



THE RED HILL ROOT



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

Volume VI, Number 14

10th Aug 2009

Farm News



Pint and Quart Containers—When you use our pint and quart boxes to gather your U-pick items, could you please transfer the items to bags at the farm?

Alternatively, could you return the pint and quart containers the following week? We are losing too many containers. ***Nancy Bernhardt, who supplies our fruit, also needs her containers returned:*** she has a labeled box by the fruit fridge for the returns. Many thanks!!!



Red Hill Revelations

By Mira Kilpatrick



Not too much to report this week. We got lots more rain Friday and Sunday. And then again Thursday morning for quite a while. It's a bit discouraging, b/c it holds us up on tractor work in the field, as well weeding, seeding, planting, etc. It leaves us wishing we did another five hundred things on the farm when we had a dry window. It also hurts crops: of course I mentioned the tomatoes last week, but also lettuce heads rot, tiny carrot seedlings get flooded out, crops get smashed down, diseased, and otherwise messed with.

Again, we always have to be thankful that we have a diversity of things growing, so at any given time there should be a handful of crops that are doing well. We also have to appreciate the CSA model and the support we get from our members. We have mentioned several times this season how other farmers across the nation might be struggling. A farmer who only grows tomatoes or potatoes could find themselves in financial and emotional crisis this year. Same with farmers who make their livelihood only at markets: if they have less to bring, or something significant like no tomato crop this year, they will bring in a lot less at markets than they typically do or may need to.

So again, thanks. It's been a strange season, and we're glad we're all still trucking along. Bonus points for those of you who show up in full rainsuits to go out into the U-pick. That always puts a smile on our faces.

Tidbits

The “Brand-Free” Farmer’s Fridge—There’s a fascinating collection of short videos from the *New York Times* about peeking inside the refrigerators of farmers



and food activists to see what’s there ([click here](#) to go to the videos, which play sequentially; at left, Tom Philpott and friends at Maverick Farms, NC [[source](#)]). *What’s so interesting is something that is patently obvious if*

you look in your fridge during our Red Hill Farm season: there are far fewer brand-name food products in said fridge, fewer corporate foods. Rather, there are lots of bags of produce from the farm and jars of things you’ve made yourself from scratch. This means that more of your food dollars go directly to the farmers who grew the food and much less to middlemen. Quite honestly, I hadn’t thought of this consciously until I watched these videos. Now I’ll be working toward a more and more brand-free fridge! All of the featured folks in the videos are members of ***Food Fighters***, a group working for food justice, social justice, and environmental health around the world (see [here](#)).

More on Tomato Blight—A *really* interesting Op Ed in the *New York Times* analyzes causes of this year’s severe “late tomato blight.” (See [here](#).) Beyond the usual suspects (heavy rains, cool temps, and high humidity), another problem is home gardeners who purchased veggie plants that weren’t local. Rather, their tainted tomato seedlings came from industrial



plant-breeding businesses in the South and were sold nation-wide at stores like Home Depot, Kmart, Lowe’s, and Walmart. As the essay notes, the irony of this is that the home gardeners who bought industrially raised tomato seedlings—“the very people most conscious of buying local food and opting out of the conventional food chain...paradoxically set the stage for the worst local tomato harvest in memory.” Buy local, even w/ plants!



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Leeks—Being in the onion family, leeks have layers, and grit often harbors b/tw the layers. *To prepare leeks*, cut away tough green tops & peel off any tough outer leaves. Cut the root end off & slice the leek in half vertically. Wash in running water, riffling thru the layers to make sure any dirt b/tw them is washed away. For



the *nutritional profile of leeks*, [check here](#). ([photo credit](#))

Potato Leek Soup—This is *the* classic leek recipe!

- ❖ 3 large leeks, cut lengthwise, trimmed, cleaned, & chopped; use only white & pale green parts
- ❖ 2 tbsp butter
- ❖ 2 cups water
- ❖ 2 cups chicken or veggie stock
- ❖ 2 lbs potatoes, peeled [or not], cut in ½" dice
- ❖ dash of chopped marjoram [dried or fresh] to taste
- ❖ ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ❖ 2 tsp chopped fresh thyme or ½ tsp dried
- ❖ Tabasco or other hot chile sauce

Cook leeks in butter w/ salt/pepper to taste in medium saucepan. Cover pan; cook on low for 10 min. Check often to be sure leeks don't brown. Add water, broth, & potatoes. Bring to low simmer & cook 20 min. Put ½ the soup mix into blender, purée, & return to pan. Add thyme, parsley, marjoram, & a little hot sauce to taste. Adjust salt & pepper seasoning to taste. Serves 4-6. ([source](#))

Keftes de Prassa (Leek Meatballs)—6-8 servings

- ❖ 1 bunch leeks, trimmed, sliced lengthwise, and washed
- ❖ 1 ½ cups salted water
- ❖ 2 lbs lean ground beef
- ❖ 4 eggs, beaten
- ❖ 1 tsp each ground cumin & turmeric
- ❖ 1 tsp each salt & pepper (or to taste)
- ❖ 2 tsp finely chopped garlic
- ❖ ¼ cup chopped fresh dill or 2 tsp dried dill
- ❖ ¼ cup sesame seeds
- ❖ flour
- ❖ olive oil
- ❖ lemon wedges or red-wine vinegar

Slice leeks into ½ -inch pieces. Bring salted water to boil, add leeks, & simmer 10 min, or till leeks are tender. Drain in a colander & squeeze all water from leeks. Combine rest of ingredients (except flour & oil), add leeks, & blend gently. Shape into meatballs & roll in flour. Flatten meat-

balls a little & fry in ¼ -inch oil till brown on both sides. Add more oil to pan when necessary. Serve w/ lemon wedges or red-wine vinegar. ([source](#))

Peasant Caviar—makes 2 cups

- ❖ 2 small eggplants, ~2 lbs in all
- ❖ 4 garlic cloves, or more, peeled & slivered
- ❖ salt/pepper to taste
- ❖ 1 tsp soy sauce
- ❖ 4 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, chopped
- ❖ ¼ cup golden raisins
- ❖ ¼ cup toasted pine nuts
- ❖ chopped fresh parsley (garnish)

Cut eggplants lengthwise in half & make several deep slits in the flesh, being careful not to cut the skin. Insert garlic slivers into cuts. Lightly sprinkle cut surfaces w/ salt; put halves on baking sheet. Bake in preheated 350 oven 1 hr. Remove eggplants, cool slightly, & invert on toweling. Once cool, squeeze them gently to eliminate excess liquid. Scrape eggplant flesh & cooked garlic out of skins into small bowl; mash w/ fork. Season to taste w/ salt/pepper, add soy sauce, oil, tomato, & raisins; stir, cover & refrigerate overnight. Stir well before serving, stir in pine nuts; sprinkle w/ chopped parsley. (Rosso & Lukins, *The Silver Palate Cookbook*)

Celery Stew—Serves 6-8; recipe can be halved

- ❖ 4 cups celery cut in ½ -inch chunks
- ❖ 1 sweet pepper (reddish if possible)
- ❖ 1 ½ cups sliced onions
- ❖ 3 tbsp butter
- ❖ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ❖ 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ❖ ½ tsp celery salt
- ❖ 4 tomatoes
- ❖ 1 tsp dried chervil (herb—check your market)
- ❖ ½ cup chopped celery leaves or dill
- ❖ ½ cup hot broth
- ❖ 2 cups cooked white kidney beans
- ❖ salt & pepper

Blanch [cook] celery for 5 min. in boiling water; drain. Slice pepper & cook w/ onions in butter & oil till wilted & lightly browned. Add garlic; cook 1 min. Stir in celery & celery salt; cover & cook on medium-low for 20 min, stirring a bit. Peel [or not], seed, & chop tomatoes & add w/ herbs & broth. Cover & cook 10-15 min longer or till celery is tender. Stir in beans & cook till heated thru. Season to taste; serve hot. ([source](#))