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THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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At Home in the Tukey Orchard

I wanted to talk this week about our home in the Tukey Horticultural Orchard at WSU. The roughly 50 acre orchard is on WSU property and assigned to the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Department. It consists of about 10 acres in mature tree fruit plantings, some small fruit, and a new 10 acre research plot planted this season. The rest of the property is in rotating garden space, research plots, open meadows, and the organic farm. Most of the areas are managed conventionally with the exception of a 2 acre certified organic fruit block immediately to the north of the organic farm that began transitioning in 2004 when the farm was introduced. The 4 acres the farm operates are also currently certified by the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

The orchard has two full-time employees and an assortment of hourly employees, depending on the student supply and harvest season. The two managers take care of the bulk of orchard maintenance and oversee the operations on different projects. At any given time up to 5 different research groups may be using space in the orchard to study everything from tree fruit genetics to flea beetle control in broccoli crops. The Entomology Department always seems to have a presence as the orchard is home to many of their bee colonies. The USDA Plant Introduction group also maintains plots where they busily maintain seed germplasm for plants from all across the world. It's a quiet place to work but there is a lot of important work happening in every direction of the farm.

We also share the orchard with many other non-human neighbors, some more visible than others. There are resident coyotes, hawks, owls, rabbits, gophers, voles, field mice, the occasional

badger, bat and robin. This year we're being entertained by a couple of new visitors: mule deer and pheasants. Both of these critters pose a threat to the fruit and vegetable production at the orchard. The resident rodents are consistently a problem for all of us but these new pests have added some stress to our season. A buck mule deer took up living between the orchard and the adjacent Natural Resource Science ground over the winter and has since seemed to amass a herd of 6-10 does and fawns. Deer have visited the orchard in the past during the fall when the fruit is ripening but usually leave. These deer have been very difficult to convince to move out and are starting to cause some serious destruction. We're currently working on improving the existing 5 foot perimeter fence and hope to get them out before the fall!

-Brad

Fruit Sales at Tukey Orchard

The orchard is probably best known in the community for their fruit sales. They offer u-pick options for many of the fruit varieties, and pre-picked fruit for many of the apples, pears, and stone fruit in the fall. If you're interested in finding out what's ready, you have a couple easy options. Deb, the orchard manager, regularly updates the orchard website with what's ready and times and dates for sales. You can also put you name on an email list that will send you updates for sales by appointment. Cherry season is late this year but hopefully will start by the end of the month. Check out these sites for more information: <http://hortla.wsu.edu> (click on Tukey Orchard link) <http://lists.wsu.edu> Select "Join a List" Select "Fruit Harvest by Appt"

This week we should begin finding summer squash in our CSA boxes. Even though later in the summer, it's easier to take squashes like zucchini for granted (it can begin feeling like we'll never get through them, no matter how much zucchini bread is made), at this point the summer squashes are new. Smaller, tender, and very tasty, be sure to highlight these on the dinner table! Here are two recipes adapted from *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, by Alice Waters. Enjoy!

--Jamaica

Summer Squash with Garlic and Basil

This is more a preparation method than a recipe—as the quantities as well as the type of squash you might use are completely flexible. This combination of garlic, basil, lemon and squash is equally good with zucchini, yellow crookneck, patty pan, or other summer squash varieties.

Summer Squash (I usually figure ½ to 1 squash per person, depending on the squash's size)
1-2 tablespoons olive oil
Garlic

Fresh basil
A squeeze of fresh lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Trim the stem and flower ends of the squash and slice. Sauté in olive oil until tender and just beginning to brown. Add a generous amount of freshly chopped garlic and basil, and season with salt and pepper. Cook a minute more. Squeeze a bit of lemon use over everything and serve.



Pasta with Summer Squash, Walnuts and Pesto

The Pesto

2-3 cloves garlic
½ cup pine nuts or walnuts

2 cups, loosely packed, basil leaves
½ cup grated Parmesan
½ cup extra virgin olive oil

The Rest

1 package of your favorite pasta
1/4 cup walnuts, toasted
and coarsely chopped

Summer squashes
Grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper, to taste

First, prepare the pesto: add the garlic, nuts and basil to a food processor; while the processor is running, slowly add the oil. Remove from the processor and stir in the cheese. Voila!

Next, while the pasta is cooking, trim and julienne the summer squash, and sauté in olive oil until tender and beginning to brown. Season with salt and pepper. Add the noodles to the pan with a ladle-full of the pasta cooking water. Add the walnuts and pesto. Turn off the heat and toss well. Adjust the seasonings, if necessary, and serve with more grated Parmesan.