

ROXBURY FARM

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www.roxburyfarm.com

Letter from a farmer

Our farm is far from perfect and we work with what we have, slowly making the improvements as the cracks in the vessel of the farm as a living organism present themselves one by one. In the context of the farm as a self-contained individuality we embrace technological solutions that help improve the farm and our lives. The tractors and implements allow us to have more of a regular working schedule, even when the windows of opportunity are small. While we don't want to become slaves to our equipment, we also don't want to become slaves to our duties. If you commit yourself to farming as a creative maternal practice, you can't be working all the time; you need time off. Some of the most important decisions we made on the farm were after we learned to listen more closely, and by developing an open heart and an open mind. You can't do that when you are always busy.

While we already struggle with being too busy, we decided that we needed to manage the whole farm ourselves instead of renting out land to our neighbor. We knew that by making our own hay we could improve the overall health of the whole farm, which includes us. By making hay under the optimum conditions we can prevent pests from migrating into our vegetable crops, we can maintain nesting areas for grassland birds, provide higher quality winter feed for the sheep, and recycle the hay as manure, allowing us to better manage the soil fertility on the entire farm. This required the purchase of new equipment, as we could not add stress to the already busy month of June, and it is an example of where technology provided a good solution while serving the farm as a whole.

Over the course of the winter we take time to reflect on the decisions we made last winter and either recommit or change them. A good example is when we plan our crop rotations. Each of the smaller fields on the farm behaves differently under different spring, summer, and fall conditions and provides different benefits and problems for the variety of crops we raise. This choice of crops in a particular field is just as much the result of our acquired knowledge and our use of logic as it is of imagining that field producing a particular crop.

Empirical evidence is a poor tool to assess why we love someone and who we choose to have relationships with. Logic and technology are helpful tools but are limited in their ability to give us all the answers. We fear we can't trust our feelings, as they are a mix of true sentience but also of desires, and unresolved past experiences. Basing your decisions on inspiration, imagination, and intuition (*con't p. 2*)



Cara and Mike washing beets.



Some of the 2008 Farm Crew at Wouter's going away party.

(*letter con't*) requires work and training. Developing our trust in these abilities is not just a required quality for an artist; all of us depend on that trust, often while making the most important decisions of our lives. Integrating art into our lives may be more of a necessity than we realize.

A whole-farm approach requires more than following carefully planned-out procedures. There is no need to know everything that is going on above and below the soil; we can't rely on an infinite knowledge base. The challenge with knowledge is how to piece all the components together again, as logic can be disassociated from real-life experiences. Working towards integral systems in more about art than science. In the words of John Peterson of Angelic Organics, "farms are a high level of poetry." In the same way that words are the basis for the poet, John sees all the subtle forms of life on the farm as material that is then composed into the farm as individuality. The more he gets to know the farm, the more he listens, which allows him to better express the farm individuality. This process requires much meditation, inspiration, and imagination—as well as sound farming practices.

Our continued study of developing a personal relationship to our farm is furthered by talking to our fellow farmer friends, the farm crew, researchers, and to you, our members. By focusing on the integrity and uniqueness of every relationship, with people, the land, and the animals, our intuition about what is right for the farm will grow and strengthen. It is a process that demands patience as all the energy is upfront. Slowly our paradigm changes and we arrive at a place where we can say like Conrad Vispo of the Farmscape Ecology Program: "*We should perhaps think of Agriculture not as humanity's dominion over Nature, but rather as Nature's gift to humankind. We forgo that dominion not because we lack the muscle to demand it but because we have the heart and foresight to avoid it.*"

~Jean-Paul

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS SEASON'S FARM CREW. We thank all of them for their dedication to the farm this season. We will miss Cara and Luke as they move on to working at Harty Roots Farm in Tivoli next season. We look forward to working with them in the future when they establish their own farm in the Hudson Valley region. Mike will be joining us as a second-year apprentice next year along with his girlfriend, Michelle. She will be moving to the farm from California in the spring. Justin will return for his third season on the farm. John will be back for his fourth season. John's fiancée, Lidia, will also join us on the farm. After a very long year of waiting for visas and paperwork, Lidia will return from Brazil this week. Dave and Linda will also be back for their fifth season. We are fortunate that the 2009 crew will be one with many talents, farming knowledge, and experience. We look forward to a great year.

2009 ENROLLMENTS:

Make sure to find your enrollment form at your pickup site. Please return the form and your deposit by January 6, 2009, to reserve your share. If you send it in after January 6 we can not guarantee we will still have shares available. We have a long list of people on the waiting list, so make sure you don't miss out.

STORAGE BOX DELIVERY: If you ordered a storage vegetable box, it will be delivered the week of December 15 on your regular pickup day and to your regular pickup location. Some sites may have an abbreviated pickup period so be sure to look for those times at your pickup site this week.

Celeriac, Onion & Potato Casserole

3 medium potatoes, sliced 1/4-inch thick
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp dried basil
1 15-ounce can whole tomatoes, chopped, juices reserved

1 large celeriac, peeled, cut into quarters, and sliced 1/4-inch thick
1 medium onion quartered, and sliced
2 small celery stalks, chopped
1 cup dry white wine (or vegetable broth)

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add salt to taste to boiling water, then add potatoes and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove potatoes to a bowl, then add celery root to boiling water and cook until just tender, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove celery root to bowl with potatoes. Reserve cooking liquid.

In medium skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, celery, and basil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add wine, increase heat and cook to reduce wine by half, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add tomatoes and their juices plus 1/2 cup of reserved cooking liquid. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a 2-quart baking dish. Ladle half of the tomato mixture in bottom of prepared pan. Make a layer of alternating potato and celery root slices, season to taste with pepper. Repeat, using remaining potato and celery root slices. Cover with remaining tomato mixture. Cover and bake until potatoes and celery root are tender, about 45 minutes. Remove gratin from oven and let stand 10 minutes before serving. Serve warm.

From fooddownunder.com.