

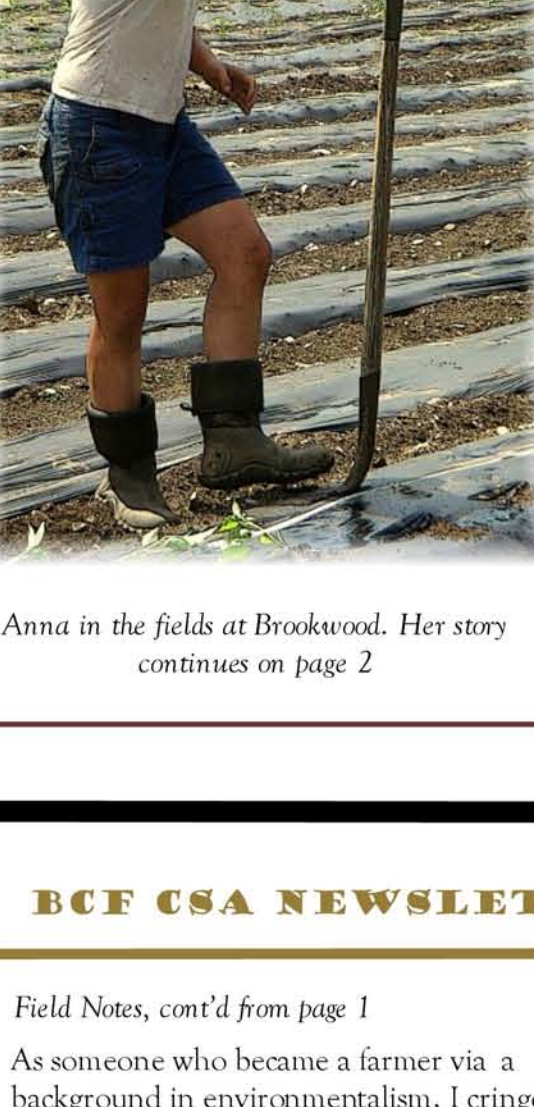
BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY FARM CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

Field Notes

by Anna Wei

When I once told a farmer with whom I worked in Amherst that my superhuman power of choice would be my ability to control the weather, he responded to me, with slight exasperation, "But Anna, then farming would so boring!" His words rang in my head as our hopes for more rain hardly ever came true this May while we continued to plant in the fields. Thus, we were sent on an inevitable whirlwind of ordering more irrigation parts, putting together the irrigation pipes, laying out tubes and drip tape, poking holes and tying knots, and ultimately, tinkering around with the water pressure.



Anna in the fields at Brookwood. Her story continues on page 2

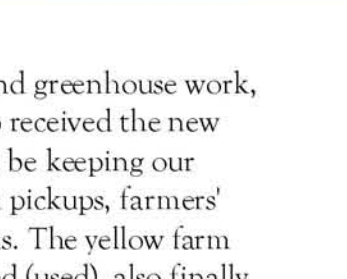
So yes, May has been a busy month for us as life blooms and activity picks up on the farm. Summer is certainly showing hints of itself as we've already experienced several days of rising heat from our unrelenting sun. Iconic summer vegetables like tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, tomatillos, and cucumbers have been transplanted onto newly-laid plastic mulch while the first watermelons were seeded in the greenhouse.

Ready to Harvest

- Mixed greens
- Radishes
- Lettuce
- Turnips
- Kale
- Spinach
- Pac Choi
- Arugula
- Pea greens

In This Issue:

Field Notes	1
Gazette	3
<i>(important news!)</i>	
Breakfast at Brookwood	4
Roots: A Personal Reflection	6
Food for the Soul: Marge Piercy	7



BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010 2

Field Notes, cont'd from page 1

As someone who became a farmer via a background in environmentalism, I cringe at the use of farming on our fields. However, the reality of farming is that we require this technology, and from my previous experience, plastic mulch has proved itself effective in keeping out weeds while helping to maintain soil moisture. Especially for plantings like tomatoes that grow throughout most of the season, the plastic mulch also works nicely with drip irrigation and will help us save time in the end. It is also apparently biodegradable. Until we find a more sustainable method, I've reluctantly come to accept plastic mulch.

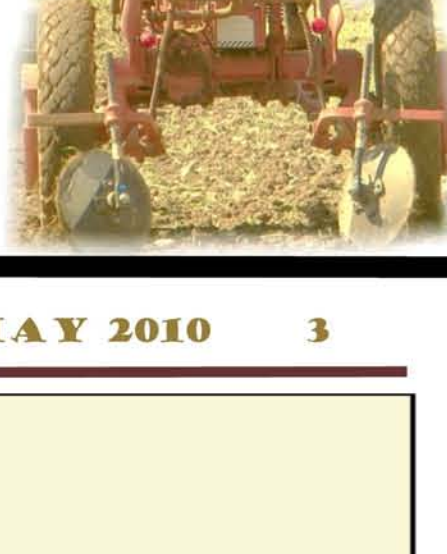
Having never farmed earlier in the season than June, I was surprised to find that I enjoyed weeding this month. At this point in the season, the weeds are not yet quite as overwhelming as they will get during the peak of the growing season. April and May are big planting months for us, so weeding becomes a task that is done intermittently when needed. Then, come late June, July, and August, we'll be crawling along the rows, scuffling with our hoes, and cultivating with our tractor like mad to suppress the weed pressure. Besides the planting and seeding, you may have noticed the lovely new fence trellises that we staked for our climbing sugar and snap peas. Unfortunately, a hungry wood chuck ate the tops of some our peas. Fortunately, she didn't do too much damage - yet.

Egg shares and Spring CSA shares that began in the beginning of May brought new and old faces to Brookwood as we started reaping from the early bounty. While we were cutting our beautiful spinach on our first harvest morning, Judy expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to "warm-up" back into the harvesting mode before the regular CSA shares starts in June, and I wholeheartedly agree with her.

Along with our field and greenhouse work, we were also excited to receive the new walk-in cooler that will be keeping our produce fresh for CSA pickups, farmers' markets, and donations. The yellow farm truck that we purchased (used) finally arrived and is becoming well acquainted with the stretch of concrete between the two farm properties. Tools, cover crop seed, and other supplies that were stored in our shed at the end of last season were rearranged and reorganized in order to better accommodate our needs for this season.

I also wanted to take this moment to thank all of you who came out to wake up the farm, eat pancakes, and purchase seedlings at our breakfast event on May 22nd, which was organized by our dedicated board members and made possible by the help of eager volunteers. It was so nice to see all of you coming out to enjoy the beautiful spring scene on the farm. Speaking of volunteers, I also want to thank everyone who has helped keep us rolling along this month. Whether you came for an hour or two, or for three days in the week, your "put-me-to-work" attitudes are much appreciated. Thank you!

Until next time, enjoy the early harvest and the eggs from Brambly Farm in Norfolk! Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming fruit share information from Jason. And get stoked for the CSA shares to start soon!



BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010 3

Gazette

SPRING SHARE and EGG SHARE pick-ups at the red barn:
Fridays 2-5pm Saturdays 9am-12p
(Questions about share pickups? Email us at brookwoodfarmer@gmail.com)

If you come to VISIT or volunteer on the farm, please park in the first parking lot at Brookwood and the separate parking lot available at the Bradley estate!

Self-Serve PLANT SALE! Help yourself to extra tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, flowers, herbs, and squash (on the table by the greenhouse at Brookwood)! \$5 for a 6-pack or \$1 for each plant. Please leave cash or check payable to Brookwood Community Farm in the money box.

Starting in June, our VOLUNTEER HOURS will change to Wednesdays from 6:30am-12pm. For people who can only come during the weekends, please join us in the fields every first and third Saturday of every month from 9am-12pm!
(Questions about volunteering? Email Anna at volunteer@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org)

Family Volunteering hours: Want to volunteer but have a little one under your care? Fellow CSA member Alysa Buchanan is coordinating "family friendly" volunteering hours during which parents switch between childcare and helping farmers in the fields. Please email her at alysab@gmail.com if you're interested in this volunteering opportunity with other families!

CSA Directory: We are creating a directory so that our farm community can stay connected with each other! Please email brookwoodfarmer@gmail.com if you do not wish to have your contact information in the directory.

Brookwood ONLINE. In addition to our web site, you can stay abreast of developments at the farm by joining our Facebook page (Brookwood Community Farm).

WISH LIST

We'd be grateful for any of the following: Chalkboard; chalk; pool skimmer; garden gloves; bed sheets (to keep produce cool!).
Thanks for your ongoing support!

BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

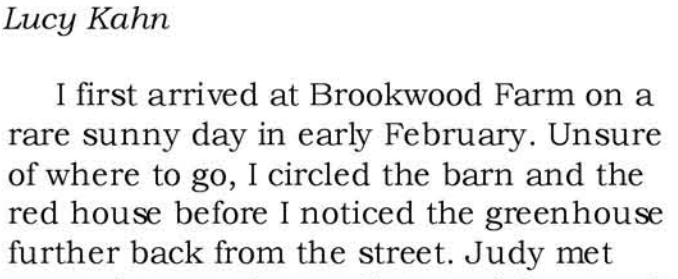
MAY 2010 4

Breakfast at Brookwood



Last Saturday Brookwood Farm held a "Wake Up the Farm!" pancake breakfast and plant sale to kick off the 2010 growing season. The weather was perfect. The pancakes were perfect. The setting was perfect. It was just that kind of morning. The pancakes were so good (served with strawberries and melon slices, plain or festooned with chocolate chips or blueberries) and the turnout so high that the food was more or less gone before the official 11:00 close. But it was hard to find a disappointed face. It was a wonderful start to the season. People sat at picnic tables talking about the farm, their towns, their interests and the great breakfast. Kids were everywhere, especially in the large tree that sits over by the greenhouse as well as the large pile of dirt at the south end of the fields. And the grown-ups were as just as full of energy and enthusiasm as folks planned their own home gardens and took advantage of the offerings at the plant sale tables. Thanks go out to all the staff and volunteers who took the time to lay out the meal. When's lunch?
by Frank Schroth

Our thanks to our generous donors: DCR Thatcher Farm, Milton; Russo's, Watertown; Stop & Shop, Hyde Park & Quincy; Equal Exchange Preserve; Kidz with Miss Debbie; Board members



Recipe

Oatmeal Pancake Mix
(10 cups dry mix)

- 3 1/2 cups old fashioned or rolled oats
- 5 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 cup vegetable oil

Grind oats in food processor until chopped fine (not a powder). Put the flour, oats, and all other dry ingredients into a mixer with a paddle. Mix on slow speed, drizzling the vegetable oil into the bowl while mixer is running. When all the oil has been added, stop the mixer and squeeze a clump of mix in your hand. If it stays together it is just right. If it is still crumbly, add oil one teaspoon at a time until the consistency is correct. Store in an airtight container for up to two weeks at room temperature, or indefinitely in a refrigerator or freezer.

Butter: Whisk together 1 cup mix, 1 cup buttermilk, and 1 egg. Don't worry if it seems thin at first: the oats will soak up the milk and the mix will thicken a bit as it stands. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before cooking. Heat a griddle, lightly grease it, and drop the batter onto it by heaping tablespoons to make a 3 inch diameter pancake. When the edges look dry and bubbles come to the surface and don't break, turn the pancake over to finish cooking on the second side.

Note: A batch using 1 cup of mix will make twelve 3 inch pancakes.

"At home I serve the kind of food I know the story behind"--Michael Pollan

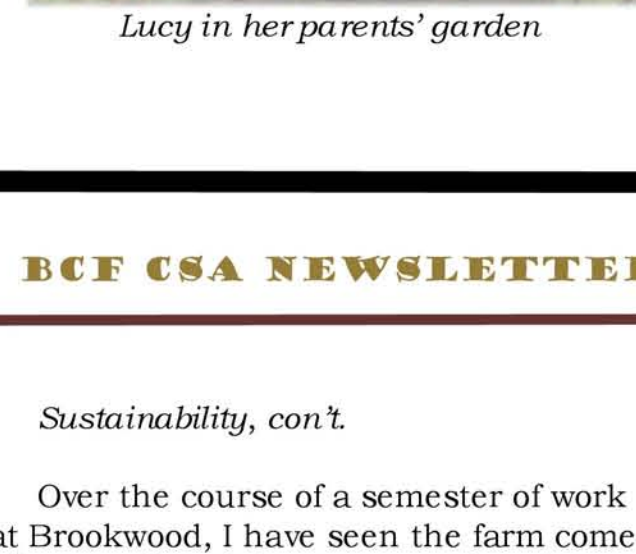
BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010 5

Roots of Sustainable Food Systems Run Deep at Brookwood: A Personal Reflection

Lucy Kahn

I first arrived at Brookwood Farm on a rare sunny day in early February. Unsure of where to go, I circled the barn and the red house before I noticed the greenhouse further back from the street. Judy met me at the greenhouse door, and I stepped inside. Even late in a New England winter, it was still warm enough to break a sweat inside. Judy apologized for the messy state of the greenhouse; it was the first time she'd been back in a while, and she was still cleaning up and getting ready for this season. She gave me the simple job of picking dried hot peppers from their brittle bushes, and offered me the radio in the corner, wishing me luck finding a quality station if I wanted to listen to music while I worked.



Lucy in her parents' garden

Since then, I have been working weekly at Brookwood as supplemental service work for my class "Historical In Action For A Sustainable World." The course focused on different activists' responses to global issues such as hunger, education, healthcare, and climate change. As a part of our course work, each member of the class participated in weekly community service work related to one of these larger issues.

I am a senior at Milton Academy, but during the fall semester I attended the Mountain School, a program that combines classes with life on a working farm in Vermont. My experience at the Mountain School sparked my interest in food sustainability. For years, I had enjoyed fresh vegetables from my parents' backyard garden, and eggs from our chickens, without realizing the importance of these acts as bold statements in the face of our fundamentally unsustainable food industry. My Mountain School experience and my work at Brookwood have helped me become firmly rooted in the issue of food sustainability, a connection I hope you CSA members, Brookwood volunteers, and anyone else reading this finds and develops in your own way.

Continued next page

BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010 6

Sustainability, con't.

Over the course of a semester of work at Brookwood, I have seen the farm come alive. My first visit was spent cleaning out the Brookwood greenhouse, and many of my ensuing visits were devoted to starting seeds in the Bradley greenhouse, planting peas and onions in the fields, and doing transplanting work for the recent plant sale. Now, the tables of the Bradley greenhouse are overflowing with green life, and more plants are coming up in long rows across the garden. At first, through February and most of March, only Judy and I worked on the farm on the days I came. Now, we usually have a group of four to seven people. I had never seen a farm in spring before; the farm work I did at Mountain School in September was harvesting, and during the summer I only helped my dad with our garden. Visiting

the farm weekly gave me regular snapshots of the planting season, and watching the farm grow from late winter to spring has been like watching a flipbook.

I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to work at Brookwood, and so happy that we have a place like Brookwood in Milton. Sustainability and local food are rising issues in the world, and local farms like Brookwood remind us to be conscious of where our food comes from, and how it was grown. We should be proud to support Brookwood, as well as other local farmers, and to continue to demand quality food with a low environmental impact from our food system. Having worked on Brookwood farm, I guarantee it can deliver.

To be of use

The people I love the best jump into work head first without dallying in the shallows and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight. They seem to become natives of that element, the black sleek heads of seals bouncing like half submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience, who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward, who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge in the task, who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and pass the bags along, who stand in the line and haul in their places, who are not parlor generals and field deserters but move in a common rhythm when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud. Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust. But the thing worth doing well done has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident. Greek amphoras for wine or oil, Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums but you know they were made to be used. The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real.

Marge Piercy

BCF CSA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010 7

