

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5: June 30th

Bees are a critical aspect to the agriculture industry due to being a prominent pollinator, increasing farmers' yields, and creating a blossoming honey industry. Honey bees are the primary pollinator of crops whereas wild bees are responsible for pollinating wildflowers. Since bees carry such an important role in our agriculture system, their existence has major implications on the food system and food security as a whole. Over one third of the food we eat relies on pollination by bees, either directly or indirectly. Many fruits, nuts, and vegetables require pollination by bees and other insects in order to yield fruit, and without pollinators these crops could nearly disappear. Honey bees are economically viable too - they contribute around \$24 billion annually to U.S. agriculture. Consumers can generate change for bees' health and population by adjusting a few critical aspects in our day to day lives. One is to avoid using pesticides or buying from individuals who use them. Shopping for organic products ensures this! Growing your own garden or letting your grass grow can help increase bee population by providing a habitat in which to live. Learning to live cooperatively with bees is beneficial not just for bee populations but also our food systems 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:

### *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. Regardless of type, fennel has a strong anise or licorice flavor. The crisp bulbs can be eaten raw by cutting into thin slices for salads and slaws. If it's 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 can be baked or boiled along with other foods to make them easier to digest. Today, fennel is used in many ways and makes a helpful digestive aid in addition to being a delicious vegetable or spice.



## What's in the Box?

- Salad Mix**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
- Organic Fennel**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Organic Garlic Scapes**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Organic Lavender**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
- Collards**, Ten Hens Farm, Bath
- Organic Mint**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Organic Cucumbers**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Strawberries**, Felzke Farms, Dewitt

## Add-Ons

- Eggs**, Grazing Field Cooperative, Charlotte
- Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
- Coffee**, Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing
- Cold Brew Coffee**, Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing
- Kombucha**, Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing
- Chevre**, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga
- Cheese**, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga
- Organic Pinto Beans**, Ferris Organic Farms, Eaton Rapids
- Meat Variety**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
- Beef**, Heffron Farms Market, Belding
- Pork**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
- Chicken**, Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston
- Honey**, Beebehavior Ranch, Ovid
- Sweet Treats**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

# Recipes and Tips!

## Sweet Fennel Butter

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened  
3 tablespoons Veggie Box fresh fennel fronds, chopped  
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice  
2 teaspoons freshly grated orange zest  
1 teaspoon honey (Veggie Box add-on)

**Mix together butter, fennel, orange juice, zest and honey until smooth, either in a food processor, in an electric mixer, or by hand. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Scrape butter into a decorative small bowl and serve.**

## Garlic Scape and Scallion Pesto

Veggie Box garlic scapes  
1/4 cup of scallions  
2 Tbsp lemon juice  
1/3 cup nuts of choice (walnut, pine nut, pistachio, etc)  
3 oz parmesan cheese  
1 1/2 C olive oil (up to 1 1/2 C)  
Salt & pepper, to taste

**Place the garlic scapes and the scallions into a food processor, along with the lemon juice, nuts and parmesan cheese. Process, drizzling in the olive oil in increments. Check the pesto every so often while adding the olive oil until you've reached the texture and flavor intensity that suits you. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss with some pasta, throw in a little more cheese and pistachios and dig on in.**



## Turnip and Fennel Saute

1 bunch turnips  
Veggie Box fennel bulb  
2 tablespoon olive or coconut oil  
1/2 lemon, juiced  
1/2 teaspoon sea salt  
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest  
Turnip greens, or other greens

**Use a mandoline slicer or a sharp knife to slice the turnips and fennel bulb. Heat the oil in a skillet on medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the vegetables and cook, stirring for 5-7 minutes or until just soft. Add the chopped turnip greens, and then add the lemon juice and sea salt and toss to combine. Garnish with lemon zest and enjoy!**

## Strawberry Mint Lemonade with Lavender

6-8 lemons (approx. 1 cup fresh lemon juice), plus 1 more for garnish (sliced and deseeded)  
1 cup Veggie Box strawberries, plus more for garnish  
Veggie Box mint  
honey + lavender syrup

### For honey lavender syrup:

**Add 1/2 cup water and 2 Tbsp. lavender leaves to a small saucepan. Bring to a boil. Stir in 1/2 cup honey until dissolved. Turn heat down, and allow to simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, and let steep for 30 minutes. Strain lavender leaves out of the syrup, and into an airtight container. Syrup will keep in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Use in your morning coffee, cocktails, or even lemonade!**

### For the lemonade:

**Juice lemons until you have about 1 cup of juice. Blend together lemon juice and strawberries, and pour into a pitcher. Add 4 cups of cold water and half of the syrup. Taste the lemonade, and add more syrup if desired. Add 6-8 mint leaves. Set lemonade in the fridge for at least 2 hours to let flavors combine.**