

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8: July 23

Welcome to week 8 of the Summer Veggie Box! Are you looking for things you can do to improve your garden this season or ways to live a more sustainable lifestyle? Composting can meet both of those goals. Homemade compost builds the health and disease resistance of the plants in your garden while diverting organics from the landfill which reduces methane emissions. Composting requires 3 basic ingredients: browns, greens and water. Your compost pile should have an equal amount of browns and greens. Browns consist of dead leaves, branches, and twigs. Greens consist of grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, and coffee grounds. Water provides moisture to help break down the organic matter. Adding compost to your garden soil will improve its fertility, consistency, drainage and health. It builds up the beneficial microorganisms in the soil leading to healthier garden overall. Composting also helps stop soil loss and helps save water. Organic material retains at least 18 times its weight in water. There are multiple ways that you can compost outside and indoors. Visit www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home to get more information on the various methods of composting. You can find a method that can work with the space you have at home. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

MSU Student Organic Farm

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

Crop Profile

Jalapeños - Capsicum annuum

The jalapeño pepper is a medium-sized chili pepper. A mature jalapeño is the length of 2-3 inches and is typically picked and consumed while still green. Occasionally they are allowed to fully ripen and turn red in color. Capsicum is derived from the Greek word, kapos, "to bite". The heat comes from a group of alkaloid chemicals called capsaicinoids, principally capsaicin and dihydrocapsaicin. The highest concentration of the capsaicin is found closer to the seeds of the pepper. However contrary to popular belief, the seeds themselves do not produce capsaicin, but can absorb some capsaicin. If the heat intensity of jalapeños is too much for you, it can be lowered during preparation by cutting open jalapenos, removing veins and seeds. Soaking in salt water for at least one hour will decrease the heat even more.

Gloves should be worn while handling hot peppers. The eyes, nose, and mouth areas are prone to irritation from capsaicin content. If exposed to capsaicin while handling or preparing jalapenos, the area should be rinsed immediately with water or a milk soaked towel applied over the area.

ALLEN
SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

- Blueberries**, Felzke Farms, Dewitt
- Garlic**, Ten Hens Farm, Bath
- Tomatoes**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Green Beans**, Magnolia Farm, Lansing
- Organic Carrots**, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
- Jalapeños**, Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids
- Basil**, Magnolia Farms, Lansing
- Organic Swiss Chard**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Add-Ons

- Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
- Meat**, Heffron Farms, Belding
- Sweet Treats**, Hobie's Catering, Lansing

Recipes and Tips!

Tangy Swiss Chard with Slivered Carrots

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
5 Veggie Box carrots, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced on the diagonal
3 cups Veggie Box Swiss chard, stems chopped, leaves cut into 1-inch strips
2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
Salt and ground pepper
Veggie Box garlic

Heat the olive oil in a skillet. Add the carrots and cook until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and chard stems and cook for 1 minute, then stir in the chard leaves and toss until wilted, about 3 minutes. Stir in the rice vinegar, season with salt and pepper and serve.

Jalapeno Bruschetta

Chopped Veggie Box tomatoes
½ baguette
1 small red onion
1 Veggie Box jalapeno pepper (remove seeds and veins for a less spicy bruschetta)
½ cup fresh Veggie Box basil
3 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 Veggie Box garlic clove
¼ cup olive oil
Salt & pepper
Optional: cheese of choice

With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 350 °F. Place thin slices of the baguette on a large baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Toast in the oven for about 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Let cool on the baking sheet. Chop tomatoes, basil, and garlic & dice onions and jalapeños. In a bowl, combine tomatoes, onions, jalapeño, basil, vinegar, garlic, and the remainder of olive oil. Season mixture with salt and pepper. Spoon the Tomato mixture onto the toasted bread. If desired, sprinkle with cheese (pictured: parmesan).



Blueberry-Basil Limeade

1 cup fresh lime juice (about 7-8 medium limes)
1 cup fresh blueberries
1/2 cup loosely packed basil leaves
1 cup granulated sugar
3 cups water

Combine lime juice, blueberries, basil, and sugar in a high-powered blender; blend until smooth. Strain the mixture through a fine mesh sieve into a large pitcher; discard solids. Stir in the water and serve over ice.



Fresh Salsa with Tomato, Basil, Garlic, Jalapeno

1 1/2 pounds Veggie Box tomatoes, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1/4 cup red onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
1 tbsp. fresh Veggie Box basil, chopped
1 Veggie Box jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
1 teaspoon minced Veggie Box garlic
2 teaspoons lime juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
1/2 teaspoon sugar

Combine all ingredients into a bowl. After that, mix them together well and let the combination sit for about ten minutes, so all the flavors meld together. Make sure the onion, garlic and jalapeno pepper are truly chopped fine enough. There are some powerful flavors in those vegetables and the smaller you can make each piece, the better.

