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# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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## Introducing: *Asparagus!*

The first CSA pickup has finally arrived! Last week's warm sunny weather was a welcome change from the preceding three weeks of cold, wind, rain, snow, and hail! As soon as the sun came back out we were busy trying to whip the farm into shape for this first week's harvest.

There are still many crops yet to get in the ground and the farm doesn't get fully planted out really until the beginning of July. Not to fear though—all of our spring planted crops have

survived the cold weather and will be ready for harvest.

One crop I'm particularly excited about is the asparagus. One of our students, Brian Koepke, has been granted funding from our college to do an undergraduate research project on our small asparagus patch. Brian's main goal is to try and get the 3 beds to peak production for a longer harvest season and delivery to the CSA. This is one crop that has never made it into the boxes due to

its early growing season and possibly improper management. It's great for me when a student can completely focus on one of our many crops (we grow about 80) and make sure we're doing everything we can to manage it correctly. So with Brian's hard work and the recent cold weather, the asparagus is only just beginning to mature. After 5 years of maintaining this interesting perennial, we are finally able to offer it in the CSA!

--Brad Jaeckel

### Pick Up Days and Times

#### Wednesdays:

4-6 p.m. at the Pullman Fresh Farm Market in the Old Post Office parking lot in downtown Pullman

#### Fridays:

3-6pm at the WSU Organic Farm

### MEET THIS SEASON'S STAFF

This year, Jewlee returns for what will be her last season with the farm. She's decided to move on at the end of the summer and move back to the Olympia area for the next phase in her life. She will manage the CSA pickups this year so you'll have lots of opportunities to see her before her departure from the Palouse. Claire is returning to manage our harvest days and keep the students in line out in the field. Justin will continue to help out on the farm with our Wednesday class, harvest days, and general construction projects. He's also now the official Pullman Farmer's Market Manager and will be at the market each week working for the Chamber of Commerce. Our new employee, Marci Miller, will be working with Jewlee at the CSA pickups and learning the ins and outs of our field work. Marci is a recent UI graduate and has worked with the UI Soil Stewards Farm for the past few years.

Hello! Asaph and I are excited to be editing this season's CSA newsletter. I love to cook, garden, and write, so I'm looking forward to writing to you each week with ideas and recipes for the produce we'll be receiving from the organic farm. Please send me an email if you have recipes or ideas you want to share—I'd love to hear from you!

I always look forward to asparagus coming into season, signaling summer, and lots of fresh garden veggies, just around the corner. I've tried to grow asparagus in my own small garden, but without much luck, so I'm especially excited to see some spears in this week's CSA box! When preparing asparagus, instead of cutting the woodier ends, I take each spear in two hands and snap them—they break where the stalk becomes tender. More often than not, I simmer the asparagus in water for just a few minutes—4 or 5—until the spears are just cooked, but still bright green and quite firm. They're delicious with just a sprinkling of salt and pepper and served with something creamy, like risotto. I've also included two other recipes: "Asparagus Salad with Sesame Seeds," is a tried and true favorite; the second is a simple method for grilling asparagus spears. Enjoy!

-Jamaica

**Asparagus Salad with Sesame Seeds (adapted from *Joy of Cooking*, by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker, and Ethan Becker, 1997)**

Snap the ends from a bunch of asparagus and cut diagonally in 2-inch pieces. Place into a pan of boiling water and cook, covered, for 1 ½-2 ½ minutes, then drain and run under cool water so the asparagus cools quickly. Set aside.

For the dressing, whisk together:

- 3 Tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 4 teaspoons rice wine vinegar
- 4 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 ½ Tablespoons brown sugar

Toast in a small pan 4 teaspoons sesame seeds. When golden, stir the seeds immediately into the dressing.

Combine the asparagus and dressing, and serve.

**Grilled Asparagus (Adapted from *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, by Alice Waters, 1996)**

Set up a barbecue and get it to a medium hot temperature. While the barbecue is heating, snap the tough ends of the spears and discard. Parboil the spears in boiling water for just about one minute. Drain, then spread out to cool a bit. Brush with olive oil and lightly sprinkle with salt. Grill over medium heat for about 6 minutes, turning them over occasionally so that they cook evenly. Remove the asparagus to a plate and season with olive oil, salt, pepper and lemon juice.