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# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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## Sweet Summer Strawberries: June and Ever-bearing

As summer continues to creep over the Palouse the first of the warm season crops are beginning to show. Last week saw the first strawberry harvest for the farmer's market and as with many of our crops, they start slow but then come on strong. These are the June bearers of which we now have two 180' beds each with two rows of plants. Strawberries have been one of the small fruit crops that we've always strived to have in the CSA but have taken many years of refining to find the right varieties, types, and amounts.

We grow two different types of strawberries, June bearers and Ever-bearers. The June plants only produce a crop once a season, usually in June, this year a little later. The Ever-bearers produce a small crop about this time and then take a break until August when produce all the way through until the first hard frost.

In the past we grew two to three full beds of Ever-bearers but realized that picking, all by hand, came at the peak of our harvest season and was difficult to keep up with. We've transitioned

over the last couple years to have more berries this time of year when we don't have as much tedious hand picking. Don't worry though: there is still one bed of fruit for later in the summer, just not as much as in the past.

Strawberries take an amazing amount of planning and energy to maintain in an organic system such as the WSU Organic Farm. Each planting only produces well for two seasons, so we always need to be thinking ahead to ensure new plantings are coming on board. To complicate matters June bearers don't produce their first year so they actually stay in the ground for 3 years and have to be maintained even when they are not producing. The plants are not competitive with the weeds and require diligent hand weeding. On top of that the critters sure enjoy those bright red beauties about as much as we do and much deterrent is needed. The hard work pays off when you pop that first summer berry in your mouth and taste a bit of sunshine!

-- Brad



If I didn't appreciate strawberries enough before, I sure do now after learning about the care and planning they take out at the farm. My favorite way to enjoy strawberries is straight off the plant or in a bowl of breakfast cereal, yogurt or (for dessert), cream. But they are also so good paired with rhubarb. Strawberry-rhubarb pie is a classic, but I'm eager to make the recipes on the next page. The first is for a galette: the crust is similar to pie crust, but is baked free-form instead of in a dish. For some reason, I find the idea of making a galette less daunting (maybe because they usually require a lot less filling—and because I don't have to prep a pie or tart pan). The second sauce is great way to freeze the yummy strawberry-rhubarb-flavor combination to enjoy later in the year. Happy summer sweetness!

-Jamaica

## **Strawberry-Rhubarb Galette**

*This recipe is adapted from the food blog, [Twopeasandtheirpod-http://twopeasandtheirpod.com](http://twopeasandtheirpod.com)*

### **Pastry Dough:**

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cornmeal  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cold butter, cut into small pieces  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup buttermilk (or, for the same results, you can use milk with a generous splash of apple cider vinegar)

### **Strawberry Rhubarb Filling:**

2 cups sliced strawberries  
1 cup chopped rhubarb  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup granulated sugar  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
1 teaspoon lemon zest

To make the dough, combine dry ingredients in a processor; pulse 2-3 times. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Slowly pour the buttermilk through the chute, processing until the dough forms a ball. Remove the dough ball and adhere any remaining pieces of dough to it, then wrap in plastic wrap or parchment paper. Refrigerate 45 minutes before rolling out.

While the pastry chills, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Make the filling by combining all ingredients in a medium bowl, and tossing gently so that the cornstarch coats the fruit. Set aside.

Place the pastry dough on a piece of parchment paper and roll out to form a 12-14 inch circle. Place the dough (still on the parchment) on a baking sheet and pour the fruit mixture onto the center of the pastry, leaving a 2-inch border. Finally, fold the border over the filling, overlapping where necessary and pressing gently to adhere the folds. Bake for 1 hour, or until crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbly. Transfer the baking sheet to a wire rack to cool for at least 20 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## **Rhubarb-Strawberry Sauce**

This recipe will make about 4 cups of sauce.

5 large stalks of rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 1 inch lengths	zest of $\frac{1}{2}$ an orange
2 cups strawberries, hulled and halved	zest of $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar	1 teaspoon ground ginger
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice	dash of vanilla

Combine all the ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Stir well and bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the rhubarb is tender, about 10 minutes. This is very good on oatmeal or in yogurt—or any other way you please!