What’s New On The Farm

We’re getting ready for volunteer season! We’re so thankful to our regulars who have been so much fun to have on the farm, and whose work has been a huge contribution to the farm’s success this summer. Now we’re getting back to lovely mornings and evenings, and are going to plant vegetables that have to over winter, clean up our perennial berry patches, repair and winterize the hoop houses and other farm structures, prep the field for cover crops, etc. - all while making sure our baskets are abundant and selling veggies at the farm stand and at the USU Campus Farmer’s Market. We’re putting a calendar together and will send it out to everyone on our volunteer list next week. In the meantime, let us know if you just have to get your hands in the dirt, there’s always a job to do!

Food Anecdotes

Do you have your own garden? How do you get all those veggies on a plate by the end of the week? Some of you have told us about your culinary activities and your experiences on farms or in your own garden, and we think it would be great to share your food production wisdom, experiences and ideas with everyone!

If you’re willing to share a personal story, pictures, recipes, cooking techniques, gardening tips, random trivia, etc., please send it to: organicfarm@aggiemail.usu.edu

Here’s mine:
Russia was my introduction to a world outside of the US, and to what food is like outside of the US. Very early in my time there in 2001, I looked in my host family’s refrigerator and saw a link of sausage and half a cabbage, and thought I was going to starve or be a huge burden on a very poor family. It turns out though that in Russia, refrigerators are for things like cabbage and sausage, and everything else that doesn’t come from their own garden plots outside the city is purchased daily from year-round market stands at various bus stops. I had armed myself with a Costco-sized jar of peanut butter, having been warned that Russia doesn’t have peanut butter. It’s still probably on a shelf in that apartment somewhere, because my host mom - a widow with a young son, who worked full-time as a computer programmer - ground her own peanut butter. I also had kombucha for the first time in Russia, hunted for wild mushrooms and strawberries, learned to preserve veggies in brine, started a tea habit I still can’t kick, discovered bay leaves and often snacked on freshly dried and salted fish, carefully avoiding the bones and eyeballs. Eating internationally has taught me to see food as a system, and to recognize that there are many, many ways to organize food systems. -Lara
On the farm, all of our interns take care of the daily farm tasks and harvest days, but there are a whole slew of people behind the scenes that are integral to our success. One of these people is James Frisby, a plant specialist and farm technician. This season, James taught us how to set up and use our drip lines and hydrometers, so we can make sure the farm is getting plenty of water. He is also one of our go-to guys when we have questions about keeping our tools sharp and plants alive, and has given us some of his own extra produce and cut flowers from his research. We thought it would be cool to let everyone get to know a little about James, so without further ado...

**What made you interested in farming?**

"I’ve always been interested in growing plants. When I was a little kid my dad gave a little spot to garden and I was allowed to plant whatever I wanted to in there. I grew some tomatoes, kept it completely weed free, and actually ate the tomatoes I grew, and then I grew to like tomatoes."

Nowadays, James keeps a home garden, but because he does so much research with them, he’d like to have you know that he does not grow any peppers or tomatoes in it.

**How did you get to the level of farming you do now?**

"I continued working with my dad on our little yard. Sometimes we would look through the catalogs and I would decide what I wanted to grow, and give him the list and he would buy it. When I started going to school, I actually started out in range management, or wildlife management, and I didn’t feel like they did much to improve the land. It was more, ‘this is what we’ve got, this is how many cows we can feed, or how many deer, and we really can’t do anything to fix it.’ I didn’t really like that, but while going through classes I kept on thinking about growing plants. I looked into it and switched over to horticulture when I was a junior, finished my degree as a senior, then stayed and got a master’s degree. While I was getting my master’s degree an opening came up for a technician and I got hired for that and stayed."

James’s lifelong passion for growing plants and taking care of the land melded together when he started farming.

"With farming, you can add things. You can add fertilizers, manures, and organic or inorganic things the plants need."

**What is your favorite thing about working in the plant science department at USU?**

"I get to learn lots of new things all the time. I don’t assume that I know everything! I’m still learning the different diseases, still finding new insects, and new ways to grow things. There’s a lot of new cultivars and varieties coming out. Plus I have to do statistical and research data, too. We’re trying to figure out if something really worked better or not."

Recently, James has done research on cut flowers to compare how flowers grow in a high or low tunnel, compared to outside.

"We are finding that with high tunnels we get the quality in the earlier season, but by the time the outside get going it’s too hot around and the quality is not as good."

**Where do you see the future of farming headed in Utah?**

"I see it going more to smaller farms. Less of the larger field crops and to smaller fruit stands." James also mentioned growing food in warehouse environments along with the small scale farm stands, but he is unsure where the labor will come from to operate these.

With regards to the future of his own career, James imagines he’ll stay at USU until he retires.
Long Dragon-Tongue Beans - Gorgeous, sweet and fresh. Best sauteed or steamed
Spaghetti Squash - These have been ripening all summer and are finally ready!
Shungiku- Edible crysanthimum leaves! An Asian favorite
Cucurbits - More bennings, crookneck and zucchini, as well as lemon cucumbers and dill cucumbers
Tomatoes - A variety ripening daily
Bell peppers- We have organic and conventional courtesy of Greenville Research farm for those looking for extra
Jalapeno peppers- These have such a kick!
Chard - You know it!
Tomatillos - Available for all the salsa lovers
Leeks - Mild but super flavorful onion replacer
Parsley, basil - Always!

Coming up: Melons, carrots, potatoes (sorry we didn't have the new potatoes! We had feedback that we harvested them too late to really be new potatoes, so we'll harvest them this week and offer them as proper storage potatoes in about a week)

Un-RECIPE FOR
Spaghetti Squash with Leek and Olive Marinara

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:
- 1 spaghetti squash, halved and seeds removed
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 TB olive oil
- 2 leeks, cleaned and sliced
- 1-inch thick (about 3 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp fresh oregano
- ¾ cup pitted black olives, halved
- 1 LB tomatoes, 1/2 chopped, 1/2 crushed
- 2 TB tomato paste
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- ¼ cup chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS:
1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds; discard. Place squash halves, cut sides down, on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until tender.
3. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and leeks; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes and olives; bring to a simmer. Cook for 15 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat; stir in red pepper flakes and oregano
4. When the spaghetti squash is cool enough to handle, scrape the squash with a fork, pulling the strands of squash away from the skin. Season the strands of squash with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste and then top with the marinara. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese and parsley on top just before serving.