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Parsley

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Greetings from the USU Student Farm! We felt that last week’s harvest went great and we hope you enjoyed all of your fresh produce. Just like Mary Quite Contrary, we’re often asked, “how does your garden grow?” Here is a brief overview of our farming operations:

Organic Farming 101

A common misconception about organic farming is that it lacks sophistication or science. Some folks think that organic farmers just put seeds in the ground and let nature take its course. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Organic farmers need a thorough mastery of ecology and soil science. Modern organic farming techniques use environmentally friendly alternatives to the synthetic chemicals used in conventional agriculture. We strive to balance soil enrichment, cover crops, beneficial habitat, and crop rotation to ensure soil fertility and control weeds and pests.

While farming organically is one thing, becoming a USDA Certified Organic farm is a whole other bucket of veggies. Farmers and CSA members alike, we all have passion for nutrition, the environment and good eatin’. So we got the passion, you got the produce—now we just need the paper work.

This includes presenting certifiers with meticulously kept records of all our farming operations from seeding to weeding to pest control to harvest to you name it. Once the certifier has every check box marked off, we are USDA certified organic! Until then though, just like any good parent, privileges are withheld. One of which is using the word “Organic” in our marketing. So while the paperwork is in the works, rest assured that your produce is being farmed “using organic farming methods”, although technically it’s not USDA 100% certified “organic”. Yet.

Thanks so much for your support! We loved meeting all of you this week and look forward the weeks to come.

Your USU Student Farmers,
Bethany, Sara, Crista, Ashley, Brianne, and Blake
**Gardening Wisdom of Old**

**Parsley Crisps**
Crisped parsley is used for garnishing dishes. Pick and wash young parsley, shake it in a cloth to dry it thoroughly, and spread it on a sheet of clean paper and put in the oven. Turn the bunches frequently until they are quite crisp. Parsley is much more easily crisped than fried.

*The Successful Housekeeper, 1887*

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**A Bit About Parsley**

Parsley is native to the Mediterranean region of Southern Europe. While it has been cultivated for more than 2,000 years, parsley was used medicinally prior to being consumed as a food. The ancient Greeks held parsley to be sacred, using it to not only adorn victors of athletic contests, but also for decorating the tombs of the deceased. While it is uncertain when parsley began to be consumed as a seasoning, it seems to be sometime in the Middle Ages in Europe. Parsley is a key ingredient in several West Asian salads, e.g., tabbouleh which is the national dish of Lebanon.

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**Tabbouleh**

This Lebanese salad is one my family’s favorite dishes. When we make it, the staple ingredients are just parsley, tomato, cucumber, olive oil, lemon, bulgur wheat, and salt. This Food Network recipe looks like a good one too. Don’t be intimidated by the “bulgar wheat”—it’s essentially just coarsely chopped whole wheat kernels. You can buy it like that (parboiled) but we just make our own with a blender or food processor. Enjoy!

-Bethany

**Ingredients**

- 1 cup bulghur wheat
- 1 1/2 cups boiling water
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (2 lemons) (can use bottled lemon juice too)
- 1/4 cup good olive oil
- 3 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 cup minced scallions, white and green parts (1 bunch) (optional)
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves (1 bunch) (optional)
- 1 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley (1 bunch)
- 1 hothouse cucumber, unpeeled, seeded, and medium-diced
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half (any type of tomatoes will do)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

**Directions**

Place the bulgar in a large bowl, pour in the boiling water, and add the lemon juice, olive oil, and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Stir, then allow to stand at room temperature for about 1 hour.

(At my house, we don’t bother adding the lemon juice and olive oil to the bulgar. We just boil the bulgar, drain it, and toss it in last with the rest of the ingredients.)

Add the scallions, mint, parsley, cucumber, tomatoes, 2 teaspoons salt, and the pepper; mix well. Season to taste and serve or cover and refrigerate. The flavor will improve if the tabbouleh sits for a few hours.