Veggie Box Newsletter
Week 10 | August 18

Here’s a joke for ya. What kind of socks do you need to plant okra? Garden hose! *insert drum and cymbal crash* All puns aside, this week our featured crop is okra, so don't forget to check out the crop profile below to learn a little more about it! We hope you enjoyed your weekend and tried out some new recipes with your ah-mazingly overstuffed boxes from last Thursday. Sadly, the forecast for this week may be stormy and cloudy, but rain or shine, this week’s goodies are sure to brighten your day!

What's in the Box?

Green Beans, Peckham Farms, Lansing
Okra, Magnolia Farms, Lansing
Peaches, Phillips Orchard & Cider Mill, St. John's
Cucumbers, Ten Hens Farm, Bath
Carrots, Hillcrest Farms, Lansing
Eggplant, Lansing Roots, Mason
Kale, Titus Farms, Leslie
Lunchbox Peppers, Swallowtail Farm, Mason
Slicer Tomatoes, MSU SOF, East Lansing
Mint, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
Add Ons
Meat Variety:
Bread: Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Producer Spotlight:

Founded in 1903, Smith Floral and Greenhouse has been a Lansing Staple for over 100 years. Originally only growing flowers, Smith Floral added their "Harvest Basket Produce" in 2013. Concerned about the widespread availability of healthy produce within the community, Smith Floral owner, Karen Smith, started touring local Michigan farms. These visits gave her a greater understanding of the scope and magnitude of sustainable and organic agricultural operations. Karen believes vibrant opportunities for local foods exist within Michigan, and she has taken advantage of those opportunities by producing seasons worth of farm fresh, local food. Their products include flowers, peppers, salad mix, basil, tomatoes, and much more!

Crop Profile: Okra

Okra is one of those plants that many people either love, think is a bit too slimy, or are not as familiar with. This member of the hibiscus family is traditionally native to the southern U.S and thrives in warmer weather. It is easily grown and distinguished by its beautiful flowers. These little green pods may look odd, but they have a myriad of health benefits. They are very rich in vitamin A, which helps support your vision, boost your immunity, and maintain healthy bone growth. They are also low in calories and high in fiber, minerals, and vitamins. Okra is often stewed with tomatoes, deep fried, pickled, boiled, steamed and served with butter, as well as eaten raw. Are you a fan of gumbo? Well, okra is an essential ingredient to any successful gumbo recipe. So, whether you are a die hard okra fan, can't get past its slimy texture, or even if you fall into the "not as familiar with" category, seriously give this green guy a try!
**Weekly Recipes**

**Sideways Eggplant Napoleon**  
Adopted from foodnetwork.com

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
- 1 eggplant sliced 1/4 inch thick  
- Kosher Salt  
- 2 small onions  
- 1 clove garlic  
- 2 Small tomatoes, sliced 1/4-inch thick rounds  
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan or vegan equivalent

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large sauté pan, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add eggplant slices, season with salt and cook until golden on both sides. Remove to a plate and repeat with onion slices. Rub a small baking dish with garlic clove then layer the eggplant, onions, and tomato slices in rows lining the baking dish. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes or until tomatoes are soft but still hold their shape. Remove the baking dish and set oven to broil. Sprinkle the shredded cheese and broil for 2 minutes. Remove from oven when cheese is melted and serve hot.

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**Roasted Okra**

- 1 pint okra  
- Salt to taste  
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
- Freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Rinse the okra, and drain on a kitchen towel. The okra should be dry. Trim away the stem ends and the tips and then place the okra in a large bowl. Salt to taste, and toss with the olive oil until coated. Lift the okra from the bowl, leaving behind any excess oil. Place on a sheet pan in one layer. Roast in the oven for 15 minutes (large okra might take a little longer), shaking the pan every five minutes. The okra should be lightly browned and tender, with a nice seared aroma. If you don’t want it to brown as much, set the oven at 400 degrees. Remove from the heat, toss with freshly ground pepper. Serve hot.

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**What the Kale? Salad**

- 1 bunch kale, stalks removed, leaves thinly sliced  
- 1 lemon, juiced  
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling  
- Kosher salt  
- 2 teaspoons honey  
- 1/2 teaspoon dijon mustard  
- Freshly ground black pepper  
- 2 ea lunchbox pepper, chopped  
- 2 ea carrots, grated  
- 1 ea cucumber, diced  
- 1 ea peach, diced

In large serving bowl, add the kale, carrots, half the lemon juice, mustard, a drizzle of oil and a little kosher salt. Massage until the kale starts to soften and wilt, 2-3 minutes. Set aside while you make the dressing. In a small bowl, whisk remaining lemon juice with honey and freshly ground black pepper. Stream in the 1/4 cup oil while whisking until a dressing forms. Pour the dressing over the kale, and add the peaches, peppers, tomatoes & cucumber. Toss & enjoy!

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**What can I do with that? Veggie Box Q&A**

What is the difference between organic and sustainably grown? Sustainably grown is the production of food, fiber, or other plant or animal products using farming techniques that protect the environment, public health, human communities, and animal welfare. Which means the use of chemicals and pesticides is used only in extreme circumstances. Organic certification is similar, requiring records of any approved chemicals. Organic certification is done through USDA accredited organizations.

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