Lettuce

Brianne Sherwood
USU Student Organic Farm

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Conquering the Bounty: Lettuce
By: Brianne Sherwood

Lettuce is very low in calories and high in vitamins, which means that you can increase the volume of food that you eat in a day while keeping calories low. This makes losing weight easier or just lowers your calories at lunch so you can eat that cake you’ve had your eye on- guilt free.

So what do you do with a ton of lettuce? Of course, green salad. But what if you get tired of your green salad with carrots, onions, and ranch dressing? Try something different! Taco salad, asian salad, greek salad, tuna salad- “salad” can mean a million different things. So mix it up, add a new topping, and use those greens from your basket in a new way.

Another way to keep salads interesting is to find and use a delicious dressing. Some of the best ones I’ve tried are homemade (see “Fabulous Flavors” box). Find a good dressing and it will make your salads ten times better.

Other things to do with the bounty of lettuce:
- Pack it on sandwiches
- Load it on tacos
- Wrap a stir fry mixture in lettuce leaves and eat it like a burrito

Featured Vegetable: LETTUCE
By: Brianne Sherwood

There are so many varieties of lettuce! Just on our farm we have EIGHT varieties: deertongue, black seeded simpson, four seasons, red sails, two star, red grand rapids, benito, and green salad bowl lettuce. Come to the farm and check them out or take a peek in the hoop houses next week when you pick up your share. Here’s a little bit about lettuce in general:

Cleaning and Storing: Make sure you wash or rinse the lettuce before you eat it. Although we clean it at the farm, we could have missed some dirt or maybe even a worm! After washing, let them drain in a colander or spin in a salad spinner. To keep your lettuce fresh, wrap it in a cloth or paper towel, then refrigerate in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer. Don’t let your lettuce freeze, as it will turn soggy when it defrosts.

Preparing: Greens bruise easily, so handle carefully. Cut or tear into bite-sized pieces right before serving to minimize browning. Also, dress your salads immediately before serving to avoid wilting.

Do you ever get stuck with lettuce but no salad dressing? One simple solution is to mix 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar. Use whatever oil and vinegar you like, just make sure they are flavorful and delicious. One example is olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Add a little salt and pepper and you got a salad dressing. There is also a recipe for a poppy seed dressing in the “Fabulous Flavors” box in this newsletter and it is tasty.

Create-Your-Own Salad

My favorite way to make salads is this way: pick a few things from a list and mix it all together. (I can never think of these toppings unless I have a list.) Try it out and make your own creation! Make your salads the main meal by adding something from the protein column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Cheeses</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Crunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>radishes (T)</td>
<td>pineapple</td>
<td>mozzarella</td>
<td>kidney beans</td>
<td>croutons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broccoli</td>
<td>apples</td>
<td>feta (S,G)</td>
<td>black beans</td>
<td>seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carrots</td>
<td>pears</td>
<td>parmesan</td>
<td>pinto beans</td>
<td>nuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>beets</td>
<td>mangoes</td>
<td>bleu cheese</td>
<td>garbanzo beans</td>
<td>tortilla chips</td>
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<tr>
<td>olives (G)</td>
<td>strawberries</td>
<td>cottage cheese</td>
<td>almonds (S)</td>
<td>(crumbled) (T)</td>
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<tr>
<td>corn (T)</td>
<td>(S)</td>
<td></td>
<td>pecans</td>
<td>pepperoncinis</td>
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<tr>
<td>celery</td>
<td>blackberries</td>
<td></td>
<td>walnuts</td>
<td>(G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avocado (T)</td>
<td>blueberries</td>
<td></td>
<td>cashews</td>
<td>small crackers</td>
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<tr>
<td>tomatoes (T,G)</td>
<td>oranges</td>
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<td>pine nuts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>cucumber (G)</td>
<td>grapes</td>
<td></td>
<td>chicken</td>
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<tr>
<td>onion (S,T,G)</td>
<td>mandarin</td>
<td></td>
<td>turkey</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sprouts</td>
<td>oranges (S)</td>
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<td>beef or pork</td>
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<tr>
<td>peas</td>
<td>raisins</td>
<td></td>
<td>tuna or salmon</td>
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<tr>
<td>bell pepper</td>
<td>Craisins (S)</td>
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<td>sunflower seeds</td>
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<td>cauliflower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pumpkin seeds</td>
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<td>mushroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hard-boiled eggs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(T)= topping ideas for a taco salad- top with sour cream and salsa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(G)= topping ideas for a greek salad- top with a little vinaigrette</td>
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<td>(S)= topping ideas for a fruity salad- top with a little vinaigrette</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Viva Vegetables by Janet Anderson and Tamara Steinitz Vitale

This is the green hoop house keeping all our veggies warm. The hoophouses allow us to extend our season for several weeks.

By: Janet Anderson and Tamara Steinitz Vitale

Feature article is "Featured Vegetable: LETTUCE"

Composed by: Janet Anderson and Tamara Steinitz Vitale

The University of Utah Student Organic Farm (USU SOF) organically grows fresh produce every season. We strive to grow the best in every crop, with a focus on sustainability and good nutrition.

We grow a variety of vegetables and fruits. Our produce is fresh and delicious.

We also grow lettuce, radishes, carrots, beets, olives, corn, celery, cucumber, onion, sprouts, peas, bell peppers, cauliflower, and mushrooms.

We sell our produce at the farmer’s market and through our CSA program.

We also have a newsletter that you can sign up for. It includes recipes and tips for growing your own food.

We are always looking for volunteers to help us with our farm. Please let us know if you are interested in helping.

Thank you for supporting us.

USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM

Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 1

May 16, 2011
ANNOUNCEMENTS
May 18th & 21st- First pickup day! Let the season begin!
Monday, June 6th- Our first CSA BBQ! 5pm at the farm. Bring friends, family, kids, and your favorite dish! Hope to see you there!
If you have a simple recipe that highlights one of the veggies we are growing that you want to share, email us at: organicfarm@aggiemail.usu.edu
Volunteer hours:
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 7am-1pm
Wednesday, Saturday: 11am-1pm

Organic Techniques:
Choosing Seeds
By: Lora Fitch

There are many types and varieties of plants that can be grown from seeds. They all have their own qualities that make them special and unique. Here is a little background about seeds. Hybrid seeds are a cross between two true-breeding parent seeds. They are relatively uniform plants but they often require higher input to keep them healthy. Collecting seed from these plants will not result in the same plant qualities from the original plant. Open-pollinated seeds vary. They are usually cheaper and more adaptable to an area. Seeds saved from these plants will be quite similar to their parents. Heirloom seeds are older varieties with unusual characteristics and tastes. They are a type of open pollinated seed so the plants will vary. Novelty seeds are seeds that have been bred, or accidently discovered, for unusual and different traits. The most common seeds breed true to type. They are noted most for their uniformity. When planting seeds for your garden have a little fun and play around with different types of seeds to find which suits your garden and preferences best.

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

On the Farm News
Hello CSA members! We are so excited to get the season started! Welcome to the farm! This year, we really want you guys feel like you are a part of the farm. In reality, it’s your farm too! Please come out anytime we are there to meet us, hang out, weed a bit, pickup some herbs, whatever.

A newsletter similar to this one will be given to you every week. If you have anything to contribute to the newsletter, such as gardening success stories, flavoring tips, veggie storage tips, or a simple recipe you just LOVE, send it to us via email! We would love to include it in our newsletter to share with everyone!

Our student farmers this year are Crista, Alanna, Keenen, Amanda, Stu, and me (Brianna). Another student member of our team is Elisabeth who will be helping with the newsletters. We couldn’t be more enthusiastic about the farm and the CSA!

Veggies to expect next week:
Lettuce, spinach, green onions, kale, chard, radishes, and herbs- of course, this is subject to change. Such is the nature of an organic garden!

Also, as CSA members you are welcome to the farm during the volunteer hours to pick up some fresh herbs for your dinners. Enjoy your local produce this week!

Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

Sweeten Up Those “Bitter” Salad Greens
by Tamara Steinitz Vitale, USU Dept of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences

Have you tried arugula, watercress, or baby chard in a salad? If you haven’t, I dare you! If you have, you may have been surprised by the slightly bitter or peppery flavor. These “bitter” greens pair well with salad dressings that are on the “sweet-ish” side. Fruit additions also complement these flavorful salad greens. Try this dressing if you have been hesitant to eat stronger flavored greens – you’ll be glad you did.

Poppyseed Vinaigrette

This dressing is great on spinach salads. A little bit goes a long way.

1/3 C canola or olive oil
1/3 C honey or maple syrup
1/3 C vinegar (try various types: balsamic, raspberry, or rice vinegars are good)
1 T poppyseeds
1/2 t freshly ground black pepper
1T Dijon mustard (whole grain adds nice texture)
Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake well.

Tear fresh spinach or other salad greens into a large bowl or onto individual salad plates. Slice some oranges, peaches or strawberries and marinate in a small amount of dressing for a few minutes, then place fruit on top of spinach. Sprinkle with feta cheese or blue cheese, red onion rings and croutons, and add a little more dressing. Dried cranberries and/or toasted nuts make a nice additional topping, too.