



"*Che schifo*"- how revolting, said Emanuele in disgust as he got fed up trying to clean them, and decided to toss the rest of the *lampascioni* into the garbage - I rescued the bulbs and planted them in a corner of the garden. If all else fails, we should have some pretty tassel hyacinths next spring.

Emanuele decided to boil the cleaned bulbs for a short while, after which he put them – still oozing goo – into a bowl and stared at them, trying to will the goo to go away. This proved ineffective.

Since Emanuele's older sisters had spent much of their childhood in Puglia and learned to cook from their *pugliese* mother, I decided it was time for a *lampascioni* conference call. After much discussion, in which both sisters corroborated the story of the cross cut, I decided to follow this procedure:

1. The *lampascioni* had already been cleaned and parboiled for 15 minute. Cut a cross in the root base of each bulb – work quickly as lots more goo will start seeping out of the cross cut.

2. Put the *lampascioni* in a large bowl of water. Change the water 3 times a day for 2 days. The water had a slimy texture (that goo again), so I rinsed the *lampascioni* in a colander each time I changed the water.

3. In a stainless steel pot, make a mixture of $\frac{1}{2}$ vinegar and $\frac{1}{2}$ water that will amply cover the lampscioni bulbs. (I used my very strong homemade red wine vinegar, so used less vinegar.

Red wine vinegar will lend a pinkish color to the *lampascioni*.) Bring to a boil with the *lampascioni* and let simmer 20 minutes, skimming off any foam.

4. Drain the *lampascioni* in a colander and rinse well in running water. Make another batch of water/vinegar (or just plain water if you like them less vinegary- this is what I did.)

5. Simmer the *lampascioni* for another 20-30 minutes until they are tender when pierced with a fork, but still hold their shape. They are resilient little buggers, so it's hard to overcook them. This is also a dish which is impossible to make if there is water shortage.

