

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 4: June 25

Welcome to week 4 of the Summer Veggie Box, which happens to be the week of Allen Neighborhood Center's 20th Birthday! Founded in 1999, ANC grew out of a four year old 'healthy communities' initiative called the Eastside Summit. This summit began as an effort between Sparrow Hospital, the Eastside Neighborhood Organization, and community members to create a "healthy community" on the Eastside. One of those members, Joan Nelson, helped in facilitating the summit, and many neighbors joined task forces focusing on health, housing and neighborhood stability. Eventually, the Eastside Summit morphed into a non-profit organization, the Allen Neighborhood Center! We have a wide array of programs, including: Outreach & Engagement, BreadBasket Pantry, the Allen Farmers Market, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Youth Service Corps, the Take Root Garden Club, the Exchange Food Hub, our Incubator Kitchens, the Senior Discovery Group, Market Walk, and of course, Veggie Box. Over 500 volunteers contribute over 10,000 hours every year to make this work possible. Together, we are building a more vibrant Eastside. If you'd like to celebrate by supporting our work, donate by bringing cash or check to Veggie Box pickup, or by making a donation at paypal.me/allennbcenter. Thank you for all the support over these past 20 years, and thank you supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Hillcrest Farms

Hillcrest Farms is a four season farm in Eaton Rapids that offers an extensive selection of fresh produce. Owner, Mark Kastner, started farming in 2008 gaining inspiration from his grandmother, a fantastic chef and farmer with whom he spent summers with as a child. Now he is known around town for his deliciously unique spinach and salad mix, as well as for the impeccable quality of the rest of his produce. His sustainable farming practices assure customers that products are safely produced with regards to environment and human health.

Crop Profile

Fennel

Fennel is a flowering plant in the carrot family that is native to the Mediterranean region. There are two main types of fennel: herb fennel and Florence fennel, or the Italian finocchio. Herb fennel's stems, seeds, and feathery leaves that look just like its cousin, dill, are all harvested and used. Florence fennel, however, is grown primarily for its large, bulb-like bottom that is eaten as a vegetable. Typically, the trimmed off green tops only garnish dishes. Regardless of type, fennel has an anise or licorice flavor. The crisp bulbs can be eaten raw by cutting into thin slices for salads and slaws. If cooked, the bulb's flavor becomes softer and more mellow. Fennel has also been considered one of the best carminatives, which are used to reduce gas, bloating, and nausea, and was baked or boiled along with other foods to make them easier to digest. Today, fennel is still used in many of the same ways and may make a helpful digestive aid in addition to being a delicious vegetable or spice.



What's in the Box?

Fennel, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Basil, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Organic Snap Peas, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Organic Collard Greens, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Organic Garlic Scapes, *Owosso Organics, Owosso*
Organic Carrots, *Monroe Family Organics, Holt*
Romaine Lettuce, *Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids*

Add-Ons

Sweet Treats, *Hobie's Catering, Lansing*
Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*
Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Cold Brew, *Rust Belt Roastery, East Lansing*

Recipes and Tips!

Basil and Fennel Pesto

Veggie box basil leaves
Veggie Box fennel fronds (not the thick stems)
1/2 cup nuts of choice (Brazil, cashew, pistachio, etc.)
3 tbsp olive oil or more if you like
2 Veggie Box garlic scapes
Salt and pepper

Put all the ingredients in a blender and mix until you have a pesto consistency (about 30 seconds). If you are using a mortar and pestle, you may need to pound the mixture in portions until all ingredients are crushed and blended. Serve as you like on pasta, toasts, pizza, veggies or meat, or even in bread.



Snap Pea, Carrot Salad

Veggie Box snap peas, halved
1/2 cup green peas
1/2 of Veggie Box carrots, sliced.
1/2 of a red onion (sliced thin)
chopped fresh fennel fronds (to taste)
2 cups of Veggie Box lettuce, chopped.
salt/pepper to taste
Balsamic Vinaigrette:
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp pure maple syrup
salt/pepper to taste

Add all the salad ingredients to a medium bowl and toss well. Whisk the vinaigrette ingredients in small bowl. Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and toss well. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Roasted Baby Carrots and Garlic Scapes

Veggie Box carrots
Veggie Box fennel bulb
1/2 of Veggie box garlic scapes
2 tbsp olive oil
Fresh thyme
Sea salt
Fresh ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 F. Slice fennel bulb in half. Put flat side down and cut in half again. Place fennel and baby carrots on cooking tray and toss with oil. Sprinkle with fresh thyme, salt and pepper. Roast in oven for 18-20 minutes. Remove, toss around and add garlic scapes. Cook for another 10 minutes or so. Serve hot.

Sugar Snap Peas with Garlic Scapes and Basil

1/4 cup pine nuts (or substitute nut of choice)
1 teaspoons olive oil
Veggie Box sugar snap peas, halved
1 Veggie Box garlic scape, cut into 1" pieces
1 tablespoons water (measure out both tablespoons into a little cup in advance)
zest of 1/4 a lemon (1 teaspoons zest)
Veggie Box basil, cut into ribbons

Set a large skillet with a lid (you'll use it again to cook the peas) over medium heat. Add the nuts to the dry pan and stir frequently until lightly browned (don't use the lid yet). This takes 5 - 10 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a small bowl. Set the empty skillet back on the burner and heat the oil over medium heat; have the lid handy. Once the oil is hot, add the sugar snap peas, garlic scapes, and water. Quickly put the lid on the skillet to trap the steam. Cook covered for 2 minutes, then uncover and cook for about 2 more minutes, stirring frequently, until the sugar snap peas are crisp tender and the water has evaporated. Transfer the sugar snap peas to a serving bowl and toss with the nuts, lemon zest, and basil. Toss gently and serve. Keep leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for a few days.

