USU Student Organic Farm

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7-9-2018

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What’s New On The Farm

We’ve moved back into mitigation mode! It’s nice that the weather and pest situation in May and June was manageable— we already had our hands full with field logistics, bed preparation, planting, weeding and establishing harvesting and processing routines. Now that we’ve got the basics fairly under control, we can better respond to increasing daytime and nighttime temps, and the pests and weeds that come with it. In the last two weeks, we’ve used Neem Oil for aphids, Bacillus Thuringiensus (B.T.), for cabbage moth caterpillars, and tonight are spraying Pyrethrin to stay ahead of Utah’s 2018 grasshopper plague. All of it is certified organic, and we’re avoiding hours of pollinator activity. Row cover is another way to mitigate pests, but it has its own problems as it traps heat and is better suited to drip lines than overhead irrigation.

Please don’t be disenchanted by pesticides in organic farming! There really is no comparison between conventional and organic pest mitigation processes. The NOP’s (National Organic Program) National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances details about 25 synthetic products that are allowed to be used in organic crop production. These include alcohols, copper sulfate, and hydrogen peroxide. By contrast, there are some 900 synthetic pesticides approved for use in conventional farming. Most pesticides allowed for use in organic farming aren’t synthetic; they’re derived from plants or bacteria, including all the ones we have used.

We have seen the difference it makes to have healthy plants in the first place. They have their own chemical and physical means of deterrence, and crop rotation plus the little ecosystem of beneficial insects and birds that a toxin-free farm nurtures also help keep pests at bay to a large degree.

Produce

These more complex 80 and 90-day veggies starting to fruit are mind boggling. The tight little heads forming on the broccoli, the juicy bulbs of the kohlrabi, the tennis-ball sized beets, the squashes growing to full maturity in just a few days. All this substantial, shapely food is just out there manufacturing itself! It’s not like we’ve never seen a vegetable before, but watching the process really is amazing. It’s always satisfying to watch ingenious domino-effect processes, where some inventor combines simple machines and laws of physics in order to ring a doorbell and end up peeling an egg or something. Starting with a seed and ending up with a cabbage is satisfyingly incredible in the same way.
Last month, I participated in a 3-week study abroad program. As part of the program I visited 3 countries in Scandinavia: Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. I studied art in the Anthropocene (a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth’s geology and ecosystems), transportation, recycling, food systems, sustainable architecture, green urban design, visited a biofuel-hydro-power plant, and a wind farm. It was a great learning experience, to say the least.

One of the most impressive things and my favorite was the bike culture in Copenhagen. Increasing and supporting alternative ways of transportation is an important step towards making a more sustainable city.

According to the Cycling embassy of Denmark, the 2017 Annual Bicycle Report confirms that cycling is still the preferred mode of transport for the inhabitants of Copenhagen. Forty-one percent of all trips to work and study to/from Copenhagen is by bike and 62% of Copenhagener choose to bike to work and study in Copenhagen. In total, 1.4 million km is cycled in the city on an average weekday, which is an increase of 22% since 2006.

During our week in Copenhagen, I observed how accessible biking is. Commuting around the city is made easy by the wide bike lanes and paths that extend all throughout the city, it is made safe by bike traffic lights, and clear marking for bike lanes. Bike parking spaces are accessible all around the city. To reach greater distances, there is availability of using public transportation whether that is metro, bus, or train where you can easily store your bicycle.

As part of my experience, I rented a bike and rode around Copenhagen. Although at first it was intimidating, it soon felt safe and fun. I got to experience rush hour, which - unique to Copenhagen - happens in bikes, not in cars.
It has been said that our founding fathers themselves once said, “America should celebrate its independence with entirely plant-based cookouts.”

Regardless of how factually correct this is, it should make one wonder: What can be substituted for even the most typical summer barbecue helpings? Well, we have just the recipes to satisfy those annual cookout cravings while providing you the perfect slew of plant-based adventures to get you through to the next year.

**Sunflower Coleslaw**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup cabbage
- 2 medium carrots
- ½ cup rainbow chard
- ½ cup chopped green onions

**Coleslaw Dressing:**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- Juice from half a lemon
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar or apple juice
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup mint

Use a blender to combine the dressing ingredients together. Use varying amounts of water to achieve your desired consistency for the dressing. Apple cider vinegar will provide a more typical coleslaw dressing while the juice will provide a sweeter dressing. Add this dressing to the vegetable mix to have a mayonnaise free coleslaw!

**Squash & Tofu Skewers**

**Ingredients:**
- Yellow Squash
- Butternut Squash
- Firm or Extra Firm Tofu

**For Marinade**
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup choice hot sauce (My preference is basic red Tabasco)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika powder

Cut the butternut squash into cubes and boil on medium-high heat for about 10 minutes. Prep the other ingredients during this but be careful the squash does not break apart from boiling. Squeeze the tofu block to get any excess water out and allow for better marinating. Cut the block into cubes and put in the marinade. Slice the yellow squash about a quarter-inch thick and retrieve the butternut squash from the boil (You can run cold water over it to cool). Add both the butternut and yellow squash to either the tofu marinade or simply add oil and salt. Apply the squash and tofu to the skewers and grill. Voila! Vegan skewers just like Thomas Jefferson ate in an alternate history!

**Citrus Butter Corn on the Cob**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 ½ tsp orange zest
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 tsp lime zest
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ cup Earth Balance Organic Coconut Spread
- 4-6 ears of corn

Spray the corn with vegetable oil and add to the barbecue. Grill for about 15 minutes. The corn should appear light brown consistently. Mash the first four ingredients together in a large bowl. Add in the coconut spread. Top the corn with this citrus butter mix. The Earth Balance Organic Coconut Spread is one of the less processed Earth Balance products and has a great texture with the corn.
What’s In The Basket

Summer produce!

Cucurbits - Squash, zucchini, cucumbers all on their way!
Beets - We’ve been teasing with our thinnings and beet greens. Time for the real deal! And on display at the Farm Stand will be our biggest beet; wait til you see the size of this thing.
Green onions - We’ll have these all season
Herb bouquet- Arugula, basil, dill and parsley are all doing well
Chard and Kael - You know it!
Pak Choi - A bit defoliated by pests, but still delicious
Perhaps peas - The peas are amazing, they just keep producing. We will see how many we get this week!

Coming up - Tomatoes!! broccoli, leeks, garlic, cabbage, tomatilloes and lots, and lots of curcubits.

*the fennel microgreens didn't fair well; we'll try again

Un-RECIPE FOR

Gourmet Roasted Beets

An Un-Recipe offers guidelines to create delicious dishes based on the way ingredients, kitchen tools and cooks interact in the kitchen. Email us with questions!

INGREDIENTS:

3 medium beets
Canola oil, Grape-seed oil, coconut oil or butter (oil with a high smoke point)
About 1/2 C feta cheese
Salt and cracked pepper to taste
Fresh herbs to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Set oven to 450 degrees
2. Slice beets into 1/3” thick rounds
3. Toss beets in oil
4. Salt and pepper to taste
5. Roast in a 1” or deeper roasting pan for about an hour, until tender and a bit caramelized on the edges
6. Sprinkle evenly with feta cheese
7. Turn off the oven and return the beets for about five minutes
8. Remove from oven once feta is just melting
9. Finish with another light sprinkle of salt and pepper, maybe a drizzle of fresh oil and a sprinkle of fresh herbs and serve immediately

Amazing with beets fresh from the garden