

THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD



Second Spring

Last week's cooler weather, after our one week of actual hot summer weather, reminded us all too quickly that fall is near. In the farming world, fall is often referred to as "the second spring" due to the cooler weather and the return of some of the crops that were dominating the boxes back at the beginning of the season. It's actually almost better than spring because we don't have to deal with the ups and downs of wet fields hindering planting and field work; the soil temperatures are warmer, and our crews are all trained and running efficiently. The one thing that we are losing is light! As summer ends, unlike in the spring, the daylight hours are becoming shorter, and become a limiting factor in growing fall and winter crops.

In a previous newsletter I mentioned that we were starting crops in our shade structure to be transplanted for fall production. That time has come and we're almost done getting all those plants in the ground. The broccoli was the first in, as it takes the longest to mature, followed by lettuces, kohlrabi, and cabbages. These crops are doing great and we'll probably see some bok choy in a couple weeks. Before transplanting, especially in the hotter weather, we try to get some water on the beds before tillage to reduce the transplant shock to the young plants. After we get them in the beds we immediately give them a nice drink of fertilizer, put the irrigation drip lines on, and cover the plants with a floating row cover. This white fabric helps reflect some of that hot sun, but more importantly, keeps the cabbage moths and other pests off the plants until harvest. Hoops of wire spaced about every 10 feet down the bed support the fabric, which is then weighted with bricks. This is an easy system to use as it allows quick access to anywhere in the bed by just removing a few bricks to get a peek under the fabric. Later in the fall when the frost does come, the fabric offers a little protection from the colder weather and prolongs the growth and harvestability of the crops. You can find floating row cover at local nurseries now by the foot, or it's easy to mail-order.

The Farm is Now Set Up at the WSU Mall!

Where: Across from the campus library

When: Wednesdays, 11am-1pm

What: We'll be there with a variety of produce for sale, and free sunflowers.

Come by and see us, or tell your friends. We'll be there until the weather gets too nasty!

We've also reached the end of our summer field seeding with the last of the lettuces, radish, *(Continued on Next Page)*

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and winter greens with the help of one of our Organic Ag students, Adam Reed. Adam is getting seeds in the ground to try low-tunnel production in the field with lettuce, spinach, and carrots, as well as prepping the hoopouses for spinach and other cold season greens. His hope is to offer these crops to local restaurants during the off season, so look for the farm's greens at place like Black Cyprus this winter!

~Brad

Okra

Okra is ready, and will make it into the large shares as well as be on the tables for sale. These tender pods are from the Hibiscus family and native to Africa. An oft-heard comment about okra is its mucilaginous quality once cooked. This "juice" is what is used to thicken Louisiana gumbo. (I just read in my *New Basics* cookbook that authentic gumbo chefs aver that if the gumbo "ain't got okra, it ain't gumbo.") Outside of gumbo though, the slip of cooked okra can be a bit of a turn off. If that's the case with you, roasting it is the trick. The recipe below comes from the Allrecipes website, where it is followed up with hundreds of rave reviews (many having to do with the roasting resulting in a drier consistency).

Roasted Okra

18 fresh okra pods, sliced 1/3 inch thick

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 teaspoons kosher salt, or to taste

2 teaspoons black pepper, or to taste

Preheat an oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Arrange the okra slices in one layer on a foil lined cookie sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in the preheated oven for 10 to 15 minutes.

Storage According to the University of Illinois extension website, okra pods should be refrigerated *unwashed*, and loosely wrapped in perforated plastic bags. Do NOT wash before storage, as wet pods will quickly mold and become slimy. Okra keeps for only two or three days. When the ridges and tips of the pod start to turn dark, use it quick. For longer storage, okra pods can be blanched in boiling water and frozen.

No Slip and Slide?

On this same webpage as the roasted okra recipe, a reader suggested soaking okra in lime-water to reduce the slipperiness of okra. According to her post, place okra pods in a large bowl and add water until the pods are just covered. To this, add the juice of one lime. Let the okra soak in the lime-water for about ten minutes; drain, rinse, and use in desired recipes as directed. Okra can also be steamed, sautéed, or boiled.



~Jamaica

One Potato....

Potatoes are also newly in season, and will be showing up in our boxes every other week through the rest of the season. Here are a few recipes, from a simple side, to a more involved soup.

Minty Roasted Potatoes

This recipe comes from *The New Basics Cookbook*, by Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins (Workman Publishing, 1989). You can substitute the new red potatoes with other varieties to good effect. As well, while the recipe calls for roasting potatoes whole, quartering them before roasting decreases the required cooking time and maximizes crispy edges!

8 red new potatoes (or other small potato variety)
¼ cup olive oil
Coarse (kosher) salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 gloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh mint

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Prick the potatoes with the tines of a fork and arrange them on a baking sheet. Bake for 1½ hours. Cut the potatoes into quarters and place them in a serving bowl. While they are still hot, toss them with the oil, coarse salt, pepper, and garlic. Gently toss in the mint. Serve hot or at room temperature. Serves 4.

Potato Gnocchi

Another winning recipe from *New Basics*. This is a Sunday (or Saturday) afternoon sort of recipe—definitely on the Slow-Food end of the cooking spectrum, but well worth a try nonetheless. According to the recipe, any potato variety—waxy (like Yukon Golds) or floury (ala Russets)—works well here. The only catch being the potential addition of an egg yolk: if your potatoes have a more floury consistency when cooked, add an egg when mixing the potato with the flour.

1 pound of potatoes, unpeeled
Pinch of salt
1 egg yolk (optional)
¾ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons olive oil
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish
Snipped chives and/or chopped parsley, for garnish

Place the potatoes in a saucepan, cover with cold water, and add the pinch of salt. Bring the water to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, 40 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and return them to the pan. Shake the pan gently over low heat to dry the potatoes. Let stand just until the potatoes are cool enough to handle. Peel the potatoes and cut them in chunks. Pass them through a ricer or food mill. Transfer to a lightly floured surface. Make a well in the center of the potatoes, and put the yolk (if using) in the center of the well. Sprinkle the potatoes with some of the flour and slowly work it in. Repeat until all the flour has been added and the mixture forms a smooth, slightly sticky, dough.

Divide the dough in fourths, and roll each piece into a 15-inch-long rope about ¾ inch in diameter. Using a floured knife, cut each rope into thirty pieces. The gnocchi can be cooked as is, or, to make decorative ridges, flour a dinner fork and roll the gnocchi under the tines. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the olive oil, and then drop the gnocchi into the boiling water. When the gnocchi rise to the surface, cook 30 seconds more. Drain in a colander. Melt the butter in a large skillet, and add the gnocchi. Toss gently, and season with salt, pepper, and a generous grating of Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle with chives, and serve. Serves 4.

Two Potato....

....and I can't help suspecting that roasted or grilled zucchini and garden tomatoes will be especially nice with this dish!

Three Potato... (or more)

Three (or More) Potato Chowder

From *The Splendid Table's How to Eat Supper* by Lynne Rossetto Kasper and Sally Swift (Potter, 2008). The introduction to this recipe begins, "This is the recipe for when you come home from the farmer's market with one too many bags of potatoes." You can make this as a potato-only chowder, or treat it as a base for a more Farmer's Market (CSA) kind of chowder-soup by substituting corn kernels, zucchini and/or tomatoes for some of the potatoes.

4 slices bacon (optional), diced
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium to large onion, diced
2 bay leaves, broken
4-5 sprigs fresh thyme
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
1/8 teaspoon fresh-ground black pepper, or to taste
4 large garlic cloves, coarse-chopped

2 14-ounce cans of chicken or vegetable broth
4 cups diced potatoes (and/or other produce e.g. corn or squash)
2 cups milk or cream (or a blend of both)
1/8-1/4 teaspoon Tabasco or other hot sauce
2 tablespoons minced flat parsley leaves

Put the bacon, olive oil, onion, bay leaves, thyme sprigs, salt, and pepper in a 6-quart pot. Sauté over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to color, about 5 minutes. Stir in the potato, garlic and broth. Cover the pot tightly and simmer the soup over medium-low heat for 10 minutes, or until the potato is tender. Stir in the milk or cream, and Tabasco. Remove from the heat. Pull out the thyme sprigs and bay leaves. With a slotted spoon, transfer about one-third of the solids to a food processor or blender. Blend for a few seconds. Return the mix to the pot. Heat the chowder to a bubble, and taste it for seasoning. Serve immediately, topped with the parsley.