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Carrots

Elisabeth Inman
USU Student Organic Farm

Keenen Crummitt
USU Student Organic Farm

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USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM Newsletter

September 12, 2011 Vol. 2 Issue 18

Amanda and a student volunteer working on that good ole herb garden

Conquering the Bounty

Have tons of carrots to use up? Try these simple ideas to enjoy the great flavor of carrots in your meals.

- ✓ Add shredded carrots to your favorite chili recipe. They will take on the chili flavors and help to sweeten it a little.
- ✓ Shred into coleslaw or salads.
- ✓ Sauté grated carrots and grated turnips. Add seasonings and serve warm for a tasty and simple side.
- ✓ Add to carrot cake or muffins.
- ✓ If you like to make your own juices, add carrots when juicing apples. This is one of my favorites.
- ✓ Make a pot roast or beef stew with carrots and potatoes.
- ✓ Cut them up in chunks or sticks, blanch, and freeze. You can make your own peas and carrots mix.
- ✓ Roast with other vegetables.
- ✓ Simmer until tender, puree and add to pasta sauce. Puree a large batch and keep in 1-2 cup portions in the freezer for later use.
- ✓ Pour vinegar and spices over carrots in a jar in the fridge to "pickle" them.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Featured Vegetable: Carrots

Carrots have a lot of history. Thought to have originated in Central Asia and the Middle East, they were introduced in Europe in the 15th century and brought to the Americas. They are well-known for their orange color, but actually come in a variety of colors, including purple, red or maroon, yellow, and white. In today's market, 1/3 of worldwide carrots are produced in China, with Russia being the second largest producer, and the United States the third.

The word carrot comes from the Greek word karoton. The first three letters, kar, indicate the horn shape of the carrot root, which is the part that we most often eat. Their leafy greens, which shoot above the ground, form an umbrella-like cluster at the top of the root. Carrots also belong to the same family as parsley, anise, celery, parsnips, fennel, caraway, cumin, and dill.

Carrots are a versatile vegetable. They are great raw and cooked in many different ways. They are the most common of all root vegetables, relatively cheap, and available all year round. They are one of the most popular vegetables here in the U.S. as well. Widely identified by young and old alike, the average carrot consumption is one cup of carrots per week in the U.S.

Storage and Preparation

Carrots are hardy vegetables and will keep for a relatively long time if stored properly. Store wrapped loosely in plastic in the refrigerator. They will keep for at least a couple of weeks. Try to store away from apples, pears, and other ethylene-producing fruits and vegetables, since the ethylene gas may cause carrots to become bitter.

Generally, it is thought that the larger the carrot, the sweeter it will be since the sugars in a carrot are concentrated in its core. Carrots are delicious eaten raw or cooked. To prepare carrots, wash dirt from skin. Remove the tops. It is not necessary to peel them, although many people prefer them peeled. Be careful not to overcook carrots if you want them to retain their maximum flavor. You can easily substitute carrots with parsnips, beets, turnips, or celery root in your favorite recipes.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Buttery Cooked Carrots

This tasty dish is a great side for any occasion. Such a simple, yet deliciously wonderful recipe. You'll want to use it over and over again.

Ingredients

1 pound carrots, peeled and cut into same-size pieces
1/4 C margarine or butter
1/3 C sugar

Cook carrots in a large pot of boiling water (or steam carrots) until tender. Drain off most of the liquid, leaving bottom of pan barely covered with water. Set the carrots aside. Stir margarine and brown sugar into the water. Simmer and stir until the margarine melts. Return carrots to the pot, and toss to coat. Cover, and let sit for a few minutes to allow flavors to mingle.

Recipe from Allrecipes.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The newsletters are now online!
Find them at:
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_orgfarm/

Elderberries are ripe! They are good for jams and pies (not so good fresh). If you would like some, let us know via email.

We will be selling organic corn every afternoon this week and next! Come get some if you would like more or just tell your friends! $3 for a dozen

Email us your favorite recipes using the veggies in your basket! Who doesn't love a tried and true recipe? organicfarm@aggiemail.usu.edu

Volunteer hours:
Tuesday and Friday: 4:30-6:30pm
Thursdays: 9:30am-12:30pm
Saturdays 7:30-1:00pm (harvest)

Organic Techniques

Cappellini Pomodoro Recipe

From: Claire Eborn, CSA member- Thanks, Claire!

Yield: 3 cups sauce (enough to serve over one 16-oz package spaghetti, cooked)

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (dried is fine)
- 5 cups chopped fresh tomatoes (canned is fine)
- ½ cup coarsely chopped basil leaves (or 1 Tbsp dried)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp Tabasco

Heat oil in 4-qt saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes, basil, salt and Tabasco. Heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve over any pasta!

Note: Tastes just like Cappellini Pomodoro from Olive Garden! It also freezes really well in quart Ziploc freezer bags! ☺

Source: Italian Favorites "Fresh 'n' Sassy Spaghetti Sauce"

For more information about the USU Student Organic Farm or CSA shares visit:
www.usu.edu/organicfarms

On the Farm News

This week on the farm and the beginning of last brought a new crop to offer-corn! This was mainly for research purposes, but after that finished the rest was set in store for the farm. The corn we grew this year was the sugar pearl white corn. This variety is by far some of the best corn I've tasted in a long time so come buy some more and tell your friends we'll be selling it every day this week and next! Plus, it's super cheap! $3 for a dozen! We've already harvested a ton and there's still so much growing.

We also welcomed MANY new volunteers this weekend, especially Saturday. I believe we had over 10 volunteers at one time! The farm really depends on them so we can't thank them enough.

Word has just been received that a certifier will come and inspect our farm this week. If the inspection turns out successful, the farm will be on the road to being certified organic. We've been waiting and preparing for this day for some time now so it's quite exciting.

Vegetables to expect next week: Tomatoes, peppers, winter squash, potatoes, arugula, basil, beets, cilantro, parsley, carrots, chard, lettuce, kale, pak choi, and tatsoi.

Article by: Keenen Crummitt

Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

Decorative Creamy Soups without All the Work

Information compiled from "How to Cook Everything Vegetarian" by Mark Bittman

Thinking soups yet? Probably not in the heat of summer, but this soup will get you excited for the upcoming months. Creamy soups are often thought of as time consuming and difficult, but this easy, substitutable recipe will become one of your favorites.

Creamy Carrot Soup

The beauty of creamy soups is that they're mostly pureed. This means no fancy dicing or slicing vegetables.

3 T butter or olive oil
1 small onion, sliced
1 pound carrots*, roughly chopped
1 large starchy potato (Russet works great), peeled and roughly chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper
5 C vegetable stock or water
2 tsp sugar or to taste (optional)
½ C cream or sour cream (optional but enhances creaminess)

Heat butter or oil in deep saucepan over medium heat. When hot, add the vegetables. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes, until the carrots soften a bit. Add the stock and cook until the vegetables are very tender, 15-20 minutes.

Use an immersion blender to puree the soup in the pan, or cool the mixture slightly and pour into a blender to puree until smooth.
(You may prepare the soup in advance up to this point. Cover, refrigerate for up to 2 days or cool and freeze for up to 6 months.)

Adjust the seasoning; stir in the sugar to play up the carrot flavor if the soup tastes flat. To serve the soup hot, reheat in the saucepan. To serve cold, refrigerate. Either way, stir in the cream, if you're using it, then garnish with parsley leaves and serve.

**Try substituting the carrots for celery or fennel for more delicious and easy creamy soups.*

Article by: Elisabeth Inman