

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 4: June 25

Now that you have all this fresh produce, you may be left wondering how to properly store it all. We are here to help with some tips and tricks! Most fruits and veggies can be stored in the refrigerator. A crisper drawer will help protect your produce and keep the moisture in to maintain freshness for longer. Plastic bags with tiny vents help keep produce fresh longer by releasing moisture. Asparagus should be stored in the refrigerator, wrapped with a moist paper towel or you can stand them up in a glass of cold water wrapped with a damp paper towel. Store carrots in the fridge and peel them when you're ready to use them (if you feel they need to be peeled). Fresh heads of lettuce should be washed really well with water before refrigerating. Dry the leaves and store them in a clean plastic bag with a few paper towels. Rhubarb should be wrapped in plastic and stored in the fridge, but it also freezes well. Freezing most vegetables at home is a fast, convenient way to preserve produce at their peak maturity and nutritional quality, but some things you will need to blanch first! Garlic and onions should be kept at room temperature (or cooler) in a well-ventilated area. Tomatoes should be stored at room temperature and washed just before using. What are other types of produce you have questions about how to store? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Hunter Park GardenHouse

The Hunter Park GardenHouse, a project of Allen Neighborhood Center, is a hub for year-round farm & garden education, where neighbors volunteer to grow food, flowers, and community, and youth develop job and life skills in service to the neighborhood. Since 2008, the Hunter Park GardenHouse has empowered neighbors to grow, prepare, and eat healthy food to better their health and become better connected with the community.

Crop Profile

Collard Greens

Collards refer to loose-leafed cultivars of Brassica Oleracea, the same species as cabbage and broccoli. Specifically, collards are part of the Acephala Group that includes kale and spring greens. Collards have large, dark-colored, thick edible leaves that are slightly bitter. Collards tend to be sauteed in oil until tender, and seasoned with salt, onions, or other seasonings. In the South, they are commonly served with salted meats and cornbread, but they can also be used in stews and stir-fries. Like kale, collards contain a substantial amount of vitamin K. They are also rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, and manganese. Check out the recipes below for some delicious ways to cook collards!

ALLEN
Neighborhood Center

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Mint Plant, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing

Salad Mix, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing

Organic Bok Choi, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt

Collards, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Organic Green Onions, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma

Strawberries, *Felzke Farms*, Dewitt

Organic Popcorn, *Ferris Organic Farms*, Eaton Rapids

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms*, Belding

Sweet Treats, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Recipes and Tips!

Stir-fry Greens with Pepper & Broccoli

Veggie Box bok choy & collards
1 head broccoli
½ cup water
1 bell pepper cut into short thick strips
Veggie Box green onions, diced
2 tablespoons canola oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon ginger, grated fine (to a paste consistency)
3 tablespoons soy sauce

Cut bok choy white stems and collard stems into one-inch pieces. Cut leaves into shreds but keep separate from stems. Remove stalk from broccoli and peel off outer skin, then cut into slices. Break up broccoli into small florets. Keep florets separate from the stalks. In a wok or large skillet, heat the water to boiling then add the bok choy & collard stems and the broccoli stalks and lower to a simmer covered. Simmer for 4 minutes then add peppers, broccoli florets, and onions. Uncover and raise heat to high and cook just until vegetables are tender, about 4 more minutes. Add the bok choy & collard leaves along with oil, garlic and ginger and toss and cook for just a minute. Add soy sauce, toss and serve.

Strawberry Rhubarb Jam

1 bunch rhubarb, chopped
Veggie Box strawberries, diced
2 cups white sugar
2 teaspoons grated orange zest
1/3 cup orange juice
1/2 cup water

In a saucepan, combine the rhubarb, strawberries, sugar, orange zest, orange juice and water. Bring to a boil, then cook over medium-low heat for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until thick. It will thicken more as it cools. Ladle into hot sterile jars, and seal with lids and rings. Let jars cool, before storing in the refrigerator.

Short-Cut Collard Greens

Veggie Box collard greens
1 tablespoon olive oil
Veggie Box green onions, chopped
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
1 tablespoon maple syrup
1/8 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes
3/4 cup vegetable broth

Remove the stems and center ribs from the collard greens and discard. Cut the leaves into 1/2-inch strips. Place the greens into a large, microwave-safe bowl with the water and cover tightly. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. In the meantime, heat the oil and add onion to the pan and cook until onions have softened, about 2 minutes. Add the collard greens and stir in the vinegar, maple syrup, red pepper flakes, and broth. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, for 30 minutes. Season with salt.

Freshly Popped Popcorn

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or coconut oil
½ cup Veggie Box popcorn kernels, divided
Salt, to taste
Seasonings of your choice

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat, combine the oil and 2 popcorn kernels. Cover the pot and wait for the kernels to pop, which might take a few minutes. In the meantime, place a large serving bowl near the stove so it's ready when you need it. Once the kernels pop, turn off the burner, remove the pot from the heat and pour in the remaining popcorn kernels. Cover the pot again, and give the pot a little shimmy to distribute the kernels evenly. Let the pot rest for 60 seconds to make sure the oil doesn't get too hot before the kernels are ready to pop. Turn the heat back up to medium, put the pot back onto the burner and continue cooking the popcorn, carefully shimmying the pot occasionally to cook the kernels evenly. Once the kernels start popping, tip the lid just a touch to allow steam to escape. Continue cooking until the popping sound slows to about one pop per every few seconds. Remove the lid and dump the popcorn into your serving bowl. Sprinkle the popcorn with a couple pinches of salt, to taste, and any other topping you would like. Toss the popcorn and serve immediately, for best flavor and texture.