



THE RED HILL ROOT



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

Volume VI, Number 11

20th July 2009

Farm News



BAGS—Our supply of plastic/paper shopping bags that you can use to bag up your produce at the Farm is running low. *If you have extra bags, could you bring some along this week?* Thanks very much!



Question of the Week—Mira says lots of folks have been asking what the farm does with the rags that are always hanging on the lines at the front of the barn. **Answer:** the walk-in cooler has blower fans that can dry out/wilt the produce. Therefore, we put a wet burlap/rag on each bin of produce, to keep the moisture in the produce, ensuring that it is fresh and crisp. *Thanks, Mira!*



Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick

“Guess what a farmer does when she's all dressed up and going out to dinner in Media? Stops by the farm to release 2,000 parasitic wasps; at least that's what I did this past Wednesday. We spoke about the Mexican bean



beetle and the damage that it did to our bean crops last year. You may have noticed some damage or the beetles themselves when picking beans this past week (photo above). To see what the beetles look like, click [here](#).

To prevent crop loss, many organic growers use beneficial insects, in this case the *Pediobius foveolatus*, a tiny wasp that parasitizes the larvae and larval beetle. The wasps are shipped overnight, and keep cool until they are released in the evening or early morning. A delivery of wasps generated much interest in the receiving department and with other staff at the convent. They didn't know what to make of it. The UPS guy wasn't even sure if he believed there were live insects in the box.

So Gerard and I went to the farm and opened up the containers amongst our various beds of beans. They



slowly make their way out. You can tap the container to encourage them to fly out. They were actually much smaller than I anticipated... about the size of a gnat! Now, they will do

their work. And in the winter they die off, so there's no



risk of introducing them permanently, and their population growing out of control. We'll have to purchase more next year when we first see their eggs. We'll keep you posted on how things progress!” (photos by Mira & Gerard)

Tidbits

Sterile Farm Fields—A *food-safety bill* sponsored by Rep. Henry Waxman passed the House Energy and Commerce Committee this month. An article about the problems it may cause, “*Crops, Ponds Destroyed in Quest for Food Safety*,” was published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (see [here](#)) and is truly shocking. In an effort to guarantee absolutely antiseptic greens and other veggies, the bill mandates “scorched-earth policies” for farm fields. The idea originated w/ giant retailers & the mega-farms that sell to them, though this bill attempts to make the



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



rules national. Ironically, as the article notes, *“In pending legislation and...proposed...regulations, the push for food safety butts up against the movement toward biologically diverse farming methods, while evidence suggests that industrial agriculture may be the bigger culprit.”* As food-poisoning attorney Bill Marler says concerning this point, *“In 16 years of handling nearly every major food-borne illness outbreak in America, I can tell you I’ve never had a case where it’s been linked to a farmers’ market.”*



What kinds of “draconian” rules are being demanded? Organic farmer Dick Peixoto (left) “planted hedges of fennel and flowering cilantro around his organic... fields...to harbor beneficial insects, an alternative to pesticides. He has since ripped out such plants in the name of food safety, because his big customers demand sterile buffers around his crops. No vegetation. No water. No wildlife

of any kind.” Hence *“ponds are being poisoned & bulldozed. Vegetation harboring pollinators & filtering storm runoff is being cleared. Fences & poison baits line wildlife corridors. Birds, frogs, mice and deer—and anything that shelters them—are caught in a raging battle...against... food-borne bacteria.”* Dick Peixoto concluded that such measures are incompatible w/ organic farming and decided simply to turn down customers who demanded them. Scientists say the science doesn’t back up these methods, and results for the environment would be disastrous. This essay is definitely worth the read. (I found the article on several sites, but Red Hill member Christine Baer also sent it—*thanks Christine!*) ([photo](#))

Katie’s Asian Cucumber Salad—Katie’s demo on the 17th produced some fabulous food!

- ❖ 1 ¾ cups sliced cukes
- ❖ ½ cup sliced red bell pepper
- ❖ ½ cup sliced snow peas
- ❖ 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- ❖ 2 tsp peeled, grated fresh ginger
- ❖ 2 tsp dark sesame oil
- ❖ ¼ tsp chili oil
- ❖ 1 tsp black sesame seeds
- ❖ salt & pepper to taste

Toss together in a bowl & serve. Now how hard is that?!

Katie’s Cucumber, Tomato, & White Bean Salad

- ❖ 1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved
- ❖ 1 medium cuke, peeled, seeded, & sliced thin
- ❖ ¼ cup thinly sliced sweet onion
- ❖ 1 can cannellini beans
- ❖ 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- ❖ 2 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- ❖ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 lemon, juiced & zested
- ❖ salt & pepper to taste

Toss together all ingredients in medium bowl to combine!
Thanks so much for sharing, Katie!



Chicken in Cucumber & Lemon Sauce

- ❖ 2 large cukes, peeled, halved, sliced, ~4 cups (more is fine, less is bad)
- ❖ 7 tbsp butter
- ❖ ½ cup flour
- ❖ 1/8 tsp pepper
- ❖ 6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- ❖ 1 tsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 cup chicken stock
- ❖ 1 cup whipping cream
- ❖ 2 tbsp + 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- ❖ 2 tbsp minced dill

Place cukes in colander. Sprinkle w/ salt, toss, & let drain 1 hr. Pat dry. Melt 3 tbsp butter in heavy skillet on medium. Add cukes & sauté till light brown, ~7 min. Set aside. In small cup, mix 1 tbsp flour & 1 tbsp butter to smooth paste; set aside. Put remaining ½ cup flour in shallow baking dish w/ pepper & season w/ salt. Coat chicken & shake off excess. Melt remaining 3 tbsp butter w/ oil in another heavy skillet on high. Add chicken & sauté till brown. Add ½ cup stock. Reduce heat to medium; cover & simmer till chicken is cooked thru, ~4 min. Transfer chicken to platter. Add remaining stock to chicken skillet. Increase heat to high & boil till reduced to ¼ cup (~3 min). Add cream & flour/butter paste & bring to boil, stirring. Reduce heat & simmer till thickened to sauce consistency (~2 min), stirring often. Stir in lemon juice & 1 tbsp dill. Season w/ salt/pepper. Add chicken & cukes to sauce; heat thru. Transfer to plates. Spoon sauce & cukes over chicken. Sprinkle w/ 1 tbsp dill. ([source](#))

Agua de Pepino (Cucumber Drink Two Ways)

- ❖ 1 cucumber, peeled & cubed
- ❖ 1 lemon
- ❖ 5 cups water
- ❖ sugar to taste



Add cuke and water to blender & purée. Strain. Add juice of lemon & sugar to taste. Serve over ice.

[\(source\)](#)

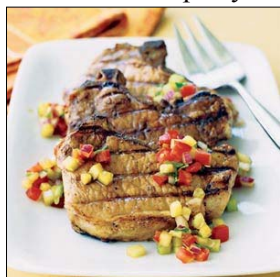
OR:

- ❖ 1 cucumber, peeled & cut into chunks
- ❖ juice of 2-3 limes
- ❖ sugar to taste (start w/ ¼ cup & work up)
- ❖ water
- ❖ ice

Put cuke, sugar, & lime juice in blender w/ enough water to reach 1½" below the top. Blend well. Strain pulp from mix & serve over ice. [\(source; photo & another recipe\)](#)

Cucumber Salsa, Korean-Inspired

- ❖ 2 cucumbers (1½ lbs total), peeled
- ❖ 2 Roma tomatoes (8 oz total), cored
- ❖ 1 red onion, peeled & chopped
- ❖ 5 green onions, thinly sliced, including green tops
- ❖ 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ❖ ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- ❖ 3 tbsp white vinegar
- ❖ ~1/2 tsp black pepper
- ❖ ~1/4 tsp cayenne



Dice cukes and tomatoes into ¼" cubes & combine in bowl. Add red & green onions, garlic, soy sauce, vinegar, & black & cayenne pepper to taste. Mix well. Cover & chill at least 30 min. Makes 5 cups—serve w/ meat or veggies. [\(source\)](#)

Homemade Refrigerator Pickles

- ❖ 1 cup white vinegar
- ❖ 1 tbsp salt
- ❖ 2 cups sugar
- ❖ 6 cups sliced cucumbers
- ❖ 1 cup sliced onions
- ❖ 1 cup sliced green or red peppers



In medium saucepan on medium heat, bring vinegar, salt, & sugar to boil. Boil till sugar has dissolved, ~10 min. Place cukes, onion, & peppers in large bowl. Pour vinegar mix over veggies. Transfer to sterile containers [boil glass jars & lids for 10 min & leave in water till ready to use—

peanut butter jars work well]. Store in fridge. [Personally, I add a tsp to a tbsp or so of pickling spices to the vinegar mix before pouring over veggies. Also, you can add more vinegar if needed to cover veggies, and you can vary the veggies. But right now we've lots of cukes!] [\(source\)](#)

Cucumber au Gratin

- ❖ 2 large cucumbers
- ❖ 1½ cups grated Gruyère cheese
- ❖ salt & black pepper
- ❖ 3-4 tbsp butter or oil

Peel cukes & cut them in 3" pieces. Slice each piece in half & remove seeds. Cook cukes in boiling salted water for 10 min, then drain & dry. Arrange a layer of cukes in base of buttered ovenproof dish. Sprinkle w/ 1/3 of the cheese & season w/ salt & pepper. Repeat layers, ending w/ cheese. Dot top w/ butter. Bake gratin in center of preheated oven at 400 for 30 min. [\(source\)](#)

Cucumber Avocado Soup

- ❖ 1 cup buttermilk [or plain yogurt]
- ❖ 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, & chopped
- ❖ 1 ripe avocado
- ❖ ¼ cup chicken or veggie broth
- ❖ 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ❖ ¼ tsp ground cumin, or to taste
- ❖ salt & pepper to taste

In large measuring cup, combine buttermilk + ice cubes to make 1½ cups total. In blender, blend this mix w/ avocado, lemon juice, cumin & half of cukes till smooth. Divide into chilled bowls & stir remaining cukes into each serving. [\(source\)](#)