



# Field Notes

June 6, 2006

*Newsletter for the Phillie's Bridge Farm Project CSA*

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Welcome to the farm, everyone! First distribution was certainly fun and invigorating. How terrific to see veterans as well as to meet new shareholders of all ages! The rainy weather didn't stop us from delighting in a fun-filled Spring Festival – just a sample of great things to come this season. Thank you to all who made the event so enjoyable and successful by contributing and participating. We had to postpone the nature hike and farm tours, but they will be rescheduled. Stay tuned!

If you are new, please read your handbook for details about the farm and shareholder procedure. Please ask questions and give suggestions. The spirit, vitality and enjoyment of the farm are community endeavors. Please share your talents and enthusiasm by helping with harvesting, weeding, building projects, grounds work, festival planning, educational programs, work parties, and/or potlucks. We especially invite you to join the CSA committee to help plan and implement activities throughout the season with a great crew of other shareholders.

We hope you've found enjoyable ways to use the veggies and herbs you've received so far. They keep getting more delectable as the weeks go on. Feel free to make use of the cookbooks on the corner desk of the Harvest Room to look up recipes, and ask the farm crew and other CSA shareholders for their suggestions as well!

*-- Janet O'Dowd, CSA Committee*

*For the months of May and June, Lindsay Trevelyan, a graduate student in Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto, joined our farm crew. We are exceptionally grateful for her presence and participation. Below are her impressions of the farm and of her involvement in Phillie's Bridge Farm Project.*

I love farming. I love that at the beginning of the day I can make my morning rounds, checking in on the chickens and all the crops, seeing them change, respond and transform. I love that there is nothing you can't talk to.

I love that in the middle of the day, all our plans can change with the whim of the weather. I love how the four layers of fleece and rain gear that I climbed into that morning get scattered around the farm, then reclaimed as the day progresses and the sun retreats.

I love that at the end of the day I carry bits of the land – remembrances of our million interactions – in my sneakers and in the folds of my knuckles. I love that the day is bordered by a gift: a unity of meals and food grown, provided and eaten. I love that farming is an offering that supports life.

I am from Toronto, Canada. I had never worked on a farm, but had always wanted to. In the midst of graduate work in Environmental Studies (specifically looking at

issues of agriculture and food politics in relation to community activism), I had an opportunity to

## Upcoming volunteer work-parties:

- Every Tuesday, 4 PM to dusk.
- Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> 9 AM to 1 PM  
Bring work gloves, a water bottle, and sunscreen/sun hat.

work at Phillie's Bridge Farm. This was a perfect chance to examine the intersection of practical personal commitment and engagement with the land alongside more expansive issues of policy and political action.

So here I am on a farm – a city girl with big ideas and a considerable amount to learn. Like building a hoop house, seeding and thinning in the greenhouse, transplanting, spreading compost, managing pests, the difference between the brassica and cucurbit families, compost care, cover crops, the stirrup hoe, and the weed-wacker – not to mention the sheer dedication and diligence required to run a farm. I quickly fell in love with the all the incarnations of the farm: blossoming and receding of cherry blooms, azaleas, and lilacs, the soft potting of soil, nurturing of seeds both delicate and robust, harvesting the awkward fern-like asparagus, watching spinach, mustard greens, lettuce, kale all take root, become hardy and ready for distribution. All that came was so abundant it was hard to imagine that it too would blossom and then recede, making room for the successive crop.

One day amidst a flurry of tomato



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potting and seeding, Gwenaël told me about a radio show that had been discussing an off-beat sport: a combination of timed chess and boxing meant to encourage and challenge the use of both brain and brawn. Later, when Gwenaël explained how to fill out the forms in the greenhouse used to track seeding and planting dates, it occurred to me that farming is like this sport: it necessitates the combination of strategy, decisive action, physicality, and strength. I am continually amazed at how much rigor is required to run a farm. I am even more amazed at how willing and eager neighboring farmers are to help each other. This is not a competition, but a community project – even between farms.

I came to Phillie Bridge Farm to study community, activism, agriculture and politics. I was planning to examine the *community* this farm served, and those people's understanding and dedication to the concept of *community*. But when Phillie Bridge becomes a moment of nostalgia and I no longer carry its soil in my knuckles, the thing that I will treasure most, that I was perhaps most shocked to find, was the community of farmers working at Phillie Bridge: my co-workers, friends, and roommates. And in a way this is the farm's greatest gift: food loved and tended to by people who are tending to each others' lives, the life of the land and the lives of the shareholders and those people they work with.

My profound thanks,

*Lindsay Trevelyan*

## Oh Boy, Bok Choy!

**Mei quing choy** is a variety of bok choy, a traditional stir-fry vegetable from China. Bok choy is a nutritional power-house: an excellent source of calcium, and vitamins A, B-complex and C.

### Cooking Tips:

Steam or stir-fry bok choy, alone or with other vegetables, but remember to separate the leaf from the thick stem, and add the chopped stem to the pan several minutes before the leaves, since the stem will take longer to cook.

### Storage Tips:

Wrap bok choy in a damp cloth, or put in a plastic bag and place in the hydrator drawer of the refrigerator. It should store for up to 1 week. The leaves will lose integrity and wilt if allowed to dry out.

## Bok Choy Soup

1 tsp butter  
1/2 cup minced leek or onion  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
1-2 medium bok choy, thinly sliced  
8 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
2 large potatoes, peeled and diced  
1 tsp fresh marjoram (2 tsp dried)  
1 carrot, peeled and grated  
3 ounces vermicelli  
salt and pepper to taste

Place butter and 1/4 cup water in soup pot; add leeks and garlic and cook slowly until beginning to brown. Add bok choy, broth and 2 cups water; bring to a boil. Add potatoes, marjoram, and carrot.

Simmer 25 minutes. Add vermicelli; cook 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. 8 servings.

*From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce*

## Irish Colcannon with Kale

1 1/2 pounds baking potatoes, peeled and quartered  
3 Tablespoons butter  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
1/2 pound **Kale**, stemmed and shredded  
3/4 cup hot milk  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Put potatoes in large saucepan and add enough cold water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and cook 15-20 minutes, or until tender. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, melt 2 Tbsp of the butter over medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until browned – about 10 minutes. Scrape the onion onto a plate. Add the kale and 3/4 cup water to the skillet. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover and cook 10 minutes, or until the kale is tender. Drain off and reserve the cooking water.

Drain potatoes. Return to the pan. Mash them until smooth. Gradually add the hot milk, mashing the potatoes until fluffy, adding the reserved cooking water if necessary. Stir in the remaining 1 Tbsp butter, the onions, kale, salt, and pepper until blended. Serves 6. Delicious!

*From 50 Best Mashed Potatoes by Sarah Reynolds*