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THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

WSU Organic Farm • 201 Johnson Hall • Pullman, WA 99164-6420

Project Manager: Brad Jaeckel • jaeckel@wsu.edu • 509-335-5893 • www.css.wsu.edu/organicfarm



A Turning Point in the Season: Early-Season Peaks as the Heat-Loving Crops Come In

Last week summer was here in earnest! The first big temperature days at the farm were a bit of a shock for the farm crew but welcome for our warm loving crops. It was a turning point in the season as the spring brassicas are almost done and the “real” summer crops are upon us. We are seeing the first summer squash sizing up quickly in the field and the hoophouse cucumbers are just about ready to get going, too. The spring pea crop is finally in its peak and is one of the best crops we’ve seen yet. Peas truly thrive in cool wet weather so this spring and early summer were just right for our snap peas.

We grow our peas on 4 foot welded wire fencing supported by 6 foot T-posts every 10 feet. This rugged trellis provides the peas with a great place to hold onto as they grow upwards. The peas were one of the first seeds to go in the ground back in March and it’s nice to see them so tall and full. They’ve easily reached the top of the fence and in some places are over 6 feet tall creating a jungle for the pickers to work in. We strap on 5 gallon buckets to each picker and send them on their way to hand pick every single pea that comes off the vine. It’s slow work but the conversation is usually pretty good.

New this week is the fava bean, another of the early season legumes. The favas are planted the

same time as the peas and are one of the few bean crops that are frost hardy. We only grow one bed of these odd beans and will probably only have them in the boxes for one or two weeks. These are best eaten fresh but require some preparation on your part. The green beans are coming but need a little more time with the heat before they start producing.

More good news: the second corn planting germinated great but is a little late. If all goes well we will have a lot of corn all at once this year but probably not until the end of summer. Maybe a corn maze this year at the Harvest Festival?!!

--Brad

Our Bounty of Cabbage!

I know the boxes have had a lot of cabbage this year, and there is more to come. All the cabbage crops loved the cool wet early season and have produced very well! We have two more crops in the field, so hang in there—after that we won’t see the cabbages again until the fall.

If you’re having trouble getting through them each week, remember that most cabbages store very well in the refrigerator for many weeks. Cabbages come with their own natural wrappers and as you keep ignoring that lovely specimen back in the corner, all you have to do to get it back in shape is take a few of the outer leaves off. We’ve also been working on sauerkraut and kimchi here at our home for an easy way to preserve some of the goodness with fermentation. A good reference book is [Wild Fermentation](#) by Sandor Katz. He covers everything from vegetables to breads and even beverages.

Pickup Reminders

Please remember to bring your own bag or box to repack your share. We are happy to reuse any twist-ties, ziplock bags, or berry containers that you may receive from us.

Before joining a CSA, I'd never worked fava beans into a menu. Now, I consider their brief summer appearance a real treat. They take a little extra time in preparation—they must be removed from their outer shells, cooked, and then slipped from a second thin skin, but the time it takes to sit down with a friend and shell them is part of the fava bean's appeal. The marinated beans can then be kept in the fridge and added to salads or an antipasto plate on short notice.

-Jamaica

Marinated Fava Beans

This recipe is adapted from Molly Watson, <http://localfoods.about.com>

2 lbs. fava beans	1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon minced shallot	2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar	2 Tbsp. minced chives
1/2 tsp. salt	

To prepare the beans, shuck the thick outer pods by snapping the stem and pulling away the tough string; use your thumb to break open the pods and remove the beans. Next, blanch the beans in a pot of boiling water for just a few minutes, then drain and plunge into cold water. The next step is to remove the thin (though tough) skins. With your thumbnail, break the skin and squeeze the bean between your thumb and forefinger so that the bean slips out. Whisk together the remaining ingredients. Toss with the beans and refrigerate for at least one hour before serving.

Green Risotto with Fava Bean Puree and Fresh Peas

Adapted from Alice Waters', *Chez Panisse Vegetables* (Harper Collins, 1996).

1/2 pound fava beans	4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
Olive oil	2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Salt and pepper	1 cup Arborio rice
1 cup fresh snap peas	1/3 cup dry white wine
1/2 medium onion	1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Shell and blanch the fava beans according to the previous recipe. Put the completely shelled beans in a pot with a little olive oil, a little salt, and water to just about cover, and cook until they are soft enough to puree but haven't lost their color, about 15 minutes. If necessary, add water while they cook to prevent sticking. Drain and mash or puree in a food mill or food processor.

Cut pea pods into 1-inch pieces. Peel and chop the onion to a small dice. Heat the stock and keep on a low simmer. In a medium, heavy bottomed pot, heat butter. Add the onions and peas and sauté until translucent. Add the rice and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the rice has turned slightly translucent. Increase the heat, add the wine, and continue stirring until the wine is absorbed by the rice. Add the stock, about 1/2 to 1 cup at a time, letting each addition be almost completely absorbed before adding the next. When the rice is tender in the center and the risotto has a saucy consistency, add the fava puree, salt and pepper to taste, and cheese.

Serves 4 as a side.