

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8: July 25

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.



Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

- Blueberries**, Felzke Farms, Dewitt
- Garlic**, Ten Hens Farm, Bath
- Organic Dill**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Salad Mix**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Kale**, Green Eagle Farm, Onondaga
- Organic Carrots**, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
- Organic New Potatoes**, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
- Pickling Cucumbers**, Titus Farms, Leslie
- Organic Jalapeño and Serrano Peppers**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing

Add-Ons

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

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Pickles

Veggie Box pickling cucumbers
1 small sweet yellow onion
1 cup apple cider vinegar
1 cup water
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons pickling spice
1 clove of smashed Veggie Box garlic
1/2 of Veggie Box dill
1 Veggie Box jalapeño, optional

Rinse the cucumbers well under cold water, pat them dry, and then set them on a towel to dry completely. Slice the cucumbers and onion, then pack them in the jars: With a sharp knife or a mandoline slicer, slice the cucumbers and onion into slices 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick. Firmly pack the cucumbers, onions, dill sprigs, optional jalapeño, and garlic into the jars, fitting in as many as you can without smashing the vegetables. Leave 1/2-inch or so of headspace at the top of the jars. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and pickling spice up to a simmer. Stir occasionally and continue simmering until the sugar and salt are dissolved. If you have a canning funnel, use it here to make it easier to fill the jars. Carefully pour or ladle the hot brine into each jar, filling the jars until the cucumbers and onions are covered. It's ok if a few small pieces poke out the top. Screw on the lids, then let the jars cool to room temperature (about an hour). The cucumbers will start off bright green, but will become darker and more "pickle-colored" as they cool. Place them in the refrigerator. Wait at least 24 hours before eating the pickles in order to let the flavors develop. Use them within one month.



Sautéed Potatoes With Kale

1 bunch Veggie Box kale, stemmed, and washed
Salt
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
Veggie Box potatoes, cut in small dice (about 1/2 inch)
1 medium onion, diced
1 Veggie Box garlic clove, diced
Freshly ground pepper

Bring a large pot of water to a boil while you clean kale. When water comes to a boil, salt generously and add kale. Blanch 2 to 3 minutes, until just tender. Transfer to a bowl of cold water, drain and squeeze out excess water, taking it up by the handful. Cut squeezed bunches of kale into slivers and set aside. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over high heat in a heavy, preferably nonstick, 12-inch skillet and add potatoes. Turn heat down to medium-high and sear without stirring for 5 minutes, then shake and toss in pan for another 5 to 8 minutes, or until just tender and lightly browned. Add salt and continue to toss in pan for another minute or two, until tender. Add remaining teaspoon oil, onions and garlic, and cook, stirring until onions are tender and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in kale and additional salt if desired and cook, stirring or tossing in the pan for another 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat, taste and adjust seasonings, and serve.

Gingered Carrot & Kale Ribbons

Veggie Box carrots
1/4 cup vegetable oil
3 leeks (white parts only) thinly sliced, washed and dried
1/4 cup golden raisins, coarsely chopped
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, finely chopped
2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest; plus 1 tbsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
4 large kale leaves, tough stems removed and leaves thinly sliced

Using a vegetable peeler, slice the carrots into long, thin ribbons. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the leeks and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the raisins, garlic, ginger, lemon zest and 1/2 tsp. salt. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the carrots, kale and 1/2 cup water and cook, stirring or turning with tongs, until softened, about 10 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.