

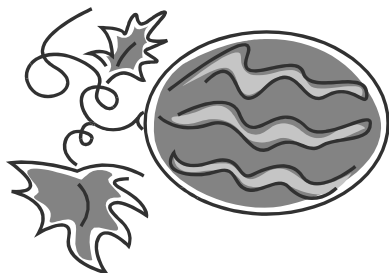
WSU ORGANIC FARM
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Two of our late summer glamour crops are upon us! Corn and Watermelon. These two well-loved favorites are quickly ripening with the recent return of hot weather. I thought things would slow down a bit after the temperatures began to drop earlier in the month, but last week's hot spell has pushed both of these crops forward. Even though the nighttime temperatures have been much lower, the hot days and intense sun seem to keep things growing rather fast.

Jewlee informed me that we'd better keep an eye on the watermelons, and I'd like to explain what exactly we do look at for a ripe watermelon. Members from last year probably remember the one week of glorious melons that arrived in the boxes. We've been working with Carol Miles, a vegetable specialist with WSU, on finding different varieties that are suited to our climate. This year we are trialing 12 different varieties, none of which we've grown before. I found one or two last year that I was really happy with but Carol wanted to try out different ones first before we get too set on any one variety. The data we collect for this trial includes number of fruit per plant, weight of each fruit, and sugar content for each variety.

But before we can record any of that information, we have to determine if the fruit is ripe. The easiest and best method to accomplish this mystery is to look at the curly tendrils opposite the point where the fruit's stem attaches to the main vine. If the tendril is brown and dry the watermelon is ready, and if it is still green you need to wait a little longer. Now, for the CSA this



is tricky because we need a certain number of fruit for the entire membership to receive a watermelon. Last year we ended up cutting some of the bigger ones in half to make sure we had enough, but this year we planted varieties that should all be small enough to go in the boxes uncut. These are referred to as "ice box" types and generally weigh between 5-8 pounds. Watermelons will keep well without refrigeration until they have been cut open, and then you either need to eat the entire fruit or save the rest wrapped in plastic and stored in the refrigerator.

The other crop that is upon us is sweet corn and it, too, takes a little practice and experience to determine ripeness. I first keep an eye on the silks that hang from the upper tip of each ear and watch for them to begin to dry or change color. At the same time I watch the size of the ears to see if the kernels are actually swelling under the husks. The next step is to just walk out in the corn and start feeling the tips of the ears to see if they've filled out to the ends. When I find an ear that feels "full" I then peel back the ends of the husk to take a peek and actually see if the kernels at the end are full. The next step is to go ahead and pull off that ear and taste it right in the field. (That's the best part!) Once I sense the corn is ripening across the entire patch, we will then count ears to get an estimate on how many are there so we can properly distribute them to the CSA.

We wait a long time for these crops to mature but they sure are wonderful once they come out of the field. They mark the end of the main summer season and the time of year when schools start back up. We aren't able to grow great quantities of either of these crops but check out the Saturday Farmer's Market in Moscow for more of these and other great fruits and vegetables from the area.

-- Brad

Fall River Vegetable Stew

(from *Sundays at Moosewood* by the Moosewood Collective)

I've made this soup many times, and it is a delicious way to use the wonderful summer vegetables we are receiving! You can throw some summer squash in here too, when you add the potatoes and carrots. Peeled and boiled summer squash will disintegrate into the soup, making the broth thicker and more flavorful.

1 large onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
3 tablespoons olive oil
5 small potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2 large carrots, cut into ½-inch rounds
2 tablespoons sweet Hungarian paprika
1 cup water or vegetable stock
28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
2 bay leaves
1 cup dry red wine
1 generous handful green beans (1/2 pound), trimmed and halved
3 cups sliced mushrooms
1 cup corn, fresh or frozen
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



1. Sauté onion and garlic in oil in a large soup pot, until onion softens.
2. Stir in potatoes, carrots and paprika, and sauté 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Pour in the water or stock, tomatoes, bay leaves and wine. Cover and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes.
4. Add green beans and mushrooms and continue to simmer, covered, for about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally.
5. Mix in the corn and simmer for about 15 minutes more, or until all vegetables are tender. Season with salt and pepper. Remove bay leaves before serving.

Quick Pasta with Arugula

(from *Vegetable Heaven* by Mollie Katzen)

¾ pound pasta, any shape
1 to 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon minced garlic
Chopped fresh arugula or spinach (a few handfuls)
1/3 cup grated pecorino or parmesan cheese
Red pepper flakes

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain, transfer to bowl, and drizzle with oil.
2. Toss the pasta with the garlic, greens, cheese, and red pepper flakes.