

The WSU Organic Standard

June 6, 2006

WSU Organic Farm
201 Johnson Hall
Pullman, Washington 99164-6420

Project Manager: Brad Jaeckel
Email jaeckel@wsu.edu
Phone 509/432/3716

It's official! WSU has been approved to offer the nation's first major in Organic Agriculture. The major will fall under a new BS in Agriculture and Food Systems and will include the new organic major as well as four others. This is exciting news for us at the farm for many reasons. The summer class that we offer will be a requirement for the new major so we're hoping to receive more interest in the project from interested students. Second, we have students that have been hoping to graduate with this new major. Our assistant manager, Jewlee Sullivan, may be the first student in the nation with this new degree. And we have at least one other student working towards it. (See bio on Will) It has been a long process for many people in the university to make this happen and they deserve a lot of credit for sticking with it and taking a stand on organic agriculture.

It's been another busy week at the farm. We're trying to get the rest of our transplants in the ground as well as some more warm season crops.

Over the last two days we've planted almost all the squash family. This includes cucumbers, six varieties of winter squash, summer squash, and the pumpkins. All we have left are the watermelons and muskmelons. Last year we trialed some different watermelons to see what did well here and which ones we liked. We've settled on a couple varieties

but will be trialing some more. Muskmelons are similar to honeydew melons. They are a small melon that can grow in a short season like ours. We are lucky to grow such a wide variety of squash but some are on the upper limits of our season. I try to find varieties that mature in less than 100 days. We start all our squash seed in the greenhouse to ensure an early start but we still are stretching it a bit with varieties like butternut and some of the watermelons.

The other warm season crops going in now are corn and beans. We actually could have gotten these in sooner but the wet weather last week didn't allow. Do not fear! We grow short season varieties of these crops as well so there will be tasty treats to come. As well as the sweet corn we grew last year I've put in a multi-color drying corn and an open pollinated sweet corn. As for the beans, we were disappointed last year with the small production and are growing much more. We will have bush beans and pole beans. One pole bean in particular should be exciting. Its a new one for me but the catalogs all claim this French fillet style bean is a winner.

The peas are on their way. The trellis is up and the first planting has been in bloom for about a week. Also on their way are the strawberries!

We will get a small early crop off last year's planting and then the main crop will come on in August. - Brad Jaeckel

Featured Student: Will Hollingbery

This week's student pick is Will Hollingbery. Will is currently a junior at WSU and is one of the first students working towards the new Organic Ag major.

Will grew up in Yakima on his family's fruit orchard which now covers about 230+ acres. He originally came to WSU to study tree fruit management but soon realized he already had more background in it than what was being taught. He switched to Horticulture but that too did not satisfy Will. Finally he has settled in Soil Science and hopes to learn more about plants through the soil. When not working at the farm or the campus creamery Will can be found on his bike either putting on miles between Moscow and Pullman or up on Moscow Mountain.

Will has really been enjoying the salad mix and the farm but when pressed for a recipe he settled for a favorite spinach dish. Saute' as much spinach as you can fit in a pan with olive oil and garlic. Add crumbled bacon and enjoy!



I love to cook diced onions with diced bacon and then whatever greens are available, like chard. But Mollie Katzen has some other ideas below, both vegetarian, one vegan. Katzen suggests stemming the greens if necessary; kale cooks better if stemmed, as does chard, and collards. I don't know about the flavor of kale stems, actually, but chard stems are really tasty when cooked, they just take longer than the leaves, so add them to the pan with the onions. - CPS

Bitter Greens Two Ways (from Mollie Katzen's Vegetable Heaven)

Katzen prefers collards, red mustard, arugula, and kale with this cherry version.

1 cup fresh sour cherries, pitted, or canned unsweetened sour cherries, drained
2 to 3 teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
3 cups sliced onion (a sweet variety like Walla Walla if available)
1 1/4 teaspoons salt
3 large bunches fresh greens, stemmed if necessary, and coarsely chopped (about 12 cups)
1 cup dried sour cherries

Place the fresh or canned cherries in a small bowl and sprinkle them with sugar. Let sit about 10 minutes.

Heat the oil in a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven. Add the onion and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, and saute' over high heat for about 5 minutes. Turn the heat to medium, cover the pan, and let the onion cook until very tender (about 10 more minutes.)

Begin adding the greens in batches (as much as will fit), sprinkling each addition with about 1/4 teaspoon salt. Stir and cover between additions, letting the greens cook down for about five minutes each time, to make room for the next batch.

When all the greens are added and have wilted, stir in the sour cherries and cook for just about 5 minutes longer. Transfer to a platter, and sprinkle the dried cherries on top, if desired. Serve hot or warm, being sure to include some of the delicious cooking juices with each serving. 4 to 6 servings.

Katzen suggests kale, escarole, chard, and mustard greens to complement the pungent flavor of the cheese in this feta version.

2 tablespoons olive oil
4 cups sliced onion (a sweet variety if available)
Salt to taste
3 large bunches fresh greens, stemmed if necessary, and coarsely chopped
1/2 to 3/4 pound feta cheese, crumbled
Freshly ground black pepper

Cook onion in oil as above, and then the greens (with less salt than above). Stir in the feta, and cook for about 2 minutes longer. Taste to adjust salt. (Some feta cheese are saltier than others.) Transfer to a platter, and grind on a generous amount of black pepper. Serve hot or warm, on or next to pasta or grains, or by itself. Serves 4 to 6.