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Tomatoes

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USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM

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Newsletter

Vol. 2 Issue 16



Stu posing with his squash nose. ☺

Conquering the Bounty

Overloaded with tomatoes this time of year? Try these simple, tasty ideas:

- ✓ Top angel hair pasta with diced tomatoes and fresh basil.
- ✓ Stir-fry tomatoes with onion, garlic, and other vegetables and serve over steamed rice.
- ✓ Try canning or roasting (check out the "Fabulous Flavors" section on page 2) tomatoes so you can use them all winter long.
- ✓ Make fresh tomato sauce by chopping tomatoes and heating in a saucepan with desired seasonings and a little olive oil. This can be frozen and enjoyed later as well!
- ✓ Use fresh tomatoes in a delicious tomato soup. For a great recipe and pictures to follow along check out formerchef.com.
- ✓ Make salsa!
- ✓ For a seasonal side dish mix corn kernels, chopped tomatoes, onion and sweet bell peppers with equal measurements of olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Add desired seasonings and serve chilled.
- ✓ For another seasonal side dish mix cubed tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and a vinaigrette. This would also be great served on top of a spinach and lettuce salad.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Featured Vegetable: Tomatoes

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Some say that the tomato is the ultimate summer produce. Tomatoes have so much history. Tomatoes are thought to have originated in South America, although Italian cuisine is probably the most associated with them. Early American colonists thought of the tomato as a poison until 1820. Today, more than 60 million tons of tomatoes are produced each year for consumption and the average American eats 80 pounds per year! California is the world's largest producer of processed tomatoes.

There are over 7,000 different varieties of tomatoes today. This year on the farm we have eight different varieties of tomatoes! They are all so different and beautiful to look at. The varieties include: Washington Cherry a regular red cherry tomato, Gold Nugget (which you have already received some of) is a yellow cherry tomato, Brown Cherry a dark reddish-brown cherry tomato, Cherokee Purple a small tomato that has the color of a beet, Beefsteak a plump, red tomato with rich flavor and perfect for slicing, Amana Orange a very sweet slicing tomato with an orange color, Brandywine a pink, sweet slicing tomato, and Oregon Spring a beautiful, red, round slicing tomato.

Tomatoes are a rich source of Vitamins A, C, and K as well as lycopene which has cancer-fighting properties. The richest source of Vitamin C in tomatoes is the jelly portion around the seeds. Tomatoes can be grown about anywhere and aren't picky about their soil, but they love heat and can be quickly killed off without the right temperatures and some babying when they're small.

Viva Tomatoes: Make Many Meals from Two Tomato Combination

From "Viva Vegetables" by Tamara Vitale and Janet Anderson, 2009

Try these simple tomato mixtures for a quick meal anytime. Easily doubled or tripled for a larger crowd or keep it small for one or two people.

Italian-Seasoned Tomato Mixture:

3-4 fresh tomatoes, chopped
8 leaves fresh basil, sliced into thin ribbons
salt and pepper, to taste

2-3 T extra-virgin olive oil
1-2 T balsamic vinegar

- Use tomato mixture in **Italian Pasta** by mixing with 1 pound cooked pasta, 1 can drained and rinsed white beans. Sprinkle parmesan over top.
- Top pizza crust with tomato mixture and 1 cup grated parmesan or mozzarella cheese for **Amazingly Simple Pizza**.
- Add Italian-seasoned tomato mixture to scrambled eggs or omelets, sandwiches, and salads.

Southwest-Seasoned Tomato Mixture:

3-4 fresh tomatoes, chopped OR
2 cans diced tomatoes
Additional seasonings such as cumin, oregano, chili powder, and garlic, if desired

2 C corn
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

- Serve tomato mixture as a dip with tortilla chips or quesadillas as **Southwest Tomato Salsa**.
- Top flour tortilla with tomato mixture and ½ cup grated cheese for **Southwest Burritos or Quesadillas**. Roll or fold and fry in skillet with oil until lightly browned.
- Try **Quick and Spicy Tomato Soup** by adding 1 cup cooked rice or pasta to pan with tomato mixture and enough tomato juice to thin soup.
- Top a baked potato with a big scoop of tomato mixture. Add cheese and sour cream to enjoy **Southwestern Baked Potatoes**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We're still giving out kohlrabi as it grows! We're keeping track of who gets them to be sure everyone gets an equal share.

We'll have elderberries soon! They are good for jams and pies (not so good fresh). If you would like some, let us know via email.

If you would like wildflowers, feel free to pick some when you pick up your share. We would be happy to show you where they are.

Email us your favorite recipes that use the produce you receive in your share!
organicfarm@aggiemail.usu.edu

Volunteer hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 7am-2pm

Wednesday, Saturday: 10am-2pm

The tomato's main sources of pollination come from wind and bees. Without these things, the plant would grow, but no fruit would be produced.

Organic Techniques: Native Bees

Bees are quite fascinating creatures. Have you ever noticed how many different kinds of bees there are? Nine hundred species of bees reside here in Utah, which is 20% of the 4,000+ species.

Some of these bees are superb pollinators and few of our native bees have much venom or any inclination to sting.

In the city, pavement, buildings, and lawns provide little food for bees. Even in the countryside, grain and hay crops do not provide food bees need. As the bee population is diminishing, planting flowers and veggies in your garden can attract bees and support their survival by providing nectar. Herbs, squashes, and melons are fabulous for bees. Some popular flowers, through artificial breeding and selection, have lost appeal to bees, such as tulips, petunias, and marigolds.

Article by: Brianne Sherwood

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

www.usu.edu/organicfarms

On the Farm News

The farm has been just bursting with summer vegetables and we're sometimes left with excess tomatoes, peppers, basil, cucumbers, and of course squash. Luckily, restaurants in the area have an interest in fresh, local produce, and we've been able to play a part in their commitment to delicious, local dishes.



Hamilton's has been a great support to us in their commitment to local produce. In fact, we interns were privileged to sample some of Hamilton's head-chef Ted's special dishes he has made using produce grown locally; and more especially on our farm. They were epically delicious and included a salad made with shaved basil leaves, halved cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and red onion. We also tried a turkey sandwich made with basil and fresh greens, as well as roast beef and red pepper sandwiches, and a flat crust pizza made with our basil. It probably would have tasted pretty good had it been made with just any vegetables, but it tasted fabulous using the fresh produce from our farm!

Veggies to expect next week: lettuce, kale, chard, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, squash, basil, green onions, eggplant, maybe winter squash.

Potatoes will be coming up in two weeks, as well as corn!

Article by: Amanda Hawks

Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

Looking for a way to keep those delicious tomatoes around longer? **Roasting** greatly intensifies the flavors in vegetables and is a great way to preserve vegetables if you have a little extra freezer space. Roasted tomatoes can be frozen and used on pizza, with hamburgers, on pasta, in sauces, soups, chili, added to stir-fries, dips, salads (and have an endless array of other uses) throughout the cold winter months.

To Roast Tomatoes:

4 large tomatoes, thickly sliced (about 1 inch thick)

2 tablespoons oil (olive oil works great or use a vinaigrette dressing such as balsamic vinaigrette for extra flavor)

Seasonings, if desired

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Place tomato slices on baking sheet. Brush with oil and sprinkle seasonings such as oregano, basil, marjoram, or fennel over tops if desired. Roast for at least 20 minutes. Tomatoes will be lightly browned and wrinkly. Serve hot by sprinkling with a little Parmesan cheese or freeze them.

You can also slow roast tomatoes by putting them in for 8-10 hours at 200 degrees F.

To Freeze Roasted Tomatoes: Let cool on pan. Set pan in freezer until tomatoes are frozen. Transfer tomatoes to a freezer container or freezer bag and return tomatoes to the freezer. When you need them, pull the roasted tomatoes out of the freezer and set in 300 degree oven for 8-10 minutes.

➤ Try using roasted tomatoes with this **Roasted Tomato Bruschetta** recipe.

While the tomatoes roast, in a small saucepan over medium heat, bring ½ cup balsamic vinegar and 1 clove minced garlic to a simmer and let reduce by half. Set aside. Slather a generous layer of ricotta on 6 slices of toasted garlic or sourdough bread, then top each with some tomatoes. Sprinkle with fresh thyme, then finish with a drizzle of the reduced balsamic vinegar mixture. Enjoy warm!

Article by: Elisabeth Inman