

WSU Organic Farm
201 Johnson Hall
Pullman, Washington 99164-6420

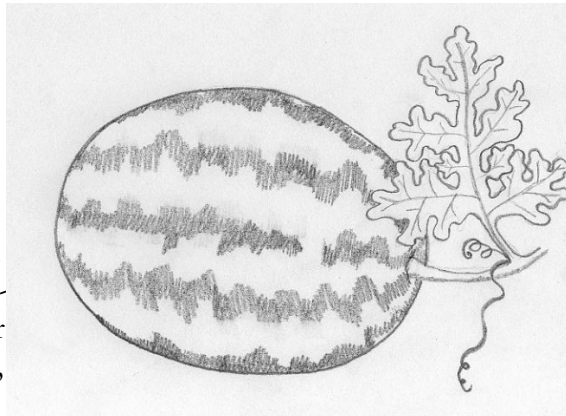
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We are participating in a watermelon variety trial led by Dr. Carol Miles, WSU Vegetable Extension Specialist. Carol is based at the WSU Vancouver Research and Extension Unit where she is screening 120 varieties this year to see which ones are best suited to the Pacific Northwest. This is our second year working with her and this year we planted 6 varieties of melons to see how they do at our farm in Pullman.

Last week you received fruit from our first harvest and we hope you enjoyed them! On Tuesday almost everyone got Quetzali, a beautiful pink fleshed melon that is nice and round. Friday members got Verona, a bigger dark green melon, and Pollinator, which is very similar to Verona but a little smaller. These were the three best performers for us this year and seem to all ripen at the same time.

You might be curious how we know they are ripe. As the end of August nears we begin to look at the vine where it attaches to the melon. At that junction there is a curly tendril and two small leaves. When these dry up the melon is ready! It never hurts to do some sam-

pling, though. Next year we will double the row space for watermelons and try a few more varieties. We are particularly interested in the 'icebox' size (6-15 pounds per fruit) as the fruit fits well into our CSA box and it is not too heavy for you to carry home. In Carol's trials, she has identified many personal (up to 6 pounds), icebox and even picnic (greater than 15 pounds) varieties that can produce well for us. Some varieties are yellow fleshed while many are the traditional red color. There are also seedless as well as seeded varieties. To see photos of the varieties Carol is testing, visit her web page at <http://agsyst.wsu.edu/WatermelonPhotos2005.htm>.



plung. Let us know what you think you might like for next year and we will try and include it in our planting plan. This variety trial is funded by the WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR) as part of the Organic Farming Research grant. We are hoping to do more of these types of trials as they help us determine different crops to grow in our area and help other growers learn about them as well.

-Brad Jaeckel and Carol Miles

Watermelon isn't something I imagine eating any other way besides slicing it open and digging in with a big spoon. BUT if you've had your share of unadulterated watermelon, perhaps you're ready to try something a little different. Alice Swan supplied me with this intriguing recipe, which comes from an unidentified magazine dated July/August 2004. I think it must look fabulous, too.

Watermelon with Feta

Slice a pound of watermelon into bite-sized chunks, arrange on individual plates, and sprinkle with chopped mint leaves and a little finely diced feta cheese. Squeeze a lime over all, and season with salt and pepper. You get salty, sweet, spicy, and tart flavors with each bite.

Or, try **Gelo di Melone** (Watermelon Gel), served for dessert in Palermo. This recipe comes from *Cucina Fresca*.

2-3 cups watermelon, enough to make 2 cups juice	2 ounces bitter-sweet chocolate, slivered
1/4 cup sugar	3 tablespoons unsalted pistachios, skinned and chopped
3 tablespoons cornstarch	Pinch ground cinnamon

Cut fruit into chunks, and put through a sieve or food mill to get 2 cups of liquid without seeds. Combine juice, sugar, and cornstarch in a saucepan and stir until cornstarch is dissolved. Bring to a boil and let cook 4 to 5 minutes, stirring constantly until mixture thickens. Let cool. Add the chocolate slivers and stir. Refrigerate until very cold, spoon into dessert goblets, and garnish with chopped pistachios and dust with cinnamon. For 6.

CSA shareholder reminder: Please everybody, bring your own bag or box to pick up your veggies each week. The farm has to scrounge these from other sources so it really helps if you bring your own. And please feel free to bring extras to help out those who forget! Thanks!!

The tomatoes continue, hallelujah.

Bread Pissaladiere (*From a Monastery Kitchen* by d'Avila-Latourrette)

1 cup olive oil	4 ripe tomatoes, sliced
1 onion, sliced	1 loaf French bread, sliced
15 ounces pitted black olives	garlic cloves and anchovies (optional)
4 tablespoons herbs provencales (basil, thyme, rosemary)	grated cheese (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 F. Pour the olive oil into a blender; add the onion, black olives, and herbs (garlic and anchovies, if desired), and blend thoroughly until smooth. Cover the slices of bread with the spread (about 4 slices per person), and place on a greased or oiled baking sheet. Arrange the tomatoes on top. If you wish, sprinkle some herbs or grated cheese on the tomatoes. Bake for 15 minutes, or under the broiler for a few minutes, until the tomatoes are cooked. Serve as appetizers or canapes before dinner. 4 servings.

Garden Tomato and Garlic Pasta (*Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters)

3 ripe tomatoes	1/2 cup fruity extra-virgin olive oil
3 cloves garlic	3/4 pound pasta
1 small bunch parsley or basil	Salt and pepper

Cut out the stem ends and dice the perfectly ripe tomatoes. Peel and chop the garlic and chop the leaves of the parsley or basil. Have all the ingredients prepared and ready by the stove. Put the pasta on to cook in rapidly boiling salted water.

Heat the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed skillet until quite hot but not smoking. Throw the garlic into the oil. Right away, before the garlic starts to brown, add the tomatoes and stir; they will probably spatter a little. Add the parsley or basil and cook just a minute or two, until the tomatoes are warmed through and have started to relax. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and toss with the cooked pasta. Serves 4.

Lentils with Garlic and Tomatoes (*Madhur Jaffrey's World of the East Vegetarian Cooking*)

4 tablespoons olive or other vegetable oil	1 cup lentils
5 cloves garlic, peeled and minced	3/4 to 1 teaspoon salt
1/2 pound tomatoes, peeled and minced	1 tablespoon lemon juice

Heat the oil in a heavy, wide, 2 1/2 quart pot over a medium flame. When hot, put in the garlic. Stir and fry until the garlic browns slightly. Put in the tomatoes. Stir and cook about 5 minutes or until tomatoes turn into a paste. Put in the lentils and 2 1/2 cups water. Bring to a boil. Cover, lower heat and simmer gently for 1/2 hour. Add the salt and lemon juice. Stir to mix. Serves 4.

*Newsletter by Carol Price Spurling - www.plumassignment.net
Illustration by Alice Swan*