

WSU Organic Farm
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This is the last week of the CSA and I know there are mixed feelings. Jewlee and I are looking forward to the winter slow-down but also a little sad to see it come to another end. I want to take some time in this last letter to let you know about the state of the farm and what's going on this winter. But first, there's some goodies in this last box that need some explanation.

The dry corn is the Painted Mountain that many of you have seen hanging in the harvest shed at the farm. These are great decorations and can be hung by the husks. They can also be used to make corn meal or hominy. You will first need to get the kernels off the cob by grabbing the cob and doing a twisting motion with your hand to break the kernels free. We grind ours in small batches in an electric coffee grinder but a food processor might work, too.

The odd shaped potatoes are Ruby Crescent fingerlings and are considered a gourmet potato. They naturally grow in random odd shapes but this does not affect their taste.

And finally the dark-brown bulbs with the white roots are daffodils. These flowers were one of the first things planted at the farm back in the fall of 2004. They've been multiplying and starting to crowd the asparagus patch. We've dug them all up and will replant a small amount with our other perennial flowers but will no longer have such a large row. The fall is a perfect time to replant these bulbs root-down, 4-6 inches deep in your garden. They are a beautiful yellow color and one of the first flowers in the spring. Plant them if you have room or please give them to a friend.

We still have some work to get the farm ready for

winter and with the wet weather this becomes more difficult. Driving the tractor on wet soil causes compaction problems for the following season so we're very careful to do our work when the soil conditions are best. The hoopouses are also getting cleaned out for their winter time work. One of the grad students in the department will be conducting research on growing winter hardy lettuces, spinach, and mustards in one of the houses and the other will have trials for other hardy vegetables. Our goal is to find greens and other veggies that can handle growing in that environment to have for local sales.

Check out our new webpage!

<http://css.wsu.edu/organicfarm/index.htm>

Thanks to our friend Carol Miles and the crew over at WSU Vancouver. The site includes all of this season's newsletters, info on the CSA program, the field course, and our goals and history.

This will be done in conjunction with work at my home farm where we have a SARE grant to operate trials this winter in our two hoopouses. So keep your eyes open at the Moscow Food Coop for our local winter veggies.

I finally want to mention the state of finances at the

farm. We've had numerous questions about our funding and budget this season so I'd like all of you to know where we stand. Currently the CSA covers about 2/3 of the farm budget with the remainder coming mostly from the Crops and Soils department. Only in the first year did we operate from start-up grant money. When I took over as manager there was no plan for funding the farm into the future. Thus, we started the CSA to help cover costs while other options could be explored. For the last two seasons I've had to piece the budget together using "soft" money from the dept.

The mission of the farm is education, research, and extension. Right now it is more a business than anything because we rely so heavily on the CSA funding. It is not the farm's intention to be competitive with other small local growers and thus

we do not sell at the Saturday Farmer's Market or to the Co-op when other growers have the same products. If the farm could secure permanent funding just for the farm manager the CSA sales would cover all other farm expenses and even be able to pay more employees. (As of now Jewlee and I are the only ones on payroll.) We are currently looking for this funding and would appreciate any letters of support for such action. If you would be interested in doing so please write an open letter addressed to the farm and send to the address above.

Thank you all for your continuing support of local agriculture and education.

- Brad Jaeckel

Starting in February I will be sending out next season's sign-up forms to all members who participated this season. You will have one month to return your forms and payment before I open the CSA to folks on the waiting list. There are quite a lot of people on the waiting list right now so I can't promise spots for everyone on it. I will send out a mass mailing in March and then it will be first-come first-serve to fill the remaining spots. If you don't hear from me in February please get in touch to secure your spot.

If you didn't get a chance to get your surveys to us this week please feel free to send them in to the address above. - BJ

I'm especially sad at the end of the season since I just found a great cookbook: *The Smith & Hawken Gardeners' Community Cookbook*, by Victoria Wise. We'll bring it out again next year. - CPS

Arugula Farm Salad (both recipes from *Gardeners' Community Cookbook*)

3 cups (packed) arugula leaves, whole if small, torn if large, washed and spun dry
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
1/2 medium sweet onion, thinly sliced
1/2 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
1/4 cup olive oil

Spread the arugula on a serving platter. Sprinkle the feta over the leaves. Strew the onion slices over the feta. Sprinkle the pine nuts over the onions. Drizzle the oil over the top and serve without tossing. (Arugula tip from Kate Jaeckel: arugula is also great in lasagna and makes excellent pesto.)

Fried Green Tomatoes

1 large egg
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup cornmeal
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
Vegetable oil or shortening, for frying (Use a little bacon fat for authentic Southern flavor.)
3 large, firm green tomatoes, sliced 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick
Salt

Mix the egg and milk together in a small bowl. In another bowl, combine cornmeal and flour. Heat about 1/2 inch oil or shortening in a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Dip each tomato slice in the egg-milk mixture, then in the cornmeal-flour mixture. Place as many slices as will fit without crowding in the skillet and fry, not too fast, until brown on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes altogether. Transfer to a serving platter, sprinkle with salt to taste, and serve right away.

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