

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5: October 18

Welcome to Week 5 of the Fall Veggie Box! Did you know that October is Michigan's Apple Month? Michigan Apple growers dedicate their time to operate 825 family-run farms with over 11.3 million apple trees, covering 35,500 acres, in Michigan. Apples are the largest and most valuable fruit crop in the Great Lakes State. Michigan is known as the variety state, with 16 different delicious varieties providing an array of flavors. Some of the most popular varieties are Honeycrisp, Gala and Fuji. Apples were brought to North America by colonists in the 17th century. In 1625, Reverend William Blaxton planted the first apple orchard on the North American continent in New England. Apple varieties brought as seeds from Europe were spread along Native American trade routes, as well as being cultivated on Colonial farms. John Chapman, (a.k.a. Johnny Appleseed) really did exist and is one of the reasons why we have so many apples today. Chapman owned many tree nurseries in the Midwest and sold and traded apple trees.

Producer Spotlight

Peckham Farms

Peckham Farms began in 2010, and has grown to a whopping 15 acres of field and 50,000 square feet of high tunnel production! What separates Peckham from other farms is that their focus on connecting the need for quality workers in the agriculture industry with one of the most underutilized and underserved groups in our state's workforce; people with disabilities. Peckham's employees are given the opportunity to gain new skills and experience in all aspects of growing and producing food. This includes planting, maintenance, and harvesting of crops, greenhouse systems, tool and machine operation and maintenance, and customer service.

Crop Profile

Black Spanish Radishes

Different from traditional spring radishes, the ones that are pink and purple, these Spanish radishes have a black exterior (hence the name). The textured, matte-black exterior of the Black Spanish gives way to a smooth, bright cream-colored interior that is high in Vitamin C. The meat of this radish is firm, yet also tender: this a toothsome, almost velvety radish -- not a crisp, juicy winter radish like the watermelon or daikon. These black radishes were first cultivated in the eastern Mediterranean and were even grown in Egypt before the pyramids were built as remains of them have been found in excavations. And while they are available year-round, they peak in winter and early spring.



What's in the Box?

Cortland Apples, *Phillips Orchards and Cider Mill, St. Johns*
Escarole, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*
Black Spanish Radishes, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*
Yukon Gold Potatoes, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Chives, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*
Leeks, *Bourne Fraiche Farms, Mason*
Garlic, *Halmich Farm, East Lansing*
Pie Pumpkin, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning*

Add-Ons

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*
Meat, *Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston*
Chicken, *Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston*
Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Onondaga*
Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Sweet Treats, *Glory Bee Sweet Treats, Mason*
Pie, *Glory Bee Sweet Treats, Mason*
Cold Brew/Coffee, *Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing*

Stuffed Pumpkin

1 Veggie Box Pumpkin
Salt & freshly ground pepper
1/4 pound of stale bread, thinly sliced and cubed
1/4 pound of cheese (of your choice), cubed
2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup Veggie Box chives
1/3 cup heavy cream
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment, or find a Dutch oven with a diameter that's just a tiny bit larger than your pumpkin. Using a very sturdy knife cut a cap out of the top of the pumpkin. Clear away the seeds and strings from the cap and from inside the pumpkin. Season the inside of the pumpkin generously with salt and pepper, and put it on the baking sheet or in the pot. Toss the bread, cheese, garlic, and herbs together in a bowl. Season with pepper- and pack the mix into the pumpkin. Stir the cream with the nutmeg and some salt and pepper and pour it into the pumpkin. Put the cap in place and bake the pumpkin for about 2 hours—check after 90 minutes—or until everything inside the pumpkin is bubbling and the flesh of the pumpkin is tender enough to be pierced easily with the tip of a knife. Because the pumpkin will have exuded liquid, remove the cap during the last 20 minutes or so, so that the liquid can bake away and the top of the stuffing can brown a little.

Black Radish Chips

Veggie Box Black Spanish Radishes
2 Tbsp olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Scrub the black radishes well, then slice them thinly (a mandoline works best). Toss them in a bowl with the olive oil and salt so that all the slices are coated. Spread the radish slices in a single layer on two baking sheets. Bake the radish chips about 15-20 minutes, until they are brown in spots and getting dry and crisp. Remove from the baking sheets and sprinkle on more salt if desired. Serve immediately.

Potato Leek Soup

Veggie Box leeks
2 Tbsp butter
4 cups vegetable broth
Veggie Box potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 teaspoon sea salt, less or more to taste
Pinch of dried marjoram
1 or 2 sprigs of fresh thyme, or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
Sprinkle of Tabasco sauce or other red chili sauce
White or black pepper to taste

Cut off the roots of the leeks. Cut the leeks lengthwise, fan them open under running water to dislodge any dirt or mud hiding inside. Cut off the tough dark green tops and discard (either compost or freeze for making stock). Slice the white and light green parts of the leeks crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices. Place the slices in a bowl of cold water and agitate them with your hands to dislodge any remaining dirt. Melt butter on medium heat in a 3 to 4 quart thick-bottomed pot. Add the the chopped leeks, stir to coat with the butter. Cover the pot and lower the heat to low, cook for 10 minutes until the leeks are softened. Check to make sure the leeks are not browning. Add the broth, diced potatoes, bay leaf, marjoram, thyme, and a teaspoon of salt to the pot. Increase the heat to high to bring to a simmer, then lower the heat to maintain a low simmer, and cook for 20 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked through. Remove and discard the bay leaf and thyme sprig. Use an immersion blender or standing blender to blend about half of the soup if you want a chunky soup, or all of it if you would like your soup to be more smooth. Add the parsley, and cook a few minutes more. Add a few dashes of Tabasco to taste. Add freshly ground pepper and more salt to taste.

