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USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter

Plants, Soils, and Climate

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9-26-2011

## Winter Squash

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*Utah State University*

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### Recommended Citation

Sherwood, Brianne, "Winter Squash" (2011). *USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter*. Paper 19.  
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# USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM

September 26, 2011

## Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 20



Every Homecoming Week, campus organizations paint on 700 N between 800 E and 1200 E. Isn't ours awesome?

### Conquering the Bounty: Squash

- ❖ Season with cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, or ginger and add a bit of butter and brown sugar for a "sweet" side dish.
- ❖ Season with chili powder, garlic, grated cheese, or herbs such as parsley, oregano, or sage and add a little butter or olive oil for a "savory" side dish.
- ❖ Replace pasta with Spaghetti squash and top with marinara
- ❖ Cut off the stem end of Acorn squash, scoop out the seeds, and stuff with your favorite grain and veggie mixture
- ❖ Cook and puree Butternut or Delicata squash for a delicious pureed soup (allrecipes.com)
- ❖ Bread slices of squash (dip in flour, then eggs, then bread crumbs) and use in place of eggplant in eggplant parmesan.

### Freezing Leftover Cooked Squash:

Never throw cooked squash away! Always cook the whole squash then freeze leftovers in meal-sized freezer bags or containers. To thaw, move the squash from the freezer to the refrigerator in the morning and it will be ready to cook by dinnertime!

### Featured Vegetable: Winter Squash

Newsletter by: Brianne Sherwood

Winter squash is one of the most fun vegetables of the season because there are so many shapes and sizes! Butternut is probably the most popular winter squash and is a very delicious one, but there are so many more. Hubbard, Buttercup, Sqaghetti, Delicata, and Banana squash are a few to try this season. Winter squash is named as such because it keeps over the winter months, not because it becomes ripe in winter (even though summer squash becomes ripe in summer).

### Preparing and Cooking

First and foremost, let's talk about cutting winter squash. It can be a VERY difficult task. Always use a sharp knife with a long blade for safety and always work on a flat surface. As a last resort, you can always put the squash in a trash bag and drop it on the floor! Use a spoon to scrape out seeds and stringy fibers.

Another way to peel and soften the squash in order to cut it into cubes (like for the recipe below), is to poke several holes into the whole squash and microwave for 5-10 minutes or until slightly softened. This allows the squash flesh to steam cook inside of the skin. Allow to cool. With a very sharp knife, cut ends off and remove peel. Cut squash in half, scoop seeds and membranes out with a spoon, and then cut into cubes.

There are two main methods to bake squash- try both to see which you prefer for different varieties: 1) Rub squash that has been cut in half with a little olive oil and bake uncovered. This will provide a "roasted" flavor and some browned, caramelized sections. 2) Add about ½ cup water and the squash halves to a large pan and cover with foil. This method results in moister "steamed" squash. Both methods need about 30-45 minutes, sometimes as long as 90 minutes for larger squash, to become tender.

*Source: Viva Vegetables by Janet Anderson MS, RD and Tamara Vitale MS, RD*

### Squash and Corn Chowder

*This recipe is a favorite of mine. If you have frozen corn from when it was in season, it works really well in this recipe. Carrots and white beans are also great additions. Any vegetable you have could work, in fact. Just be sure to give them enough cooking time to soften.*

2 Tbsp olive oil	2 bay leaves
1 cup onion, chopped	½ tsp thyme
1 medium butternut squash, cut into 1" cubes	½ tsp summer savory (oregano works too)
2 medium red potatoes, scrubbed and diced	3 cups corn (frozen or fresh)
Vegetable stock or water	1 cup skim milk
	Salt and pepper to taste

In a large, heavy-bottomed soup pot, sauté onion in oil for 5 minutes; add potatoes and squash. Add stock or water to barely cover vegetables and bring to boil. Add seasonings, reduce heat, and simmer until tender (20-25 minutes) with the lid on. Remove 2 cups of solids- mash and return to pot. Add corn, heat through. Add milk, salt and pepper; heat gently. Add water or milk to adjust consistency if needed. Remove bay leaves and serve immediately.

Garnish with a sprinkle of paprika, croutons, sliced green onions, or grated cheddar cheese if desired.

*Adapted from a recipe by: Tamara Steinitz Vitale, USU Dept of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The newsletters are now online for year round access! Find them at: [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student\\_organic/](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_organic/)

**PUMPKIN DAY-** Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 4pm-dusk. Come with your family and pick up some pumpkins! One pumpkin is free per half share!

If you haven't received a winter squash yet, pick some up when you come to pumpkin day. They grew a little slower than expected this season.

Look for the surveys we will be sending via email!

**THANK YOU FOR A FABULOUS SEASON!**

### Organic Techniques: Food Label Terms Everyone Should Know

A few food label terms can be a little misleading so knowing exactly what they mean can help you discern how sustainable a food really is. In an earlier issue we talked about what "organic" and "natural" means on food labels. Here are a few more terms to spot at the grocery store:

**Cage Free-** Found on egg cartons, this means that the chickens aren't in little cages, but they are often still confined entirely indoors in crowded and dirty conditions. It's a step up from caged chickens, but not by much.

**Free Range-** This term's only qualification is that the animals have access to the outside. Usually this means the animals are confined most of the time with just a small yard to visit from time to time. Of course, this label can mean truly free range as well.

**Grass Fed-** These animals could have been grain finished so a more reassuring label is "100% grass fed" or "grass finished"

**Pastured-** This term isn't regulated, but it means the animal was raised grazing or foraging outside on pasture. This term can generally be trusted, but always ask questions to clarify if you can.

Source: <http://news.change.org/stories/8-misleading-food-label-terms-every-eater-should-know>

For more information about the USU Student Organic Farm or CSA shares visit:

[www.usu.edu/organicfarms](http://www.usu.edu/organicfarms)

## On the Farm News

This is it. We've reached it. Twenty weeks of produce; starting with sparse boxes of early season greens, and ending overwhelmingly filled. It has been a pleasure for all of us interns to get into the dirt and grow tasty vegetables for you to enjoy. We've also enjoyed getting to know all of you!

It's nice to connect with others that love local, delicious food. Thank you so much for being part of our farm and supporting local agriculture this year! It has been a great experience. Things that have been keeping us busy this week include harvesting, pulling out old plants, and getting the green hoop house tilled and ready to plant our cover crop. Again, we're grateful for the volunteers who've helped us out tremendously over the past few weeks.

Don't forget to come to Pumpkin Days on October 8th! It will be an awesome event to welcome the fall time season. And remember us for next year! We'll be contacting you via email around the beginning of April to purchase shares before we open it up to everyone!

Vegetables to expect next week: PUMPKINS and winter squash!!!

Article by: Amanda Hawks



## Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

### Cooking Vegetables to Perfection

*One of my favorite dinners= a grain + a bunch of different sautéed vegetables- sort of like a spin on a stir-fry. Why do I like it? It's fast, easy, and uses tons of vegetables. Plus, when I go to the farmer's market, I don't have to make a list. I can just get three or four different veggies I think would taste well together. Who doesn't love the no-planning method sometimes!*

First, cut your vegetables- thinner if you want a faster cooking time.

The vegetables that need the **longest cooking times** are:

- Carrots
- Onions
- Potatoes (especially potatoes)

If you're sautéing with a bunch of different veggies, put these in the heated skillet with a little oil first. They need about 20 minutes total. I would even consider boiling these until semi-tender before adding them to the sauté pan at the end (except the onions- always sauté those).

Veggies with **medium cooking times** (these probably need about 15 minutes total- put them in 5 minutes after the veggies above):

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Bell peppers
- Summer squash

Veggies with **short cooking times** (these need about 10 minutes or less):

- Mushrooms
- Tomatoes

Veggies with **very short cooking times** (need about 5 minutes or less):

- Spinach and other greens

After your veggies are done, add the grains (cooked) and seasonings to the pan (see "Fabulous Flavors in the corn newsletter issue), heat through, and you've got a meal!

Article by: Brianne Sherwood