

WSU Organic Farm
201 Johnson Hall
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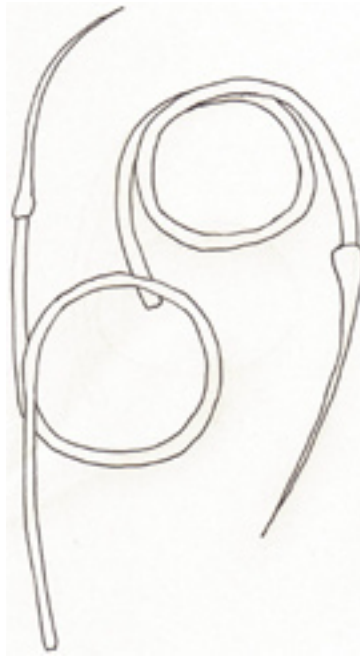
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Seems like I always have something interesting to say about the weather and this week is no exception. Our Tuesday harvest started out with some very unusual dark clouds racing overhead. With the few early harvesters gathering (we get started about 7am) the winds picked up and the hail began to fall. Now hail is one of the most stressful types of precipitation a farmer has to deal with. And this hail was marble size and thick! The plants survived the beating and the short storm quickly turned to rain and then continued north. It's nice to know those storms usually don't last long. But it's raining again today and the fields are too wet to work.

We've been able to keep planting in between dry spells and are staying on schedule. As you've noticed the carrots have arrived. These early morsels are thanks to the hoophouse. Hopefully we will have a continuous supply until the field carrots or beets are ready in a few weeks. As the carrots are coming out of the hoophouse we are replanting those beds to beans and sweet potatoes. We also have one bed of sweet peppers that was recently transplanted.

The tomatoes got some attention this week as they are really starting to gain some height. The tall varieties all got a

string to climb so they stay upright. I run a single strand of wire about 7 feet above the middle two beds of the hoop-house and then attach poly-string down to each plant. After pruning the lower leaves off the plants the string is wrapped around the main stalk and keeps the vines growing vertical. As the vines grow we just continue to wrap the string around until they reach the top. This allows for more plants per bed, easier picking, and better ventilation. The shorter varieties all have cages and require less attention.



Garlic scapes by Alice Swan.

I've had some questions from members about their greens wilting in the fridge. It is important for you to put any leafy greens that you are not directly using into plastic bags and then into the fridge. This will help hold the natural moisture in the greens and keep them from wilting. I know some of the bunches are huge so try using the larger plastic shopping bags with handles. Tying the handle in a knot is actually a handy way of sealing the bags. And on another note the plastic salad mix bags are now biodegradable. They are a little weaker than the other bags so watch out especially at the bottom seam. But I think this should be a more sustainable option for the many bags we go through.

- Brad Jaeckel

Featured Student: Kristen Koenig



Kristen Koenig is having a lot of fun at the farm this summer! Today was Kristen's first time planting an actual seed and it was exciting to see her joy in the experience. Kristen is a WSU grad student in Special Education and is very new to the gardening/farming world. She moved here specifically to complete research on the human-animal bond. WSU has a unique service component of the vet/med unit called the People Pet Partnership Program. The program does research, education, and community service related to pet care, pet responsibility, and therapeutic horse-riding. Very cool!

Kristen has been researching sweet potato production for the farm and hopefully we will get some planted in the hoophouse to see if we can actually grow some here on the Palouse. Her favorite recipe for the orange tubers is sweet potato fries. Simply slice the potatoes into fries and coat with olive oil, salt, and a little brown sugar on a baking sheet. Bake in a 400° oven for about 25 minutes or until done. Enjoy!

Garlic scapes and turnips are making their 2006 debut this week. What are garlic scapes, you ask? They are the curly tops of the garlic stalk. If you leave the scapes on the plant, that is where the seed head develops. But you can harvest them while they are curled and eat them like garlic or green onions in stir fries, soups, and salads. Garlic farmer MaryJane Butters has a great garlic scape pesto recipe which is as follows:

Garlic Scape Pesto

1/2 lb. organic scapes (chopped into 1" sections)
1 c. organic olive oil
2 c. grated parmesan cheese

In a blender, combine the scapes and olive oil. Pour mixture into bowl and blend the cheese in by hand.

Turnips have a humble reputation, growing as they do in the dirt, quietly and without a lot of fuss. Writing this, I'm away from home and don't have access to my usual cookbooks - but I *believe* that turnips would go well in a dish of roasted roots. Cut potatoes, turnips, sweet potatoes, beets, etc. into inch-sized chunks, coat with olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and roast uncovered in a large baking dish at 400 degrees or so, stirring occasionally to brown all sides. When they're crisp on the outside and tender on the inside, serve and eat!

The 1951 *Fannie Farmer* cookbook has several turnip recipes. My family loves mashed potatoes so we'll try author Marion Cunningham's recipe for mashed turnips. And who would've ever put the words turnip and soufflé' together? This soufflé' would be a great way to eat leftover cooked vegetables all year long.

Mashed Turnips

One pound serves 3. Wash turnips, pare (peel), and slice, dice, or quarter. Cook until tender, 10 to 30 minutes in boiling water in a covered pan. Drain off liquid. Mash turnips and cook a minute or two to dry thoroughly.

Season with butter, salt, and pepper. For variety, fold in 1/4 cup heavy cream, whipped, and season delicately with rum or sherry.

Turnip Soufflé'

You can mix leftover vegetables in this recipe if you like.

3 tablespoons butter
1/2 teaspoon chopped onion
3 tablespoons (or more) flour
1 cup whole milk, or cream
1 cup cooked turnips and/or other vegetables, mashed or chopped fine
3 egg yolks, well beaten
Salt and pepper
Other seasonings to taste
3 egg whites

Melt butter, add onion, and cook slowly until onion is yellow. Stir in flour. Blend well, add liquid, and cook until thickened. Add turnips. Heat well. Add egg yolks and cook on low 1 minute. Season to taste, adding more onion if needed. Cool 10 minutes or more. Beat egg whites until stiff, fold into mixture and bake immediately. Pour into unbuttered baking dish, and bake at 350 degrees about 30 minutes until firm. Serve immediately.