



JULY

# HAPPY HOLLOW FARM

*Week 9 of 24 Wed. 7/2, Thurs. 7/3 & Sat. 7/5*



LETTUCE FENNEL

## CHINESE CABBAGE



### What's in your share?

#### Full, Partial & Single Shares

- Beets & greens
- Chinese Cabbage
- Green beans
- Pearl Drop Onions
- Swiss Chard
- Summer Squash
- Zucchini



#### Full Shares

- Kale (Red Russian)
- Lettuce



**C**ORE group members Sarah Perry & Beth Perrin Hi from Sarah Perry and Beth Perrin. We joined Happy Hollow Farm's CSA in 2011 after hearing a presentation by Liz. Her love of what she is doing and willingness to share her knowledge (and veggies) was infectious. If our names look familiar, it may be because you have received a distribution shift reminder from us. We are here to help answer questions about more than just distribution shifts, so don't hesitate



to reach out if you have need something.

The wonderful veggies from HHF are part of our lifestyle. Beth is a competitive powerlifter which requires good, healthy foods, and Sarah's love of cooking makes the new and different items in our box each week always exciting! Please let us know if you have any questions or want a new and exciting idea for how to fix one of the veggies in your share!

Please remember to return your box every week when you pick up your next share



# Memories from my first year farming

**JT** This chapter was published in the Garden Greenhorns book in 2012 in the chapter titled “Old Neighbors; New Community”. My dear friend & CSA member Jeanne H. helped me write it.

## “Old Neighbors; New Community” *Cross-Pollination*

The summer I started my Community Supported Agriculture farm it rained twenty inches over the yearly average. Experienced growers told me I was lucky to have challenging conditions in my first year because subsequent years would be easier by comparison. Though my bottomland at Happy Hollow Farm was saturated and some of the organically-grown vegetables I’d planted early in the season drowned, my tomatoes thrived. Most other gardeners in this mid-Missouri rural area lost their tomato crops to rot and disease so my success was noted by some local community members, in particular my neighbor, J.T. Cassil, whose family used to own my farm.

For most of his adult life J.T. was a dairy farmer, and now at 70 he raises cattle and cuts hay on the farm adjacent to mine. He drives a Jamestown school bus and has transported three generations of students safely to and from school each day. Especially enjoyable for J.T. is driving the students across the state for ball games, concerts, and field trips and sharing these experiences with them. He delivers gravel to those in the neighborhood who need their roads improved or building foundations set. He is an avid banjo player in a gospel band, picking by ear and rarely reading sheet music. J.T. is part of a well

respected extended family that has lived in the area since 1870.

My partner, Katie, and I knew little about the Jamestown community three years ago when we moved to Happy Hollow Farm from Columbia, a university town of 100,000, just a 45-minute drive away. We discovered our new community consisted of many local families like the Cassils who have lived and farmed here for over 100 years. As soon as we got settled, I began making a concerted effort to get to know my new neighbors.

One of the first things we did was visit J.T. and his wife, Mary, with what turned out to be a terrible homemade cherry pie. J.T. and Mary were very gracious about the chewy crust. Mary suggested that lard would improve the flakiness of the crust and shared how their lard comes from hogs they butcher every year. That evening I learned the best pie crusts are made with lard and the best friendships are made by sharing experiences and spending time together.

I felt an immediate affinity toward J.T. because he reminds me of my grandfather who was exceptionally important in my upbringing, and I have a deep respect for older people and their accumulated wisdom. When Katie is traveling, J.T. checks on me every day while Mary provides food knowing that I have little time to cook. Last spring, J.T., his cousin, and two sons helped me cut down three huge locusts along the side of our mutually-shared road and hauled them to the building site of my new barn. He introduced Katie and me to his friends at the local Labor Day picnic and a church dinner opening a door into our new community. He helped me change the tire on my old manure spreader, a life threatening job if not done

properly, and two months later gave me an advertisement for a newer, less dangerous machine. A week seldom goes by without seeing J.T.; usually he stops by to see if I need anything, but sometimes it’s just to say hello.

Even though our mutual admiration grew rapidly, J.T. was often perplexed by my new-to-him farming practices. Why was he helping me unroll large round hay bales over sod for what I was calling “permanent beds” where the first tomato crop would be planted? Why did I wait to put out my tomato plants until late May when everyone else sets theirs out earlier aiming for tomatoes by the 4<sup>th</sup> of July? Farmers in this area traditionally raise corn, soybeans, and cattle while holding off-farm jobs to supplement their income. Most also use conventional spraying methods of synthetic fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides. Organic farming is considered unconventional, “hippyesque”, and not economically feasible. Most local residents consider the type of farming I’m doing as “truck farming,” the old term used for selling produce out of the back of ones’ truck, and are unfamiliar with the newer concept behind Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); where the public pays the farmer prior to the growing season and receives a weekly share of produce for a given number of weeks.

In the spring, J.T. and Mary helped me plant nearly 200 tomato plants, taking some of the greenhouse-grown young plants for their own garden. As the plants grew, we were all impressed with the lush green foliage and their ever increasing size.

As summer wore on and the rain continued, my tomato plants

thrived while most other gardeners were losing theirs or having poor fruit development. Once harvest time began there were so many tomatoes that J.T. again brought his cousin and son over to help pick, and Mary canned 30 quarts of tomatoes for Katie & me. The twenty members of my first-year CSA received six varieties of tomatoes and a few members bought extras to can. While my tomato harvest was abundant, I had numerous problems with other vegetables because of the cold spring and wet conditions over the summer. The potato and onion plantings were complete failures. I lost two of the early broccoli plantings as well as many other vegetables, which just didn't ripen properly. Though I was initially disappointed that I didn't get the fifty memberships envisioned, it turned out for the best with the adverse growing conditions, my inexperience with the new bottomland, and all the other first year projects such as building a 12' x 30' greenhouse, a 40' x 60' modified timber frame barn, an 8' x 10' walk-in cooler, and a 30' x 96' high-tunnel funded in part by the new organic farmer cost-share program of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

This year I attempted to grow thirty-six different kinds of vegetables because I have a twenty-five week growing season and members can tire of the same produce week after week. One of my goals is to provide members a new vegetable each week. Counting the various varieties of tomatoes, peppers, lettuces, cucumbers, and squash that I grew there were probably over 100 varieties of vegetables served in the weekly shares. Some of the vegetables were new to my members, such as escarole, tat soi, fennel, hakurei turnips, celeriac, and what turned out to be J.T.'s favorite

new vegetable: kohlrabi. The report from most members is that the unusual new vegetables are a welcome challenge for their cooking creativity.

J.T. and Mary were surprised by so much variety in my vegetables. They seemed impressed by my ability to do most of the farming by myself and by the end of the summer attributed my success, especially with the tomatoes, to my organic practices of using mulch and compost. In October, for the first time, J.T. unrolled hay onto his garden in preparation for next year's season. Over the winter, J.T. and Mary's soil will be protected and the earth worms will rise to the surface loosening the soil. As the mulch decomposes nutrients will be added back into the soil. If all goes well J.T. and Mary will have a bumper crop of tomatoes next season.

The cross-pollination occurring between J.T. and me accomplishes one of the major goals in my life, to meet and befriend new and different people. It is one of the reasons I decided to start a CSA rather than sell at a farmer's market. In addition to my passion for feeding people healthy, chemical-free food, I have developed wonderful friendships and a support network to aide my farming journey. Even though J.T. and I do encounter certain limits to our relationship – J.T. did not attend Katie's and my commitment ceremony, and despite his invitation I choose not to attend his church – our friendship remains strong because it is based on mutual respect of hard work, and caring for the land and family and friends. My experience with J.T. demonstrates how well the new breed of farmers can develop meaningful friendships with long-time rural residents. As J.T. often says to his neighbors, "Any two women who work as hard as they do are OK in my book."

This week's *veggie of the week* is Chinese Cabbage. This sweet supple leafed cabbage is one of my favorites for eating raw. And what better time than the week of the **4th of July** to make a raw cabbage salad!!! As a cabbage you can do pretty much anything with it but one of our favorite ways to prepare it is as cole slaw. Katie likes Veganaise instead of Mayo so she uses that salt, pepper, a little sugar and vinegar as the base. She doesn't really use a recipe but just adds these dressing ingredients in a small bowl and mixes them to taste. She then chops up either into cubes or thin slivers any other veggies we have in the fridge (hakurei turnips, scallions, carrots, beets, pearl drop onions, fennel, etc.) and adds copious amounts of these veggies with the cabbage and tosses them in a large bowl. Last she takes her dressing and pours it over the veggies and mixes everything together. The flavors have a chance to mix together the best if it can sit in your fridge for a couple hours before being served.

From the farm to all of you, we wish everyone a happy and safe 4th of July weekend!!!