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Strawberries

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USU Student Organic Farm

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Newsletter



Amanda, Alanna, and Cami finishing up work on the planter boxes

Fruit Feature: Strawberries

Article by: Jillian Cartwright

Strawberries are delicious – it's a fact. Ask anybody and I can almost guarantee that they will tell you that they love or at least enjoy a good strawberry. Strawberries are springtime to me. They are the first of anything remotely sweet to pop out of the ground after a long winter of eating tired apples, bruised bananas, and sad-looking oranges. Even the under-ripe California-grown strawberries that appear in the grocery store starting in late February have a certain allure to them, even though we all know they're going to taste more like sweetened cardboard than a beautiful red berry. However, if you're willing to wait until strawberries are really in season, you will be handsomely rewarded with all good things this berry has to offer. And in Logan, UT where our growing seasons are a little different than most other places, that wait is just a little bit longer. Ok, quite a bit longer. But I can guarantee that these berries that are just coming on at the farm are worth it. Even after eating strawberries for a good solid two months now, I popped one of these farm berries into my mouth, and it was a completely different taste. These things taste like strawberries in a way that I never knew a strawberry could taste. They really are that good. I wish I could say that I will never eat a store-bought strawberry again, but come next March, I probably will give in. In the meantime, we will enjoy these glorious berries.

Strawberry Freezer Jam

Makes 6 8-oz containers

This recipe is nothing fancy. In fact, it's straight off the back of the Sure-Jell box. And yes, it has a ton of sugar in it, but please make it anyway...it's fantastic and well worth it. It will be a little piece of heaven to keep in your freezer when January is looking bleak and you can't take even one more banana.

4 pints of strawberries
3 c sugar
1 box SURE-JELL For Less Sugar (it's the pink one)
1 c water

Wash and dry 6 8-oz plastic containers with lids. Wash, hull, and chop strawberries, then crush them a cup at a time, still leaving them a bit chunky. Measure exactly 4 cups crushed strawberries into large bowl.

Mix the sugar and pectin in large saucepan. Stir in water. Bring to boil on medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Remove from heat. Add strawberries; stir 1 minute or until well blended.

Fill all containers immediately to within 1/2 inch of tops. Wipe off top edges of containers; immediately cover with lids. Let stand at room temperature 24 hours. Jam is now ready to use. Store in refrigerator up to 3 weeks or freeze extra containers up to 1 year. Thaw in refrigerator before using.

Mixing Greens

Article by: Amanda Spackman

While we've featured some excellent greens recipes this summer, we haven't taught you one of the most important tips about greens, mixing them!

While there are many good recipes that feature a single green, greens are highly interchangeable, in fact oftentimes the recipes taste better when multiple greens are used in the same recipe.

So what does this mean? Say we feature a mouth-watering chard recipe, but Chard is a little sparse in the share that week. Feel free to use a little tatsoi, kale, spinach, etc...until you have enough. You will enjoy the results. Mixing greens gives you a variety of flavors and textures that balance each other out, the sweetness of spinach balanced by the fibrous more bitter taste of kale. Experiment! You'll find that improvising might just bring a whole new life to your kitchen.

On the Farm News

Announcements

The first CSA barbeque is June 26th at 6 PM on the farm. Come prepared with your favorite pizza topping to share and we'll provide the rest – we're making grilled pizza!

The CSA pickup scheduled for July 4th will be moved to July 3rd so be sure to mark your calendars!

We love volunteers and would love to have CSA members come out and help out! Our volunteer hours run from 8am to 12pm Monday through Friday. If you would like to help with harvest, come on Wednesday or Friday from 7am to 10am.

Article by: Amanda Hawks

On the farm this last week, we enjoyed the first week of strawberries- so yummy! CSA members will get some with their shares, and they are welcome to come pick extra if you'd like- but PLEASE only come between 7am and 1pm Monday through Friday, so that we're there with you. This will help us keep things organized and aware of what has been picked. Thanks! Also on the farm this week, we built two planter boxes. We'll be filling those with soil and extra vegetables for both the summer camp kids and for our campus stand. The weather has gotten constant and things are growing so well! The only problem of late has been flea beetles. They enjoy chomping up stir fry greens, such as tatsoi, chard, and spinach; some of your produce may appear a bit lacey thanks to these fiends.

The News Down Under

Weeds, that invasive, stubborn, herbaceous vermin that lurks in the forefront of every gardeners mind all summer long. Many a technique has been developed to try and control this interloping pest; everything from getting down on your hands and knees and pulling individual weeds, to commercial herbicides that claim to euthanize the weed without harming your vegetables. A new method of weed control that I have recently come upon is one that I now refer to as, "The News Down Under". It is a very effective method which has a very minimal cost. Items you will need include a months' subscription to a local newspaper (cost: \$10), and grass clippings (cost: If you pay anything for these, you are paying WAY too much).

First, put the newspaper in single sheets in between your rows of produce. Then, distribute the grass clippings on top. That's it! The newspaper will suffocate unwanted weeds like many of the gardening plastics you can get in the store, but it is much cheaper and allows water to flow into the ground (plus, it allows you to catch up on current events while in the garden). The grass clippings help shade the soil and keep it from drying out as quickly. Then, in the fall when it is time to put the garden to bed for the winter, tilling the natural grass and biodegradable newspaper into the ground will help incorporate valuable organic matter into the ground, and help loosen the soil for next years' roots. By implementing "The News Down Under", you will have to water and weed your garden less, and spend your free time doing something more productive; like figuring out how to preserve the bumper crop of Dyer's Woad you grew last year. Happy Gardening!

Article by: Trevor Knudsen

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

www.usu.edu/organicfarms

Planter Boxes

Article by: Amanda Hawks

We have envisioned having planter boxes on the farm for quite a while now, and recent construction on the farm is making that a reality. The last week of May Jeff, Keenen, and Val (fellow farm workers from neighboring university plots) piped the ditch that ran across the front of the farm, between the wildflower strip and the road. This left a ribbon of empty soil and a big pile of extra dirt. We seeded the strip with wildflower seeds, and hearing

of our desire for planter boxes, Jeff moved the extra dirt over to the north side of the hoopouses along with a few scoops of compost. Thank goodness for loaders and huge farm equipment! This last week we constructed the planter boxes, and we hope to use them for additional campus stand produce as well as a place for the camp kids to plant when they come.