



Field Notes

June 27, 2006

Newsletter for the Phillie Bridge Farm Project CSA

The Texture of Dirt

When soil is just the right moisture for tillage, it feels like silk. Like dipping your fingers into a soft, crumbly cake. In the early spring, when warm sunny day followed warm sunny day, we scratched our heads, looked at the sky, and said, "Where's the rain?" During this time, the soil felt like powdered chalk and we cringed to till for the dust that would plume in the tractor's wake. In the late spring, it rained and rained and rained and the soil turned to slippery molasses and each step of the boot would leave its memory in the brown behind it. No tractor work then, for the broad metal disks form chunks of clay and the tires sink in the mud. No planting then either, for the wet soil compacts around seedling roots and turns hard and brittle when dry. When soil is wet you leave it alone and, in the long run, try to build good soils that drain deep.

The wet late spring meant that all the seedlings in our greenhouse were delayed in making their debut. *Not yet* to feel the unfiltered sunshine, to feel their roots tickled by the earthworms. They had to wait – hushed, eager – behind greenhouse doors, an audience of honeybees and songbirds awaiting the performance. Some plants, the ones who were *so close, so ready to be free and on their own*, disliked the wait. Their roots curled tightly in the seedling cells and their leaves drooped

frowningly. "Just be glad, Little Plants," we told the grumpy ones, stuck in their pots, "At least there are no deer in here."

But when the soil is just right – right for tillage, right for planting – the farmer's heart sings. *Now*. Now is when we can jump on the tractor and rumble purposefully across the fields. Now is when we call to the plants in the greenhouse "Come out, come out! Now its time to line up in your neat little rows, feel the sweet breeze kiss your leaves!" Now we kneel in the furrow, plunge our hands deep, separate the soil to make way for new seedling roots. Now we sweat, wipe our brow. *Now*.

– Gwenaël Engelskirchen,
co-farmer/project coordinator

Future of Food Movie Showing & Potluck

Phillie Bridge Farm Project invites CSA members to attend an on-farm potluck and viewing of the documentary film *The Future of Food* on Tuesday, July 18th and Saturday, July 22nd. *The Future of Food* addresses the current situation of food production, distribution and control in the United States and abroad. The film examines the history and social implications of the monopolization of seed patents and food ownership, the health risks involved in the use of

Upcoming events at the Farm:

- Hike on the Nature Trail, Saturday, July 22nd, 11 AM. Meet at the Harvest Room.

- *Future of Food* Movie Showing & Potluck: Tuesday, July 18th, 5 PM potluck, 6 PM movie showing & Saturday, July 22nd, 12 PM potluck, 1 PM movie showing.

genetically modified organisms for food, and suggests alternatives to the current state of "bigger is better" agriculture. As a member of a CSA, you've chosen to receive produce that is both fresh and local, and to support agriculture of a human scale. The topics covered in *The Future of Food* are relevant to these choices. Join members of the Phillie Bridge Farm community to share good food and to watch and discuss the film. **Tuesday, July 18th – 5 PM potluck, 6 PM movie showing. Saturday, July 22nd – 12 PM potluck, 1 PM movie showing.** For the potluck, please bring healthful food, snack or drinks to share – let's support our local producers! Also, please **bring your own dish, cup and utensils** – let's refuse refuse! **RSVP to Tim Biello at trbweeks@yahoo.com.**

Hike on the Phillie Bridge Farm Project Nature Trail

Tim Biello, our farm intern extraordinaire, will lead an hour-long, kid-friendly hike on the Phillie Bridge Farm Project's nature trail, which winds through



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the woods and meadows beyond the fields. Enjoy the natural beauty surrounding the farm, learn to identify local trees and plants and discuss the mutual relationship between agriculture and "the wild". The hike will leave from in front of the Harvest Room at 11 AM on Saturday, July 22nd. Tim will lead one other hike on August 19th. **There is a maximum of 15 people for both hikes, so please RSVP to info@philliesbridge.org.**

Farm Camp Scholarships

Three scholarships to attend Farm Camp at Phillie's Bridge Farm are available to children whose families would otherwise not be able to afford the camp tuition. If you know any children between the ages of 6-12 who might be eligible and interested, please contact Martha Cheo, Education Director, at 256-9316.

PBFP Seeks Farm Camp Assistant

We are seeking someone who enjoys kids and the outdoors to help with Farm Camp in exchange for a free Basic Share in the CSA. The position runs Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 2 PM, for 3 weeks starting July 31st. If you're interested and already have a share, you can get a credit for next year. The Farm Camp Assistant helps the Educators when they lead activities and helps the Camp Director supervise children during free time. Contact Martha Cheo at

256-9316.

Spring Education Programs on the Farm

This spring, as in previous years, every Duzine Kindergarten class visited the farm. In addition, PBFP education staff also led visits by classes from Sargent Road Elementary in Beacon, the Huguenot Street Nursery School, and the Playhouse Nursery School. Children took a "Tasting Tour" of the vegetables and herbs growing in the fields, examined the diversity of seedlings in the greenhouse, planted seeds to bring home, dug up some ready-to-use compost, planted in the Discovery Garden, and visited the animals. A new program called "Growing Together" brought young children ages 2-4, together with a parent, to the farm weekly for 5 weeks. Each week we harvested and cooked a different tasty, healthy snack. We also had time to visit the animals, plant seeds and seedlings, examine the greenhouse and compost piles, dye wool yellow with dandelions and make our own caterpillar puppets, pick and press flowers to decorate our own hand-made paper, and crank some vanilla ice cream we topped with strawberry rhubarb sauce. On the first day we planted turnip seeds after seeing "The Giant Turnip" puppet show. The last week we ate crunchy, tasty turnips and sautéed turnip greens. It was such a treat for us to have the same enthusiastic children and parents come back for 5 weeks in

a row. A big thank you goes to: Tim Biello and Monica English, PBFP Farm/Education Interns; Nancy Dergham, Jeffrey Roberts and Ann Finn, Contractual Share Educators; Wendy Rudder and Michelle Pollard, CSA member volunteers; and Emmy Abrahams and Jerry Williams, volunteers at large.

Coming Soon: Kohlrabi!

Kohlrabi is excellent cooked or raw. Grate kohlrabi raw into salads, cube into soups, stews or stir-fries, mash with potatoes, or eat raw like an apple! Peel kohlrabi skin only if tough. Kohlrabi leaves can be used like other greens.

Sautéed: Grate 2 kohlrabi, place in colander and sprinkle with salt. Let stand 30 minutes to drain. Heat 4 tbsp butter over medium heat, add 1 medium diced onion and sauté. Stir in kohlrabi, reduce heat to low, cover and cook 10 minutes. Increase heat to medium and cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in fresh, chopped herbs (thyme, chives, sage, savory, etc.)

Kohl-slaw: Combine 2 kohlrabi, 1 cup finely shredded cabbage, 1 red onion, 1 apple (cored and diced), and 1/2 cup currants or raisins. Gently toss with 2 tsp olive oil with 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar. Cover and refrigerate a few hours before serving.