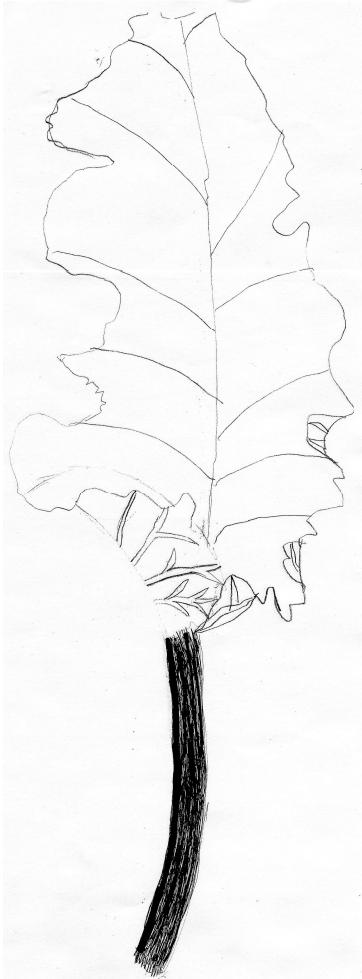


WSU ORGANIC FARM
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I'm excited to finally get started with this year's first CSA harvest! This past winter and spring have been the most unusual that I have experienced in my short time on the Palouse, but according to the old timers there hasn't been a winter like this in quite awhile. What makes it difficult is that I begin planning for each season in December and January, and this year I didn't get a clue that the winter would be so long until around February. So here we are starting two weeks later than planned, but hopefully you are as eager to start eating some fresh veggies as I am.

I was able to make some adjustments to our seeding schedule in the greenhouse that helped allow us to push back some of the earlier field work. We typically start using the heated and lit greenhouse on campus the beginning of February for starting all of the onions. By the middle of February I had decided to push back our early greens seeding by one to two weeks because I did not think I would be able to get into the field to transplant those crops by the end of March. And that was the case! I actually did the first round of direct seeding during a short break in the weather on Easter Sunday, which is when I typically try to get them in the ground (mid-March). However, the only crops that survived that first planting were the peas. The other beds that were planted that day had terrible germination and



crusting of the soil due to the snow and rain that followed. Planting in the spring here is really about waiting for windows of opportunity and hoping that conditions allow for good growth. It's always a bit of a risk, but more so in the spring!

To make conditions worse, we didn't start to get a break from freezing temperatures until the end of April. Our first transplants went out in early April and largely just sat there wondering what to do. Our cold hardy greens can tolerate freezing but they were not able to add new growth. This was true for the direct seeded crops and is largely responsible for our late start this year. Then to make conditions more interesting we saw almost no precipitation between early April and the middle of May...thank goodness for irrigation!

Enough about the weather! The good news is we are quickly planting out the fields and the extra two weeks without a harvest has allowed us to get on top of the early weeds. We have a great new crew of students that have been working hard to grow your food and are eager to see some results of their labor. Jewlee is again back assisting with the farm and student management and I have added another part-time manager to help on harvest days.

I have had some members offer to switch from their Friday pickup to one of the Tuesday pickup options but we could use about 5 more. If you are interested in making the switch, please get in touch with me ASAP. The new Tuesday pickup option is between 2 and 4pm and will be at the Tukey Orchard straw bale building located just inside the orchard main gate. Packed cardboard boxes will be left there unattended for members. The boxes can be taken as is or left if you wish to repack to your own bag or box. If you do take the cardboard box please return it empty the following week and we will reuse it.

Thank you and I hope you enjoy these first crops.

--Brad Jaeckel, manager

If you are better organized than I, you can serve salad daily. We usually end up making a big green salad for a meal at least once a week. We have gotten into the habit of making dressing from scratch. They really taste great and don't take that long. By adding a handful of nuts, seeds and/or cheese, it's hearty enough for a meal. I also often add raisins, dried cranberries or fresh pears to cut the vinegar and add a little sweetness.

For our Christmas dinner this past winter we were lucky to partake in a traditional Italian meal. It was very tasty, but I was pleasantly surprised by the salad at the end of the meal drizzled with extra virgin olive oil and a little sea salt. It was quite refreshing and very cleansing. It couldn't have been easier. Our favorite way to eat arugula is the following salad. The dressing also is great on greens either with or without the extra cheese and walnuts. My favorite way to eat rhubarb is in a pie with or without strawberries. If you get overwhelmed it can be diced and popped in the freezer for later use. I have included a crisp recipe for those who don't do pie crusts.

--Valeri

Arugula with Pecorino Romano and Toasted Walnuts

(from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison)

8 to 10 cups arugula, 4 large handfuls, stems

discarded, any large leaves torn

Walnut Oil Vinaigrette, see below

Salt

½ cup or more coarsely grated pecorino Romano

½ cup cracked walnuts, roasted

Toss the arugula with a little salt and enough vinaigrette to coat lightly. Add the cheese and walnuts, toss again, and serve.

Walnut Oil Vinaigrette

(from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison)

1½ tablespoons sherry vinegar or tarragon vinegar

2 shallots, finely diced (substitute green onions
early in the season)

Salt and freshly milled pepper

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

6 tablespoons roasted walnut oil or a mixture of walnut
and extra virgin olive oils.

Combine the vinegar, shallots, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a bowl and let stand for 15 minutes. Stir in the mustard, then add the oil. Whisk well until the dressing is thick and smooth. Season with pepper. Taste and adjust the amount of vinegar or oil if needed.

Rhubarb-Apple Crisp

(from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison)

1½ pounds apples, peeled and cored (optional)

2 pounds rhubarb, diced into 1-inch pieces

1¼ cups sugar

¼ cup flour

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch ground cloves

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Make the topping (below) and set it aside. Dice the apples, then put them in a bowl and toss with the remaining ingredients. Arrange the fruit in a 2-quart gratin dish and cover with the topping. Set the dish on a sheet pan to catch and drips and bake until the juices from the fruit are bubbling and the topping is brown, about 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Crisp Topping

6 tablespoons butter, cut into 1/2-inch chunks

¾ cup brown sugar, packed

2/3 cup flour

½ cup rolled oats or chopped nuts

¼ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon grated nutmeg

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional

Using your fingers or the paddle attachment of a mixer, work the butter with the rest of the ingredients so that each piece is coated and you have a coarse, crumbly mixture. Use it to cover a shallow gratin dish of sliced fruit. Variation with oil: In place of butter, use 6 tablespoons canola or a mixture of canola and a rich-flavored nut oil, such as walnut or hazelnut.