



BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY FARM CSA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 8 2010

Field Notes

by Anna Wei

I usually don't get nostalgic during this time of the season but, since everything seems to be earlier this year, the truth is I have been getting sentimental lately.

When Jason, Judy, and I were planting fall broccoli on Thursday, memories of the three of us rescuing our small garlic plants from the heavy piles of leaf mulch in March were very much on my mind.

The realization that the newly planted fall broccoli beds were once the garlic beds and the fact that all three of us were working together on this new turnover in crops made me a bit sappy. Time certainly does move faster as I get older (at my ripe old age of 23) and it moves even faster when you're a farmer in the summer.

It's also about that time in the season when we farmers are thoroughly exhausted - it's not about getting through to the end of the season, it's about getting through the day.

In moments when I'm asking myself "Wait, why am I here? Why am I putting myself through this again?" it's the little things that keep me going. Of all the little things this week, the one that has been by far the most delightful was witnessing one of the most amazing beneficial relationships a farmer can have with an insect.

Kristin, Roslindale beekeeper and one of our workshares, found a tomato hornworm that was infected by a predatory parasitic wasp called the "braconid wasp." The female wasp lays its eggs just under the skin of the caterpillar and as the eggs hatch, the larvae feeds on the hornworm's viscera - literally eating the hornworm alive. I had seen many pictures of infected tomato hornworms while perusing insect books, but seeing one live in our very own tomato patch made the whole "letting nature take its course" thing feel more real.



Tomato Hornworm

Aside from reminiscing and ecological moments, we're still harvesting, planting, weeding, hoeing, and shoveling away! The watermelons are getting

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This Week's Share

Garlic
Tomatoes
Eggplant
Peppers
Beans
Potatoes
Scallions
PYO herbs
Summer Squash/
Cucumbers
Cherry Tomatoes
Husk Cherry Tomatoes or
Tomatillos

Coming soon:
Carrots
Watermelons

Volunteer drop in hours

Wednesdays from 7am -
noon at BRADLEY

first and third Saturday of
every month from 8am -
noon AT BROOKWOOD.

Questions?

Email Anna at
volunteer

@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org

Field Notes, *cont'd from page 1*

bigger since the last time I checked, though some have been eaten through by the woodchucks (Jason found nearly ten woodchuck holes last week in our melon patch!). Baby fall brassicas are growing in our greenhouse and being protected (we hope) against the thriving population of cabbage moths. Leeks are looking bigger and the onions are coming out soon to cure. We've got winter squash and pumpkins growing, and multiple generations of carrots and beets.

Lately, some of you may have noticed the beautiful mass quantities of tomatoes (knocking on wood). For those of you who may be missing the greens and wondering if they will ever come back in the share-- don't fret, they will! We hoed a bed of baby salad greens earlier this week and then covered them with row cover, which we hope will keep them from being

eaten by flea beetles (we lost our last lettuce bed to some hungry deer). Our current lettuce is sizing up and we recently seeded some new Swiss chard and kale. I don't like to blame the weather, but growing greens in this heat is difficult. In the meantime, do visit your nearest farmer's market and support other local farmers who have been able to grow greens through this heat.

Until more greens arrive, I hope your bellies are as full as mine with tasty salsa and refreshing heirloom tomato salads! If you haven't tried the Aunt Ruby's German Green variety, oh, you must! It's my new favorite heirloom tomato, and yes, you eat them ripe when they're green and slightly pink in color!

Anna

Tips on cutting flowers and keeping them fresh


1. Cut yourself a nice long stem, but don't cut all the way to the bottom of the plant. Be careful to leave some of the branching sets lower down as they will continue to produce.
2. When you get your flowers home, re-cut the stems about an inch from the bottom. Cut them at an angle with a clean, sharp clipper, scissor or knife.
3. Strip off any foliage at the bottom of the stem that might be under the water line. This will help keep bacteria from growing in your vase.
4. Keep your vase as clean as your dinner dishes, changing the water often. Flower stems are like pipes-- if they get clogged up by bacteria the blooms will wilt.
5. Remove any wilting elements from your bouquet. Some flowers last longer than others so you can improve the staying power of the long-lived flowers by removing the dying ones.

See Gazette, page 3, for information on cutting bouquets at Brookwood.



“People from a planet without flowers would think we must be mad with joy the whole time to have such things about us.”

~Iris Murdoch



Gazette

Pick-Up times

Tuesday 8/10 : 1-6pm
 Thursday 8/12 : 1-6pm
 Saturday 8/14 : 9-12pm

Fish Share and Fruit Share pickups starts this week!

FRUIT Shares will be available for pickups during your regular distribution hours.

FISH shares, however, must be picked up on Tuesday only! The fish will be available for pick up at Brookwood from 2-6pm next Tuesday. The fish will be in large coolers inside the shed where you pick up your veggies. Remember to bring a cooler to pick up your fish. If you have any questions about the FISH pick up, contact Mark at info@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org All other questions about fish, etc, should be directed to CAFC.

U-pick Flowers! It's been so wonderful seeing folks out picking their own bouquets in the flower garden! Remember to follow the instructions on the sign and return scissors. Prices for stems are listed on the sign. Please follow the picking limits for each kind of flower. Questions? Contact

Anna volunteer@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org

See page 2 for tips on cutting flowers and keeping them fresh!

Recipe

Fresh Green Bean Salad

Ingredients:

½ lb. green beans
 3 small summer squash/zuke
 2 tomatoes
 2 scallions
 2 cloves garlic
 2 Tbs. olive oil
 1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
 salt and pepper to taste

Snip the ends of the beans, cut into 1-2" pieces and add to boiling water.

Return water to a boil, and cook another three minutes.

Drain and dump into ice water to chill. Drain again.

Julienne the summer squash or zucchini and add to the beans.

Mince the garlic and scallions and chop the tomatoes into small pieces.

Dress with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper. Let marinate until the squash softens a little. Serve with bread to soak up all the yummy juices.



Goldfinch at Brookwood

Save the Date!

The next POTLUCK DINNER at Brookwood is slated for Friday, August 27, 6 pm. As always, bring food to feed 4 hungry people, and your own utensils (& musical instruments!)

Vegetable of the Month: Peppers

Peppers are a new world crop that is believed to be one of the first cultivated crops in the Americas. There is evidence that they were domesticated in Ecuador more than 6,000 years ago and that chili peppers were part of the human diet in the Americas since at least 7500 BC. Christopher Columbus was one of the first Europeans to encounter them, in the Caribbean, and he named them "peppers" because of their similarity in taste to the black pepper of India, although the American peppers have no relation to the Old World Piper nigrum, commonly known as black pepper. After Columbus, sweet and hot peppers were brought back to Spain and introduced to Asia via Spanish controlled trade routes from Mexico that took them to India, China, Africa, the Philippines and Korea. Today, Mexico remains one of the major pepper producers in the world.

Although we separate peppers into the categories of "sweet" and "hot," there are five distinct species of peppers and the largest, *Capsicum annuum*, includes both sweet and hot varieties (bell peppers, cayenne and jalapenos). What determines their heat intensity is the chemical group known as capsaicinoids, which includes capsaicin and several related chemicals. The "heat" of chili peppers is measured in Scoville heat units (SHU), which is the number of times a chili extract must be diluted in water for it to lose its heat. Bell peppers rank at 0 SHU, New Mexico green chilis at about 1,500 SHU, jalapeños at 3,000–6,000 SHU, and habaneros at 300,000 SHU. The hottest chili pepper on record is the naga jolokia (from northeastern India), at over 1,000,000 SHU.

The common bell pepper is the only *Capsicum* that lacks capsaicin (the chemical that gives that burning sensation). Capsaicin not only adds heat to our food, but is useful in treating arthritis pain and headaches. Peppers are also a great source of vitamin C (and note that red peppers have a much

higher Vitamin C count than do green ones) along with most B vitamins (B6 in particular) and potassium, magnesium, and iron.

At Brookwood Community Farm, we grow a variety of sweet and hot peppers. Sweet pepper varieties include: *Flavorburst* (lime green bell, turning to yellow); *Islander* (a lavender bell with a mild, sweet taste); *Revolution* (a large, blocky green bell); *Carmen* (a long Italian roasting pepper); and Round of Hungary (a sweet, red pimento with ribbed, flattened fruits- great for stuffed peppers). Hot peppers we grow, listed from less to more hot, include: *Pardon* (green, medium size, not hot when harvested smaller- 1½," become more hot when grown to 2-3"); *Ancho* (larger, heart shaped, used for chile rellenos, mole sauce and chili powder); *Czech black* (small, pointy, dark purple, medium hot); *Jalapeno* (green, longer, blunt point, medium hot); *Cayenne* (long, red, thin walled, good for hot sauce and drying); *Bulgarian carrot* (orange, thin, pointy, hot); *habanero* (orange, small lantern- extremely hot!).

Although the bell peppers we harvest as green will turn red or orange, and we leave many on the vine to mature, we often have a problem in getting them to ripen evenly, resulting in soft spots or rot, as one area becomes overripe while other parts of the fruit are still green. For this reason we harvest some fruits when they start to turn color, or include red fruits in the distribution baskets that may have soft spots you will need to cut off. It is worth it to experience the sweet taste of Carmen or juicy red bells. These peppers are delicious raw, and with onions, are an unbeatable combination along with scrambled eggs, sauces, fajitas and many other dishes. Roasted peppers are a gourmet treat.



Brookwood Peppers

Introducing Our Volunteers

Katie Sullivan

I'm 20 and going to be a junior at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at NYU this fall. The school has no majors but requires that I create a unique, interdisciplinary concentration--so my concentration is going to be the philosophical and anthropological implications of different forms of agriculture, because I am quite interested in sustainable agriculture, "the environment," philosophy, and anthropology. Besides academic interests, I also love photography, making music, writing, running, yoga, biking, cooking, and French.

I am volunteering at Brookwood because I think the farm exemplifies one type of truly sustainable agriculture and want to support that type of farming as well as learn how it all works. I've never had the chance to farm before now, even though I've studied different types of farms and techniques in courses at school. After I began volunteering at Brookwood, many of my previous assumptions about farming have been overturned. I would always read about how "labor intensive" organic farming is--only now can I fully appreciate the work that goes into organic farming and acknowledge what it would take for our food system to change over to that type of farming. I was skeptical about whether or not I would like farming--but from what I've experienced so far, I really like it. That is not to say that it is easy by any means, or that I absolutely love harvesting a seemingly never-ending row of cucumbers in the heat and sun-- but overall I find it to be more engaging than any sort of job I've done before (and not at all dehumanizing, unlike many jobs I've had). I also like that farming requires physical work and produces tangible results; I feel like I've actually accomplished something at the end of the day.

Erickson Smith

I'm going into my second year at Pearson United World College of the Pacific on Vancouver Island, Canada, which is an IB school that I've been attending for the last two years of high-school. I wanted to work at Brookwood to learn more about larger-scale farming, as my previous farming experience had been in a greenhouse and on a 1-2 acre farm. Since I began working in my school's greenhouse, I became more interested in sustainable and organic agriculture and its place in our modern food system, as well as in the produce itself.

What attracted me to Brookwood was its CSA, because I think local food distribution is what needs to happen more to turn our food system around. I've really liked working with young people who are genuinely interested in what they are nurturing, and all the new farming techniques I've learned, stringing tomatoes and drip-irrigation being a couple examples. I've also just really enjoyed being outside for the better part of the day among people and plants that are both very much alive. It's hard to beat a beautiful New England summer day. The only thing I've disliked is the length of the lunchbreak. It is my strong belief that if one is to be a farmer, one must first understand and explore the complexities and intricacies of the flavors and textures of each and every morsel of foodstuff you have to eat that day.

Peter Smith

I'll be starting at Princeton University in the fall after two years at United World College-USA in New Mexico. Over the past two years at my school in New Mexico, I was involved in a number of volunteer activities (soup kitchen, Habitat for Humanity), but had yet to really work on a farm. I had heard great things about Brookwood from Mark Smith, and I had also just completed a science course that included a study of farming and food production methods. So, I came to Brookwood to get firsthand experience of organic food production. I really liked the camaraderie at Brookwood, and appreciated the patience and friendliness of Judy, Jason, and Anna, among others. I learned that organic food production is hard work, but also very gratifying.



Villanelle for Brookwood

The soil's not for us; we're for the soil
And each to compost turns, when we repay
Loam where we'll lie, turf on which we toil.

Beyond the fields, all's noise, haste, din, turmoil
Kneel here and learn, where quietude holds sway,
That soil's not for us; we're for the soil.

We soil-block and seed; soon, shoots uncoil
Wreathe skyward from their beds of sand, silt, clay--
Loam where we'll lie, turf on which we toil.

Worms, grubs, nematodes--we don't recoil;
They farm the underworld, by their work convey
That soil's not for us; we're for the soil

We pay the dirt its due, let nothing spoil
We gather, eat, share, store, with reverence pay
Loam where we'll lie, turf on which we toil.

Some days it rains. Some day it's fit to broil.
We do what we know. The soil knows its way.
For soil's not for us; we're for the soil:
Loam where we'll lie; turf on which we toil.

Michael Horan
Stoughton