

# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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## SOIL STEWARDS PLANTING WATERMELON

Last week during our Wednesday class, we had some visitors on the farm from the University of Idaho (UI) Soil Stewards Organic Farm. Our neighbors to the east have a very similar sized organic farm at the UI field station on the Troy Highway just outside of Moscow. Students there grow vegetables for a CSA and campus sales. The UI farm is different in that it is operated as a student club. So management changes every year as different students cycle through. We are spending more time together now because of a USDA Higher Education Challenge (HEC) grant that WSU, UI, and Montana State University (MSU) are all part of. The three year grant is geared to support our efforts in sustainable agriculture education and includes group teaching days such as we had last week.

After the two hour lecture on the brassica family and vermiculture we hit the fields. I love having a large group to work with when we need to get a lot done in a short time. With 15 eager bodies we quickly planted out all the watermelon, outdoor tomatoes, and weeded one of the smaller hoophouse. We are taking another crack at watermelons this year after our failed attempt last year due to late snow in June. I've added a couple new varieties to try including Blacktail Mountain, a small cool season melon bred in northern Idaho of all places. I was given one

of these small tasty treats from a former CSA member last year that he'd grown in Moscow and was impressed. After finding the seed offered through Abundant Life Seeds I stumbled upon the actual breeder while researching sweet potatoes. Turns out Glenn Drown of the Sand Hill Preservation Center in Iowa is originally from northern Idaho, but transplanted to the Midwest to a better climate for sweet potato cultivation. Glenn has asked us to take data on our sweet potato production this year in hopes of improving his selection of northern varieties. I hope his watermelon does well, too!

—Brad Jaeckel

## TOMATOES, TOMATOES, TOMATOES

We've also expanded our selection of outdoor tomatoes after last year's surprising success. Of course, the cherry tomatoes will be the main stay as well as the nice yellow slicers we had last year. In addition to those, we have added about five new varieties to trial including another bred in Idaho. Researching seeds is fun and I often stumble upon interesting selections in unlikely places such as the Wood Prairie Farm in Maine who offers a cool season tomato called Latah, named after the county to the east. Apparently the University of Idaho bred an entire series of tomatoes named after Idaho counties. I'll let you know how it turns out.

### Pick-up days and times

- **Wednesdays** 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. at the Pullman Fresh Farm Market in the Old Post Office parking lot in downtown Pullman
- **Fridays** 3 - 6 p.m. at the WSU Organic Farm

### Pickup Reminders

- Instead of trading at the table, look for the "leave an item and take an item" box at your pick-up site. Each week you can trade one item from your box for something left in the box.
- Please remember to bring your own bags to repack your share.
- We'd be happy to reuse any returned twist-ties, zipper bags, and berry containers that you may receive from us.



For years, I bought salad dressing — until I discovered how easy it is to make! The Caesar salad dressing below is delicious with romaine lettuce, but you can mix in other greens as well. The Salmon Egg-drop Soup with Spinach is quick and light, so it is nice even on warmer days. Enjoy!

—Marcia Gossard

## CAESAR SALAD

from *High Road to Health* by Lindsey Wagner

This is a nice twist on traditional Caesar salad dressing.

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 clove garlic, sliced               | 6 Greek olives, pitted and chopped into a paste                             |
| 2 tablespoons cold-pressed olive oil | 2 bunches romaine lettuce, washed, dried,<br>and torn into bite-size pieces |
| 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard             | Croutons (optional)   |
| 1 tablespoon lemon juice             |   |
| 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar      |   |
| 2 teaspoons natural soy sauce        |   |

1. Soak the garlic in the olive oil for 30 minutes, then remove the garlic and discard.
2. In a jar, combine the olive oil, mustard, lemon juice, vinegar, soy sauce, and Greek olive paste. Secure lid and shake until the dressing is emulsified.
3. Place the lettuce in a large salad bowl and toss with the dressing. Sprinkle with croutons and serve immediately.

## SALMON EGG-DROP SOUP WITH SPINACH

Adapted from *Sunset Magazine* December 2004

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| 5 1/2 cups vegetable broth  | 2 large eggs, beaten to blend |
| 3 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh ginger                                 | 1/4 cup chopped green onions  |
| 12 ounces boned, skinned salmon fillet<br>rinsed and cut into 1-inch chunks | Salt and pepper               |
| 2 cups lightly packed rinsed, stemmed spinach leaves                        |                               |

1. In a 4- to 5-quart pan over high heat, bring broth to a boil. Add ginger, reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook to flavor broth, about 10 minutes. Remove ginger chunks with a slotted spoon or fine strainer.
2. Add salmon and simmer until chunks are opaque but still moist-looking in the center (cut to test), about 5 minutes. Add spinach and stir just until wilted.
3. Increase heat to bring broth back to a boil and slowly stir in eggs. Stir in green onions and add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle soup into bowls immediately.