of parmesan cheese
- ❖ salt/pepper to taste

Sauté the garlic in olive oil; add in & steam/sauté the escarole (throw in the endive too, if you want). Add the beans and stir/allow to heat. Add parmesan, salt, & pepper to taste. “*I think the parmesan is key! This can be used as a side, or mixed w/ pasta, or diluted w/ broth for soup.*”

For 79 more escarole recipes, see [here!](#) ([photo credit](#))



**Aby's Favorite “Best Green Bean Salad”**—This is from *One United Harvest*, a cookbook with recipes from CSAs across the nation. *Thanks Aby!* [From Melinda: see [here](#) for sample recipes from *One United Harvest*]

- ❖ 1½ lbs fresh green beans
- ❖ 1 cup diced red onion
- ❖ 1 cup crumbled feta cheese (blue cheese is also nice!)
- ❖ 1 cup toasted walnuts
- ❖ **for dressing:** ¾ cup olive oil
- ❖ ¼ cup white wine vinegar
- ❖ ½ cup finely chopped, packed basil
- ❖ 1 tsp salt
- ❖ ½ tsp diced fresh garlic
- ❖ fresh ground black pepper

Combine oil, vinegar, basil, salt, garlic, & pepper. Shake & refrigerate. Snap beans into pieces, boil for 4 min, & plunge into cold water [the beans, not you!]. Drain & set aside. Just prior to serving, toss beans, onions, cheese, & walnuts w/ dressing. Enjoy!!!!

**Green Surprise Dip**—Mira says this is “from *Simply in Season*, one of Aby's favorite cookbooks; great for unique, seasonal recipes.” As a green, you can use chard, kale, spinach, escarole, etc., whatever suits your taste.

- ❖ 1 cup steamed chard or other greens
- ❖ 1 cup plain yogurt
- ❖ 1 cup cooked chickpeas
- ❖ ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ❖ 2 cloves garlic
- ❖ ½ onion
- ❖ 1 tbsp lemon juice, or to taste
- ❖ ½ tsp salt, or to taste

Purée in blender or food processor. Eat! (Now wasn't that tough?) Yields about 2½ cups. Serve w/ veggie sticks, crackers, tortilla chips, thin slices of kohlrabi, etc.

*“Many public-school children seem to know only two dates, 1492 and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; and as a rule, they don't know what happened on either occasion.”* Mark Twain