

Farm News



BAGS—Our supply of plastic/paper shopping bags, which 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!



Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick

This week on the farm has been great. We have been getting a lot of work done. We had an amazing onion harvest. With the pending rain, we decided to get our onions out of the field so they would not rot. As I wrote the other week, these storage onions will cure for some time. First in the hoop house, in the sun, and then in the shade. We will share them out as fall sets in. They are lovely, big and bright, much better than the puny crop we grew last year!



Aby and I finally got the old Farmall tractor out (left). This is a classic, belly-mounted cultivating (weeding) tractor. The tractor we use most, a newer John Deere, has rear-mounted implements (versus belly-mounted) and has much more power and versatility. However, these old cultivating tractors are very useful when you want to cultivate 3-row crops such as carrots, beets,

lettuce, greens, etc. because the operator can see the plants as they cultivate. With the other tractor, you have to keep turning around, and you sometimes see you've gone off course and have just destroyed half a bed of turnips! The Farmall handles very differently, and it will take some time for us to get used to it, but hopefully it will save us from hoeing everything by hand, which takes more time and is harder on our bodies!

Other than that, we have been busy planting flowers, lettuce, and the last of the summer squash, as well as seeding the last beans and sunflowers of the season. We've started a bunch of the fall crops in the greenhouse. Thanks to Tom, Aby's fiancé, and Martein, her family friend who came out to help mow, stake peppers, weed, and do whatever else we asked of them! A very productive week indeed! Until next time, eat your chard like it's nobody's business. (photos by Mira)

Greetings from the U-Pick Garden!

By Aby Wright

Each Tuesday and Friday morning, after the harvest is all in and washed, Mira and I meander through the U-Pick garden. Our ultimate goal is to determine exactly how much of a crop there is for each member. With tomatoes and zucchini and bunches of carrots this is easy – we just harvest everything and divide by the number of people coming that day or count out that number of rubber bands before harvesting.

With flowers and berries and U-Pick tomatoes this task becomes a bit tougher. We look at how far down the row we go to fill a pint or quart container and assess whether everyone could pick that amount based on the amount of producing plants. Then we factor in the weather which can mean more or less people picking. As you can see this is not an exact science, and no matter how many times we go out there and calculate, it doesn't get any easier or more accurate.



So.....sometimes the UPICK crops runs out and sometimes there's a ton leftover and we question whether we forgot to put the item on the board. But when the numbers are off we remember – there's always next time! And with a season as great as we've had so far, the garden is lush and full and there's usually plenty to pick.

With that said:

It seems as though the **sunflowers** have been blooming forever!!! Everyone has done a great job of cutting the stems higher up so that the lower buds can flower and be cut later. Thank you and keep picking.

With flowers like the **giant marigolds and the tithonia** (giant wall of orange flowers with fuzzy stems) the lower buds on these plants are more prolific than the sunflowers and in order to get a reasonable stem length you must cut lower and take some secondary buds with your bloom. But please don't let this stop you from picking them – they need to be picked to keep putting out new flowers.

The **basil** is now in full force – feel free to pick as much as you'd like and get your fill of pesto and caprese salads (tomato/basil/mozzarella). Basil is also a great aromatic filler for flower bouquets. (Dill flowers are great in arrangements too)

We have a small section of **okra** that can be picked. There won't be enough for everyone every week, but we invite you to check out the patch each time you come and take what you'd like with the idea of sharing with everyone throughout the season. These should be picked small (2-4") and frequently to encourage new fruit set.

Tomatillos and Husk Cherries are just starting.



Tomatillos are great for salsa verde. The husk cherries are also known as ground cherries for a novel reason – you can tell when they are ripe because the husk turns brown and they fall off the plant. So scoop them up off the ground for a delicious treat. They are kind of like a fruity cherry

tomato. A local chef sometimes chocolate-coats the husk cherries as an after dinner treat for diners. Be inventive! [above, *Physalis pruinosa*, aka husk cherry, ground cherry or “strawberry tomato”]; [Photo credit](#). For more info see

[here](#) and scroll down till you come to “*Horning's Farm Ground Cherry*”—lots of local history to this fruit!]

****Remember – A white stake with a sign means a crop is ready to be picked****

Change, Change, Change.....

By Aby Wright

Things are ALWAYS changing on a farm. Weeds come and go, crops come and go, and sometimes even workers come and go. A farmer's job is demanding and intense. We all work very closely with one another and this makes the job even tougher. It's important to find the right fit so that the work stops feeling like work and you can get through the day with a smile on your face and a feeling of satisfaction. Last week Kim decided that Red Hill Farm wasn't a good fit for her. This is not all that uncommon in the farming world and there is no one to blame. The truth



is that it's really hard work, and it's hard to find the right fit. We wish Kim well, and *we welcome Emily Fero in her place*. Emily worked with us last season part-time and is joining us for the rest of this season. She is happy to be back on the farm and we sure are happy to have her. *Make sure to*

welcome her back or introduce yourself if you're a new member! (photo of Emily last year, supplied by Emily)

Vegetable Destination

By Marcy Magness

One may think that members are the only recipients of our incredible veggies (of course members are the first and most important recipients), but at times Red Hill Farm grows and harvests an excess of food.

The extra harvest is first shared by members as “seconds” and also distributed to OLA Convent and Assisi House. *Lately, some of our veggies have been distributed to new destinations, City Team Ministries and Bernadine Center Food Pantry.* Both non-profits are located in Chester. The vegetables are being picked up on Wednesday mornings and then shared with Chester residents, used for homeless meals and men's recovery program meals. (FYI: Chester has no supermarkets, which can make fresh food difficult to come by for those who live inside the city limits).

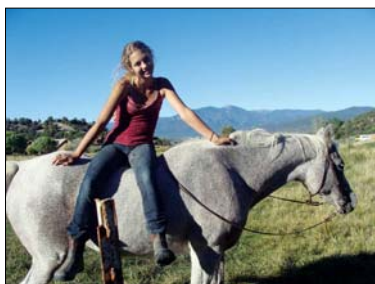
We at Red Hill Farm are happy that our produce is being utilized in these capacities. Kudos to Aby and Mira for

their knowledge of farming, which in turn allows our veggies to reach these destinations.

Anyone who might be interested in participating in drop-off to CT Ministries, please contact me [Marcy Magness] at allvegy@yahoo.com.

Tidbits—Cool Kids!

Child Farmer!—The Aug/Sept 09 issue of *Mother Earth News* has a great article about (and written by) 13-year old



Treska Lydia Stein (see left), who is learning to farm in the foothills of the *Sangre de Cristo* mountains in New Mexico. In summer 2008, she apprenticed herself to a local farmer who taught her a lot about growing,

harvesting, and selling produce. At the same time, she nurtured her own large garden, which she calls “wildly successful”! She also spent time at nearby Gemini Farm, home of an almost totally self-sufficient family growing produce and goats. This year, as a result of these experiences, Treska has elected to be home-schooled so she can tend her garden and start her own new produce-seedling business! For full article, click [here](#); [photo credit](#).

Child Chefs!—*Spatulatta* is the name of the teenage cooking team **Isabelle and Olivia Gerasole**, whose cooking website,



www.spatulatta.com, won a James Beard award in 2007.

Subtitled “*Cooking 4 Kids Online*,” the site features recipes, video demos, and instruction in basic cooking tasks, all aimed at children (in

photo, clockwise from left, are Isabelle [“Belle”], Gaylon [co-producer], Heidi [Mom & co-producer], and Olivia [“Liv”]; [photo credit](#)). There’s also a Spatulatta blog, detailing many of the public events in which the sisters participate by teaching other kids how to cook (including their upcoming debut in Ireland!). See [here](#) for the blog. To check out all their recipes, click [here](#). They also have kids’ vegan recipes ([here](#)) and vegetarian ones ([here](#)).

For their recipe for *Corn and Tomato Salad*: click [here](#); for *Sushi Rice Salad*, [here](#); for *Mini Sub Sandwich*, [here](#).

101 Salads!—Farm workshare member Joanne sent us this link to Mark Bittman’s *NYT* article on 101 quick easy recipes for summer salads—*Thanks Joanne!* ([Click here](#))

101 20-min. Picnic Meals—And I found *this* Mark Bittman column on quick meals for summer picnics! How cool is that (he’s so smart!). [Click here](#).

Susan’s Swiss Chard Tuna Salad—serves 2-4

- ❖ ½ cup mayo
- ❖ 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ❖ 2 tsp balsamic vinegar
- ❖ ¼ cup chopped kalamata olives
- ❖ 2 tsp brine from the olives
- ❖ two 6-oz cans tuna, drained
- ❖ ¾ cup chopped Swiss chard stems
- ❖ 2-3 cups chopped Swiss chard leaves
- ❖ ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ❖ 1 cup (or more) chopped scallions (~10 small)
- ❖ salt & pepper to taste
- ❖ a few handfuls kidney beans, drained (optional)

Combine mayo, mustard, vinegar, & brine in medium bowl & mix. Stir in olives, tuna, chopped chard leaves & stems, parsley, & scallions. Salt/pepper to taste; add more mayo/vinegar if desired. Stir in beans if using. ([source](#))

1-Minute, No-Cook Raspberry Jam

- ❖ some fresh sweet raspberries
- ❖ a little sugar (maybe)

To make one serving of jam, place the raspberries on a plate and mash them with a fork. For a larger batch, put the raspberries into a bowl and mash them with a potato masher. Sprinkle in a smidge of sugar if your berries are a little tart. Slather jam on toasted, buttered bread, or on a peanut-butter sandwich. If you make a lot, put some in freezer to enjoy next winter! ([source](#))

Creamy Zucchini Soup—serves 4

- ❖ 1½ lbs summer squash, cut in ½” dice
- ❖ 1½ cups chicken or veggie broth or water
- ❖ ¼ cup whipping cream
- ❖ ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ❖ 1 tbsp parmesan cheese

Bring squash & broth to boil in saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover & simmer ~15 min. Purée in blender till almost smooth. Return to saucepan. Add remaining ingredients; stir on medium till warm. ([source](#))