

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10: May 7

Welcome to week 10 of the Spring Veggie Box! The season for foraging ramps, cup plants, fiddleheads, and more! mushrooms has just begun, and free healthy food will continue to be available for those willing to forage for it. Michigan woods and waters are full of edible foods waiting for consumption. But as we embark upon this 'trend' of consuming wild edibles, we should exercise some caution. The good thing is that the food you pick in the wild has zero carbon footprint. Harvesting them can be sustainable if done correctly by people who understand the ecosystem and seasons well. But if we open the floodgates, we might be driving head-on into a collision with the environment. Even with the best sustainability practices, foraging will never be scalable in our current system; hence farming.

However, it's also important to note that foraging should not be viewed as a fun 'trend' by foodies, but rather a very real and personal connection that native people have always had with the land. This is not to say that non-native folks should not forage, but to practice self-awareness and self-restraint. Remember to avoid over harvesting, leaving some behind for others and for sustainability for future growth - don't be greedy! In this week's box, ramps, cup plants, maple syrup, and honey are all native to Michigan and could have been foraged and prepared by you. 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 provided to provide to the community.

Crop Profile

Ramps

A foraged delicacy, ramps are like a wild leek but with a more pungent and garlicky taste. Their leaves, stalk, and bulb are edible, and they only appear for about a month or so in the spring, making them a pricey treat. You may be able to find ramps under the shade of deciduous trees in rich soil. Ramps are also important in indigenous cultures - they have long been foraged by indigenous populations (like the Anishinaabeg and Cherokee) as food and medicine, and are even part of folklore. However, the present foraging techniques and the quantities being harvested have consequences that are of concern to botanists, environmentalists, and naturalists. Ramp populations and their preferred habitats are declining in many areas. When foraging for ramps, you should only take the largest ramps from a cluster, and only a handful per cluster at that, and cutting them above the roots to ensure more can grow. Ramps are consumed raw or cooked in soups, pesto, accompanying egg dishes, and sautéed with seasonal foraged wild greens or morels!



What's in the Box?

- Organic Swiss Chard**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Basil Plants**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Organic Scallions**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Bok Choi**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Wild Ramps**, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
- Organic Head Lettuce**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Native Cup Plants**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Organic Radishes**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Organic Garlic**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Microgreens**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Add-Ons

- Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
- Honey**, Beebehavior Ranch, Ovid
- Maple Syrup**, Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning
- Meat Variety**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
- Sweet Treats**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Recipes and Tips!

Spring Potato Salad with Ramps and Radishes

3 pounds yellow potatoes, cut into bite sized pieces
Veggie Box radishes, chopped
Veggie Box ramps, chopped
Veggie box scallions
handful of fresh parsley, chopped
2-3 stalks of celery, chopped

For the Dressing:

2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
juice of 2 lemons (about 5 tablespoons)
1/2 cup good quality olive oil
salt and fresh cracked pepper

Place a steamer in a large saucepan. Add a bit of water to the bottom. Add the potatoes and steam until potatoes are nearly done. Turn off the burner and keep the cover on for an additional 10-15 minutes to ensure the potatoes are fully cooked.

This technique keeps the potatoes from being loaded with water, which sometimes happens when boiled, and from being over-cooked which can lead to mushiness. Check them after 10 minutes, and if they're tender, remove the lid. Meanwhile, make the dressing. In a medium bowl, add the garlic, Dijon, lemon juice, and pinch of salt and pepper.

Whisk. Then slowly add the olive oil, whisking the entire time. Adjust seasonings, if necessary.

Remember that potatoes require a bit of salt to let their flavor shine through. When the potatoes are done steaming, add them to a large bowl and pour about 2/3 of the dressing over them while they are hot. Use a rubber spatula to gently fold the potatoes and dressing together. Let sit until mostly cool, then add the vegetables and the remainder of the dressing. Fold everything together, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for a couple of hours. When ready to serve, let it come to room temperature- the flavors are brighter when they are not completely cold. Sprinkle with a crunchy sea salt before serving. Enjoy!

Ramp Butter

2 sticks of unsalted butter, room temperature
Veggie Box ramps, white and green parts
1/2 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest, grated finely
Kosher salt, to taste
Fresh ground black pepper

Trim the root end and wash ramps very thoroughly. Chop up the ramps and sautee them in a small bit of butter for a few minutes until cooked. Let them cool. In a food processor, add the ramps, salt, pepper, butter, lemon zest and juice. Process until they reach the texture you want. You can pack compound butter into air-tight containers or even ramekins and store them in the refrigerator for about a week. The traditional method is to roll the butter into logs, either in parchment or plastic wrap, so they can be chilled and sliced. You can freeze the rolls for months and just slice off what you need and re-wrap well.

Spring Frittata with Charred Ramps

6 eggs
2 tbsp milk
1/2 Veggie Box ramps
3/4 cup of potatoes
Cheese!
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic
1/2 Veggie Box swiss chard
Veggie Box cup plants
Salt
Black pepper

Preheat your oven to 400. Whisk together eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Set aside on your counter. In a skillet over medium heat, add some olive oil, and when hot, sauté the ramps whole (make sure they're dry when they go in) until softened. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Remove from heat and set aside. While ramps are cooking, warm a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add enough olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan. Add in potatoes and a sprinkle of salt. Cook, covered and stirring occasionally, until softened and browning. Then turn the heat down to medium. Add the cup plants. Add garlic and the chard and cook a minute more. Pour eggs over potatoes and greens. Tilt the pan so eggs cover vegetables and settle into any nooks. When the eggs start to set, arrange the ramps on top and crumble the cheese over everything. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the eggs have set. Enjoy!