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The Herb Garden

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USU Student Organic Farm

June 13, 2012
Volume 3, Issue 5

Newsletter

One of the beehives on the farm

Veggie Feature: The Herb Garden

Did you know that you can pick fresh herbs at the farm? It's true – the farm has its own herb garden that has been a work in progress for a few years. Weekly shares won't necessarily contain a portion of these herbs, but CSA members are more than welcome to come and pick from the herb garden when they pick up their boxes on the farm. The garden has quite a wide variety of herbs that would go perfectly with the produce each week. Herbs that are ready to go right now include sage, thyme, dill, and chives. Check back during the season for lavender, rosemary, and mint. The garden is located just south of the pick-up area, right by the picnic table and big red umbrella.

Lemon Herb Pasta

This pasta is delicious. It's light with just a touch of creaminess without being too heavy. I threw it together in about 15 minutes and it only uses one pot, both things that are good for any home cook.

8 oz dry linguini
1 T butter
2 T cream
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
2-3 T fresh herbs, minced
2 T freshly grated parmesan
Salt and cracked black pepper to taste

Bring 2 quarts of water to boil in a large saucepan. Add pasta and cook until al dente, 7-10 minutes. Drain pasta but don't rinse it. Return the pasta to the pan and add the butter and cream. Once the butter is melted, add the juice, zest, cheese, and salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Herb Pairings

So now that you know you have these wonderful, aromatic plants at your fingertips, what can you do with herbs anyway? Here are some short descriptions of a few of the herbs you might come across and what to do with them.

Basil-Basil and tomatoes are arguably made for each other, simply mix some sliced tomatoes with basil, oil, and balsamic vinegar and you'll be in basil heaven. Basil is very popular in Italian dishes. Blends well with garlic, lemon, oregano, and thyme.

Chives-Known for pairing with potatoes. Great as a garnish for any savory dish. Pairs especially well with sauces, soups, and vegetables.

Cilantro-A very important herb in Mexican cuisine. Best used raw or only slightly cooked. Tough stems should be discarded, this is a very potent herb so use sparingly. Blends very well with chiles. Tastes great in salsas and guacamole.

Dill-Dill is known for flavoring fish, especially salmon. Can be rubbed on a fish filet with salt, pepper, oil, and a little lemon. That's all the flavor you'll need. Leaves have a slightly bitter flavor which diminishes with heat. Can be used to flavor dressings, especially ranch dressing.

Lavender-Used in sweet dishes or drinks – teas, jams, even lemonade.

Article by: Amanda Spackman

Announcements

Guess what? It's that time again! The strawberries are ready to pick. CSA members are welcome to come and pick as many as you would like. We will be selling them as well to passersby who come out and pick.

Also, we are gearing up for our first CSA barbeque, which will be June 26th at 6 PM. There will be more information soon, but come prepared with your favorite pizza topping - we're making grilled pizza!

We love volunteers and would love to have CSA members come out and help out! Our volunteer hours run from 8am to 12pm Monday through Friday. If you would like to help with harvest, come on Wednesday or Friday from 7am to 10am.

Everything Organic

Article by: Amanda Hawks

Often the term "organic" can be misinterpreted in food production today. We thought it would be nice to take a section of the newsletter to go over exactly what makes us certified organic at our farm. One of the biggest things about being organic is not using chemical pesticides or artificial fertilizers in dealing with weeds, pests, and soil nutrition. We have organic alternatives which we will use this section to describe later in future issues. Also, an important component of being certified organic that we do is keep careful records of harvest, seeding, transplanting, farm inputs, and maps of vegetable locations. Finally, we purchase organic seeds that are USDA certified organic. Check this section in the next couple of issues for more details about each of these aspects of our organic farm.

On the Farm News

Article by: Amanda Hawks

Even with temperatures getting close to freezing Tuesday and Wednesday night, everything on the farm is growing great. I am so impressed by how big things are getting, as is reflected in the produce in the most recent shares. There is so much happening on the farm! Our Utah Campus Compact Gardening Outreach interns are hosting a small summer camp about twice a month on the farm, where a group of 6-8 year olds come for about an hour and learn about gardening and get to perform some farm-related tasks. This last Monday, the group came for their first time. Cami, one of our gardening outreach interns, gave them a farm tour. Heidi, another gardening outreach intern, held a vegetable bingo competition, and we ended their stay by seeding up radishes, carrots, salad mix, cucumbers, zucchini, and transplanting broccoli in the hot hot sun. They were good sports about the heat. Now there is a cute little plot on the east side of the hoop houses devoted to the summer camp, as well as to extra vegetables for the campus stand.

Better Together

An organic garden is often cherished for what it is lacking, such as chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; but it is also so much more. Organic gardening is the art of combining numerous elements to make an interconnected system which mimics nature, a system that relies upon insects, birds, shade, sun and all other aspects of a living and working community. The use of beneficial relationships in organic gardening is key to success. Companion planting uses these relationships to enhance your garden's productivity. Simply put, some plants are just better together, this technique is based around the idea that certain plants can benefit others when planted next to, or close to one another because of natural substances in their roots, flowers, leaves etc. These natural substances can repel and or attract insects depending on your needs. In some cases, they can also help enhance the growth rate and flavor of other varieties. If you feel like you're trading a pest free and productive garden for an organic one, think again. Here are some helpful companion plants for your organic garden:

Marigolds: Plant freely throughout the garden. Pest deterrent through roots, leaves, and flowers!
Basil and Tomatoes: Basil will help repel thrips, flies and mosquitoes as well as enhance your tomatoes growth and flavor. Not to mention, a killer pair on the dinner plate! Bruschetta anyone?
Chives: A helpful perennial that comes back year after year with pungent blooms that repel pests
Dill: Plant with your carrots and other root crops; the tall, slender dill-plants act as sunscreen for more sun-sensitive crops like spinach and lettuce.
The Three Sisters, Corn, beans and squash:
This classic example is tried and true. Corn offers the beans needed support and trellising, while the beans pull nitrogen from the air and bring it to the soil for the benefit of all three. The squash's large leaves shade the soil and acts as a living mulch, keeping it cool, moist, and preventing weeds.

Article by: Hayley Waldbillig