

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8: April 25

The "Veggie Box" begins with a small wax-coated cardboard container, and every Thursday morning, two or three people neatly place each item of produce in the box, folding it closed after completion. It is a simple, straightforward process of assembly. But you, along with every other Veggie Box member, know that the problems facing the world's food systems are far from simple and straightforward. Each Veggie Box is imbued with a concern for the environment, farmers, the community, and personal health. Over the past seven weeks, we have referenced some of the issues arising from the current system of industrial food production. The origins of our current industrial food system can be found, not just in the pursuit of food security and feeding of the world, but also in the consolidation and inequitable distribution of economic and political power, land, and resources, going back centuries: a legacy that includes stolen land, lives, and labor. Michigan ranks fifth in the nation for registered migrant and seasonal farm workers. Michigan farmers are increasingly relying on the H-2A visa program, which brings foreign workers into the country temporarily, to meet seasonal labor demands. Beginning with the production side of the food system, approximately 75% of farmworkers in the U.S. are immigrants, both documented and undocumented, or migrant laborers. These farmworkers receive some of the lowest wages in our country and are very prone to work-related injuries due to the physically demanding labor of farming. Furthermore, within the production and processing of the food system, a majority of managers are white, whereas approximately 88% of the laborers are people of color. In order to have a more sustainable food system, we must also ensure that we are creating a more equitable food system. What steps are needed to move in this direction? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

CBI's Giving Tree Farm

CBI's (Community Based Interventions) Giving Tree Farm is a seven acre, non-profit CSA farm just north of Lansing, MI between Old Town and Dewitt. The farm originally began as a community garden for people with disabilities. As it's volunteer base grew, so did the available programs. The farm has established a heated greenhouse and eight hoop houses for year-round horticultural therapy programs. Monday through Friday, the farm provides vocational training for people who have suffered from traumatic brain injuries, allowing them to organically cultivate the produce and provide to the community.

Crop Profile

Arugula

This week's crop profile is probably one green that you have tasted or seen before. Rocket, roquette, or rucola, as arugula is more commonly known outside the United States, is widely eaten in Europe. The plant was harvested as early as the 6th century B.C., and was brought to America by British colonists. It was not until the 1990's, however, that arugula became known as a popular culinary ingredient in the United States. It is slightly bitter and spicy, with a flavor often described as "peppery" or "mustardy." Instead of being considered in the same class of leafy greens as spinach and lettuce, arugula is actually a cruciferous vegetable, similar nutritionally to cabbage, broccoli, and collard greens. To store arugula, keep it dry in a cool place for up to two weeks, or keep it in a plastic bag in the refrigerator with a paper towel to absorb moisture. If it gets wet, arugula can rot quickly. The plant is most commonly eaten raw, as a salad green or sandwich topping, but also works well sautéed, added to pasta, or pizza.

ALLEN

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Chives, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Microgreens, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Radishes, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Jonathan Apples, Phillips Orchard & Cider Mill, St. Johns
Carrots, Green Gardens Community Farm, Battle Creek
Arugula, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing & Zumo Eco Farm, Williamston
Organic Red Russian Kale, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
Meat, GCC Organics, Mt. Pleasant
Sweet Treats, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

ANC Happenings

Want to keep the fresh, local produce coming (and continue seeing our lovely faces once a week)? Then this is your reminder that registration for the Summer Veggie Box is open, with spots filling up fast. The Box is 14-weeks long, with pickup on Tuesday and worksite deliveries on Thursday. Summer will feature some of the produce and farmers you know and love from Spring, as well as new and exciting crops and products. Remember to enter the photo contest, the winner will get one distribution of the Summer Veggie Box for free! Sign up at this link: bit.ly/summerveggiebox2019

Recipes

Arugula Pesto Sauce

Veggie Box Arugula loosely packed
1 cup Walnuts
1/2 cup Parmesan Cheese
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2 cloves Garlic chopped
2 Tbsp Lemon Juice optional
1/4 tsp Kosher Salt; Black Pepper to taste

Place Arugula, Cheese, Walnuts, Olive oil, Garlic, (optional) Lemon, Salt, and Pepper in a food processor fitted with the dough/chopping blade attachment. Blend on high speed until thoroughly combined. Drizzle in more olive oil (or water, if desired) until texture reaches favorable consistency. Store in airtight container, refrigerate up to five days.

Apple Brown Betty

Veggie Box apples peeled, core removed, thinly sliced
1 lemon
3/4 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1/2 cup cold butter 1 cube

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, add apple slices to a 9x9 baking dish. Cut lemon in half and squeeze juice over apples. Toss apples to evenly coat. In medium sized bowl, combine flour, sugars, and spices. Add cold butter and use a pastry blender to work the butter into the dry ingredients, cutting it into small pieces. You want the mixture to be crumbly with little to no dry ingredients left that haven't touched the butter. Sprinkle all of the topping over the apples evenly. Cover with aluminum foil and cook in preheated oven for 40 minutes. Remove foil and allow to continue cooking until the topping is crisp, about 10-20 additional minutes. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Pickled Radishes

Veggie Box radishes, scrubbed and ends trimmed
2 cups water
2 cups white vinegar
4 teaspoons kosher salt
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons whole peppercorns
4 garlic cloves (peeled)
4 sprigs fresh Veggie Box dill (from last week)

Pack the radishes and dill into pint jars. Add the garlic and peppercorns (divide evenly across the jars -- I only used two). In a large saucepan, combine the water, vinegar, salt and sugar and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar and salt are completely dissolved. Pour the hot brine into the jars, leaving a little bit of space at the top. Seal and let them cool to room temperature, then refrigerate. Radishes will be pickly and ready to eat in one day but will get even picklier as they sit.

Sauteed Kale with Smoked Paprika

Veggie Box Red Russian Kale, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon sweet or hot smoked paprika
Generous pinch of dried crushed red pepper

Cook kale in large pot of boiling salted water until wilted, about 5 minutes. Transfer to colander; drain. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika and crushed red pepper; sprinkle with salt. Add kale and sauté until heated through, about 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and more smoked paprika, if desired. Transfer to serving bowl; drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and serve.

What to do with Greens?

Pasta: Sauté chopped greens in olive oil or butter, and add to any pasta dish.

Soup: Toss washed and chopped greens into any soup, home made or store bought.

Eggs: Add greens into scrambled eggs or make a frittata.

Freeze: To freeze greens for later use, remove stems, clean and chop greens. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Blanch greens by cooking for one minute, then use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer to a bowl of ice water. Freeze cooled greens in one and two cup containers to use later in the week. Thaw and use in soups, stews, and sautés.

Really, try them in just about anything - Quesadillas, Burritos, Curries, Stir-Fry, Pizza and Smoothies.

Tips for Keeping Herbs Fresh:

If you find that you have a lot of herbs leftover, there are a number of ways to store them so you can enjoy them for longer! For items like thyme, oregano, rosemary, and parsley, hang them upside down to dry (I have a piece of twine/string hanging up by command hooks in my kitchen, and then use clothespins to clip the bunches up by their twist-tie/rubber band). Basil can be stored on your counter in water, but you could also chop it up and place it in an ice cube tray; pour olive oil over it and freeze to have ready-to-go herbs for sauces and cooking! I dump these cubes into a ziplock bag and just have them at hand throughout the year - you can do this with other herbs as well! To store chives, I typically cut them up with scissors into a mason jar, and then just put it straight in the freezer.