



Field Notes

Week of June 11, 2007

Newsletter for the Phillie Bridge Farm Project CSA

"It's June. Everything changes in June." When I moved to the farm this year in February, it was during the beginning of a snowstorm that seemed to last through April. Vertical sheets of snow turned into blankets of snow turned into crumpled hills of snow before the plow. I knew I had come to Phillie Bridge Farm to do a job that I was eager to do, but as the winter and spring wore on I started to question whether any of our efforts would ever come to fruition. Enter June. This glorious month – when timely rain, morning mists and balmy afternoons seem to grace every day with impossible growth in the field (crops, pastures *and* the weeds) and at harvest, every week a new vegetable or three appears on the menu – the first broccoli! Bok choy! Escarole!

During this month, we farmers get to show off our strength and stamina. April and May let us get in some practice before we have to plant six beds of tomatoes in one afternoon – and then till in another field. On any given morning, the list of tasks looks daunting, but that is the excitement of the work here. At the end of the day, we can look back and know that we have done something significant and look forward to doing even more tomorrow. Our interns have shown themselves to be real troopers, not only by working hard, but also by attending educational outings and work parties at other farms.

Farm Camp Scholarships Available

We have scholarships available to Farm Camp for children whose families would otherwise not be able to afford the camp tuition. If you know any children between the ages of 6-11 who might be eligible and interested, please contact Martha Cheo, Education Director, at 256-9316. Transportation is not provided. If you are able to help transport a child from the Kingston or Ellenville area, let Martha know. There are 3 weeks of Farm Camp, starting July 23, Monday-Thursday, 9am-2pm.

In the past couple of weeks, I have seen and spoken to most of the community that makes up our CSA. A number of folks I have met for the first time during distribution. I will hold in my memory new mothers showing their children different herbs on the table, comments on the freshest greens and good recipes for them, and screams of delight at our renegade chicken. These memories are what I was waiting for. I will carry them with me through this long, arduous, fantastic month.

– *Jesica Pascual*
Co-Farm Manager

Spring Education Programs @ PBF

Once again, this spring, every Duzine Kindergarten class visited the farm, as well as children and parents from the Huguenot Street and the Playhouse Nursery Schools. Children took a "Tasting Tour" of the fields, examined the diversity of seedlings in the greenhouse, planted seeds to bring home, dug up some ready-to-use

compost, helped plant in the Discovery Garden, visited the animals, and picked rocks from the fields, learning about how rocks are formed. We also enjoyed the company of a group of "high functioning" autistic students

from Rondout Valley High School, who had a memorable time on the farm, including cooking up some scrumptious kale-cheese biscuits. The "Growing Together" children (2-4 years of age) and their parents have also been enjoying the farm weekly. A big thank you goes to the following talented and enthusiastic people: Aileah Kvashay and Liz Herman, Farm Educator Interns, and Rebecca Larsen, Edwin Lee Gibson, and Anne Finn, Contractual Share Educators.

– *Martha Cheo, Education Director*

Escarole is a new crop for us at Phillie Bridge Farm Project. The open, loose-leaf heads resemble lettuce, but the leaves are thicker and far more bitter. For this reason, Jes recommends you cook it rather than eat it raw. Many cookbooks recommend washing the leaves well, paying special attention to soil that hides in the narrow channels where the leaves attach to the base. And guess what? Escarole rivals bananas as a source of potassium.



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Wilted Escarole

Wash and trim. Cut the leaves into wide strips. Sauté in olive oil, covered, until wilted and bright green, about 2 – 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, add a splash of vinegar, and serve.

Variation: Sauté onion and garlic in the pan before adding the escarole. Once cooked, toss with an herb of your choice: tarragon, parsley, oregano, sage. Serve with gruyere, roquefort or parmesan cheese.

Chard, Spinach & Escarole Pasta

*From Alice Water's
Chez Panisse Vegetables*

1 bunch chard (about ½ pound)
1 pound spinach
1 head escarole
1 large red onion
1 – 2 cloves garlic
1/8 cup olive oil
½ tsp fresh thyme
½ cup red wine
1 pound linguine
¼ cup stock or water

Stem the chard and the spinach, if necessary. Remove the core for the escarole and separate the leaves. Wash all the greens and cut into chiffonade. Peel and coarsely chop the onions. Peel and chop the garlic very fine. Put a pot of salted water on for boiling the pasta. Heat a heavy casserole over medium to high heat; add about half the olive oil, the onions and thyme and cook, covered, until

tender, about 5 minutes. Uncover, and continue cooking about 5 minutes more, until the onions are very brown. Add the red wine, cover, turn the heat to low, and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Put the pasta on to cook. Uncover the onions and add the garlic. After a minute or so, add the greens and the stock. Cook for 5 minutes, season to taste with salt and pepper. Drain the pasta and add to the casserole with the greens. Pour a little olive oil over, toss well and serve.

When we first started harvesting kale, I couldn't get enough of it. The leaves were so fresh and tender that I kept munching them raw. Then I invented this salad, inspired by a dish Martha made in the fall. The lemon juice "cooks" the kale, resulting in a delicious, amazingly fresh dish. — *Gwenaëll*

Super Seasonal Salad

1 generous bunch fresh kale
Juice from ½ a lemon
1 – 2 tbsp olive oil
1 pint fresh strawberries
salt and pepper

Wash kale and allow to drain completely. Remove stems, chop leaves coarsely (about 3 to 4 inch strips or pieces), and transfer to a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, and ¼ tsp of each salt and pepper. Drizzle the dressing over the kale and toss the kale until the dressing is thoroughly incorporated – each leaf is coated (kale should darken

and wilt slightly). Halve or quarter 1 pint of fresh strawberries and toss with the kale. Serve immediately.

Green Herb Soup with Sorrel and Lovage

*From Deborah Madison's
Local Flavors*

1 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tbsp olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
2 small potatoes, thinly sliced
3 – 4 cups sorrel, stems removed
4 cups chard leaves
1 cup lovage, finely chopped
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
4 – 6 cups stock or water
lemon juice or white wine vinegar
½ cup crème fraiche

Warm butter and oil in a soup pot. Add the onion, potatoes, carrot, sorrel and chard. Add 2/3 of lovage and sprinkle 1 ½ tsp salt over all. Cover and cook over low heat until the greens have collapsed and the potatoes are partially cooked, about 15 minutes. If the pan seems too dry at any point, add water in small increments so that nothing burns.

Add the stock or water, bring to a boil and simmer, partially covered, for 15 minutes. Puree or leave the soup with some texture. Stir in the remaining lovage. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice or vinegar to taste in order to bring out the flavors. Sometimes several adjustments are necessary to get it right. Stir in the crème fraiche and serve.