

THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD



Summer is Here, but Not Yet for Tomatoes

Amazingly, it seems that things are starting to dry out, the lilacs are blooming and ground is warming! Last week we only lost an afternoon of work to some light rain and since then have been busy catching up. The farm looks great right now so stop and take a look if you are picking up your share on Fridays, or feel free to stop in on Fridays even if you're not picking up a share.

We got the new mulch layer working last week and began transplanting pumpkins, winter squash, and summer squash. Hopefully this will save labor on weeding and help grow better plants in general. The machine took quite a bit of tinkering to work correctly, and we still have more learning as we go. And, we've been frantically setting up irrigation for all these new crops as our spring rains are finally letting up. The summer squash will be the first of these crops to produce, probably not for a few more weeks, but hopefully by the beginning of July we'll see some of those prolific treats arrive.

Our crew at the farmers market has been getting lots of interesting questions about when certain crops will be available, so I thought it would be a good time to talk about seasonality in the fruit and vegetable world. It always concerns me when I hear people ask early in the season, "Do you have any tomatoes, yet?" Not a bad question, but one that shows a disconnect many shoppers have with the ability of our region to produce certain vegetables. While our grocery stores somehow provide a constant supply of almost any fruit or vegetable, it is largely a manipulated system drawing on crops grown "out of season" from, usually, great distances. To truly understand eating "in season," we as eaters need to become better connected to our specific growing region.

Here on the Palouse vegetable production is a challenge. Our season is fairly short for warm season crops, and we have a long cold winter. In order to produce many of the garden vegetables that you will see offered on a constant basis at a store, we as farmers have to work hard just to produce these crops even for a limited time. (Cont'd on next page)

B.Y.O.B.

You've probably noticed that we are not providing plastic bags at our pickup sites this year. We are serious about encouraging you to bring your own bag, box, towel, small child, umbrella, or whatever it takes to get your produce home without the use of another plastic bag. *Please try to remember to bring your own.*

(Cont'd from previous) So, back to the tomatoes...We will unfortunately not have ripe tomatoes for many weeks. Even with the use of our greenhouse and hoopouses, the tomatoes take 4 to 5 months from seed to fruit, and when they do come, it will be limited by our frost-free season. Don't expect to see the tomatoes much after we start to receive hard frosts in the fall. Last fall was wonderfully mild and the tomatoes continued well into October, but that was unusual.

To help our CSA members, students, and even restaurants that are interested in our crops, I created a [Crop Availability Chart](#) a few years ago. It lives on our website and I would recommend taking a look to get a better sense of when all our crops will be appearing in the shares. Learning about how the crops are grown and their requirements are one of the things we hope to teach more, and we'll continue to try to keep you well informed on what is "in-season".

--Brad

The pumpkin patch—the red is the mulch paper for keeping down the weeds.



Around the Organic Farm—early June, 2011.

Submit a Tip or a
Recipe!

Do you have a favorite
recipe or a storage or
preparation tip you
want to share in the
newsletter? Let me

know at
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Alex, recent grad of Organic Agriculture, and Assistant Farm Manager



..... Three Recipes for Bok Choy

For **short-term storage**, bok-choy will keep, refrigerated, in an open (unsealed) plastic bag for about a week. Unfortunately, freezing bok choy renders it very soft and for that reason, isn't recommended. However, if you're looking for a **longer-term storage solution**, check out the kimchi (Korean pickle) recipe below.

Bok Choy Kimchi

This recipe comes from the really fun gardening and food preservation website dorisandjillycook.com

About 1 1/2 pounds bok choy (stems and leaves), cut into 2 inch squares
1 or 2 turnips, peeled and thinly sliced
1 to 2 tablespoons ginger, minced
1 to 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
6 scallions, cut into 2 inch pieces, then cut in half lengthwise
2 tablespoons hot or mild paprika
6 cups water
4 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt (or 3 tablespoons pickling salt)

Make your brine by dissolving the salt in water. Put the bok choy and the turnips in a large bowl and cover with brine. Weight the vegetables so that they stay submerged and let sit for 12 to 24 hours.

Drain the vegetables, reserving the brine. Mix the remaining ingredients by hand then stuff them into one or two quart mason jars. Pour the brine over the vegetables. Run a knife alongside the inside of the jar to release air bubbles and add more brine if needed. If you're using a regular mouth jar and everything's submerged up to the lid, just put the lid on. If you're using a large jar and are having problems with things floating to the top, put a ziplock bag within the jar and fill it with brine to prevent air from touching the vegetables.

Move the jar to a cool, dark place and let it sit for 3-6 days. After a day or two you should see bubbles rising to the surface. After a few days, begin tasting for sourness. When the kimchee is sufficiently tangy move the jar to the fridge. Refrigerated, it will keep for months.

Wok Fried Bok Choy

Adapted from Jaden Hair's food blog, [The Steamy Kitchen](http://TheSteamyKitchen.com)

1 1/2 pounds bok choy 3 tablespoons broth or
1 1/2 tablespoons sesame water
oil salt to taste
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon grated fresh
ginger

Separate and rinse bok choy. Heat sesame oil in wok or frying pan over medium high heat. Add garlic and ginger. When fragrant and light golden brown, add to the garlic and ginger the bok choy. Toss well to coat each leaf with the garlic-ginger oil. Pour in broth, water or wine. Immediately cover and let cook for 1 minute. Salt to taste and serve.

Udon Noodle Soup with Bok Choy and Poached

Egg *Adapted from the food website www.thekitchn.com*

Serves 2-4

1 bok choy, ribs sliced and 1 stick cinnamon
leaves into thin ribbons 2-4 eggs
Sesame oil 1 package dry udon noodles
2 cloves of garlic, minced 2 green onions, thinly sliced
4-5 cups chicken broth 3-4 tablespoons soy sauce
2 whole star anise

Sautee garlic and bok choy ribs in a few teaspoons oil. Add broth, star anise and cinnamon and simmer 5-10 minutes. Add the dry udon. When noodles are just pliable, crack the eggs into separate measuring cups and slip them, one at a time, into the broth. Cook for two minutes. Add the bok choy and stir very gently so as not to break the eggs. Cook an additional two minutes, until the egg whites are completely set but the middles are still loose. (Cook for an additional minute if you like your yolks set.)

Remove from heat and gently stir in the soy sauce and the spring onions. Taste and add more soy sauce if necessary. Remove the star anise and cinnamon with a slotted spoon. Divide the soup between two bowls and eat immediately.