

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 11: May 12

Welcome to week 11 of the Spring Veggie Box! We all want a healthy food system where our children's bellies are full, where we can access and afford fresh, nutrient rich foods, and where people who work along the food chain from the field to the kitchen can live sustainable and healthy lives. We all want a food system that is fair, sustainable, and racially equitable and we see glimpses of this happening every day: Residents of Detroit are transforming vacant and blighted land into urban farms to grow fresh and healthy foods for their communities, building economic opportunities for those seeking work; and farmers, universities, hospitals, and healthy food advocates (like ANC) are working across the state to build strong food hubs connecting consumers to farmers, keeping local farmers in business, and keeping kids healthy. Unfortunately, these glimpses are overshadowed by our broken food system, in which many of us lose, particularly communities of color. This food system works for some, but fails too many of us. Yet, we already have a glimpse of the possibility of a just and healthy food system. To get there, we must use a critical race lens to diagnose what is wrong with our current system, assess entry points for change, and determine ways that we can work together to build a better system for all of us. Thank you for 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

Asparagus

Asparagus was first grown in Greece more than 2,500 years ago, and experts say ancient Romans enjoyed it, too. It was commonly found growing in the wild. Most vegetables are annuals, meaning they need to be planted every year. Asparagus is one of only a few perennial vegetables, meaning they come back year after year. That's why you can sometimes still find asparagus growing in the wild. Asparagus is known as a springtime vegetable and is primarily grown commercially in California, Michigan, and Washington state. Growing asparagus does require patience and space. Several square feet are needed per plant, and it can take 3-4 years to produce edible spears once the seeds are planted. This lengthy wait and the short season has given asparagus an exalted status as a luxury vegetable, which accounts for its occasional higher cost at the market. However, it's one of the easiest to prepare and cook.

ALLEN
COMMUNITY CO-OP

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Radishes, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing or Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Kale, Green Gardens Community Farm, Battle Creek
Organic Tomato and Pepper Plants, Owosso Organics, Owosso
Organic Spinach, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Mint, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Green Garlic, Ten Hens Farm, Bath
Salad Mix, Green Gardens Community Farm, Battle Creek
Wild Ramps, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Asparagus, Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
Meat Variety, Heffron Farms, Belding
Sweet Treats, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
Beef, Heffron Farms Market, Belding
Cheese, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga
Chevre, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga
Chicken, Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston
Pork, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Recipes and Tips!

Spring Risotto with Ramps, Asparagus, and Mushrooms

2 Tbs. unsalted butter
1 cup trimmed and roughly chopped Veggie Box ramps
2 cups Veggie Box asparagus pieces (1 inch)
7 cups vegetable broth
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups chopped onion
1 tsp. kosher salt
2 cups short-grain risotto rice, such as arborio or carnaroli
1 cup dry white wine
1 cup of sliced mushrooms
1/2 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
2 to 3 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

In a medium sauté pan, heat the butter until foaming, then add the mushrooms and sauté for about three to four minutes. Then add the ramps and sauté until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the asparagus and sauté another 1 to 2 minutes. Set aside. Bring the broth almost to a boil in a large pot. Reduce the heat to very low; the broth should stay hot but not simmer. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a heavy 3- to 4-quart straight-sided sauté pan at least 10 inches wide or in a similar-sized Dutch oven. Add the onion and 1/2 tsp. salt, and cook slowly, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon until softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Add 1/2 cup water, lower the heat to medium low, and continue cooking until the water is completely gone and the onion is soft and glistening but not browned, another 5 to 10 minutes. Add the rice to the pan and raise the heat to medium. Cook, stirring constantly, to coat the rice with the oil, about 3 minutes. Toasted rice should still be white and glistening, but you should hear a clicking sound when you stir it. Pour in the wine and cook, stirring constantly, until it's mostly absorbed, 2 to 3 minutes. Ladle in 1-1/2 to 2 cups broth to barely cover the rice and stir constantly. Add another 1/2 tsp. salt, adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and keep stirring. When all the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is dry enough that your stirring spoon leaves a trail showing the bottom of the pot, ladle in another cup of broth, again stirring until it's all absorbed. Continue adding broth in 1-cup increments, always stirring, until the rice is nearly but not fully al dente; this is usually 12 to 16 minutes after the first addition of liquid. When the risotto is a few minutes away from al dente, stir in the sautéed ramps, asparagus, and mushrooms. After you've added 5 cups of liquid, taste the rice to determine if it's al dente and pleasantly creamy. If it is, remove it immediately from the heat. Otherwise, let it cook a little longer, incorporating more broth. Gently stir in the cheese and parsley and serve immediately.

Lemon Roasted Asparagus

Veggie Box asparagus, trimmed
2 tbsp olive oil
Veggie Box green garlic, minced (white and light green parts)
2 tbsp parmesan, grated
1 lemon, thinly sliced
2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice (approx. 1 lemon)
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/4 tsp ground black pepper

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the asparagus, lemon slices, olive oil, freshly squeezed lemon juice, sea salt, ground black pepper, minced garlic, and parmesan cheese to the baking sheet. Toss to evenly coat. Place in the oven and roast for 8-10 minutes or until the asparagus is crisp on the outside and tender in the center.

Green Chutney

1 1/2 cups Fresh Cilantro Chopped
Veggie Box Mint leaves, Chopped
3-4 Green Chillies Chopped
1 inch Ginger Chopped
6-8 cloves Garlic (from last week's box!)
1/4 tsp Hing
1/2 tsp Cumin Seeds
Salt to taste
3 tbsp Lemon Juice

Blend all the ingredients in a blender until smooth. Try not to use water, but if it's getting difficult to blend, add a tablespoon or two of water and then blend. Serve this chutney with sandwiches or wraps, or with chaat, samosas, or other types of Indian snacks!

