

# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD



## A Guide for Summer Seeding

The farm is almost completely planted and it looks like we're on track for this time of year. June is a big month for getting all the warm season transplants and direct seeded crops in the ground after the danger of frost has passed. The weather has improved greatly over our coldest May on record, but it's still with its ups and downs. The last couple weeks have been especially busy as we begin to run the risk of getting crops in the ground too late for them to reach maturity before the end of the season. I've had some requests from members interested in hearing more about planting dates, so I'll try to cover some of the crops we've been working on lately.

The last newsletter had a link to our Crop Availability Chart, which gives a good picture of when all the different crops are harvested, but the corresponding planting schedule is very different. I haven't made a similar chart but am thinking that would be a great idea! We largely determine planting dates from following the recommended dates from the seed companies, but also from our own experimentation and year-to-year record keeping. I'm always playing with the planting dates to see if a little change makes any difference in the greater scheme. As you can see in the Availability Chart, we have a large number of crops to work with and the planning for such a diverse number of crops requires a considerable amount of knowledge of all their individual requirements and climatic tendencies.

An easy way to simplify the process is to subdivide the vegetable crops by plant family or similarly managed crop groups. This enables us to group them into (CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE)



### *Meet the Staff*

**Mark Howell** is one of our newest staff members. He is managing our market stand on Wednesdays, as well as planning, planting, and maintaining the cut flower garden at the farm. Mark started at the farm last year as a student, and worked the entire season after wanting to better develop his gardening skills for the Palouse. He ended up volunteering to help Jewlee at the farmer's market and really loved the marketing side of the farm's business. Luckily we were able to have him back this year and are excited to see how the flower garden turns out. Stay tuned as Mark will let us know when the u-pick flowers are ready and also for his beautiful bouquets to arrive at the market.

(Cont'd from pg. 1) a couple of distinct categories: cool season or warm season crops. The cool season crops are usually frost hardy and can be seeded or planted early or late in the season. The warm season crops tend to be more sensitive to frost and require greater heat units to reach maturity. Because we use plastic covered hoopouses we can have much earlier planting dates for both groups of crops when grown indoors.

I'll try to focus more on the outdoor crops as most of you will be growing these crops in your home gardens. All of our outdoors tomatoes, peppers, basil, okra and eggplant are started from seed in the greenhouse in early April. It takes roughly two months for them to reach transplant size and we like to have them ready to transplant by early June. All of the cucumbers, pumpkins, summer and winter squash, and melons are seeded in the greenhouse around the beginning of May. They should be ready to go in the ground in June, too, but they grow much quicker. The warm season crops that we start directly in the ground include corn and beans. These can be started anytime in June after the soil has warmed and planted

more than once to ensure a successful crop.

We are also continually seeding crops that are grown both early in the season and throughout the summer months. These include carrots, beets, salad mix, and some of the brassica greens. These can all be planted well into the summer, but you have to be careful on when to stop as they do require a certain amount of time to reach maturity. We are usually slowing down on the direct seeded crops by the end of July and into August. For example, carrots and beets take a little longer to grow and can't reach full size if planted after the end of July. Salad mixes, lettuce, arugula, and radishes, however, can be sown all the way into the beginning of September.

I hope this helps with your garden planting. I'll try to continue to talk about the other crops as they arrive in the boxes.

~Brad

*Do you have recipes or tips you'd like to share in the newsletter? Email [jritcher@me.com](mailto:jritcher@me.com)  
I look forward to hearing from you!  
~Jamaica*

## Coming Up:



Kale and chard have now been in the boxes for the last couple weeks and will continue as one of the farms mainstay greens. These two crops are nutritional powerhouses and often overlooked as great crops to add to simple recipes. We will usually alternate these two crops and will also try to rotate in additional greens to keep up the diversity. We're growing four different types of kale this year: Red Ursa, Ripbor, Lacinato, Rainbow Lacinato, and will add Collard Greens as well. The Swiss Chard is a rainbow mix with a variety of brilliant summer colors. ~Brad

*One cup of raw kale contains as much vitamin C as an orange the same amount of calcium as in one cup of milk (and kale's calcium is more readily absorbed, too)! Kale also contains iron and folic acid, and antioxidants.*

# ..... Recipes for Kale (and one for Swiss Chard) .....

## STORAGE AND PREPARATION

For **short term storage** (up to one week), kale should be kept unwashed and in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. The flavor, however, will become stronger the longer it's stored this way. As with the tender greens, excess moisture causes kale to spoil more quickly, so be sure it's completely dry – place a paper towel in the bag (or wrap the kale in a tea towel) before refrigerating.

For **longer storage**, there's good news! Kale is great for freezing. Simply wash, dry, mince, and then store it in a freezer bag. Kale thaws quickly for easy use – use as you would raw.

Wash by swishing in a bowl or basin of cold water to remove any residual garden soil, then rinse. The stems are tough, so break or cut them away to the lower part of the midrib. Then fold or roll the leaf vertically and chop into ribbons, or mince. My preference is either very thin ribbons or minced fine. Kale adds beautiful color and nutrition to many dishes, but its resilient texture is noticeable when left in large pieces or coarsely chopped. One pound of raw kale will yield about 2 cups cooked.

*NOTE: In recipes for egg, salad or pasta dishes, Swiss chard and kale are easily combinable and interchangeable!*

### IN A PINCH (or a HANDFUL)

Kale can be minced and added raw (or frozen) to many recipes: pasta, salads, or eggs for starters. It adds the colorful accent of a garnish, but with a bigger boost of vitamins and minerals.

As a mother of two kale-skeptics, one tasty way to get this veggie into my kids' diet (and mine, too) is in a **berry smoothie**. That's right! Add 2-3 chopped leaves (or a handful) to a blender, along with a frozen banana, frozen (dark) berries like blueberries or blackberries, a generous spoonful of plain yogurt, and orange juice. Whir and enjoy.

### **Roasted Kale**

*Recipes for roasted kale are flying all over the internet. I tried this one last week. It is a different way to eat your greens, to be sure, but yummy. Crispy edges, and salty-garlicky. Not quite a potato chip, but.....see what you think!*

*I saw one recipe suggesting topping this with a poached egg and a side of roasted potatoes, which sounds like a fine supper to me.*

2 bunches kale  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 to 3 large cloves garlic, minced  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Rinse kale and pat dry thoroughly. Remove stems and roughly chop leaves. Toss with olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Spread on a large rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring every five minutes or so, until leaves are tender, crisp on edges and slightly browned.

### Stems of Swiss Chard

*Perusing our newsletter archives, I came across this recipe from Carol Price-Spurling in a 2006 season newsletter (she found it in The Basque Table). I can't wait to try it with my next bunch of chard! Thanks, Carol!*

10 Swiss chard stems, leaves removed, cut into 2-3" lengths  
¼ cup flour  
2 eggs, beaten  
½ cup olive oil

In a large saucepan, bring about 2 quarts of water to a boil over high heat. Add the chard, and cook it for about 15 minutes, until it is soft. Drain it well.

Next, spread the flour on a plate and roll the chard in the flour. Shake off the excess flour. Beaten eggs should be close at hand in a shallow bowl.

Dip the chard stems in the egg and drop them into the oil. Reduce heat to medium and cook the chard to about 1 minute. Raise the heat to medium-high, turn the stems, and cook them for about 1 minute longer. Drain them on two layers of paper towels and serve immediately.

According to Carol, the leaves make a nice accompaniment: simply chop them and sauté in 2 tablespoons of olive oil with a sliced clove of garlic. (Just before the greens are finished, I like to add a generous squeeze of lemon. JR)