

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5: July 1st

Bees are a critical aspect to the agriculture industry due to being a prominent pollinator, increasing farmer's yields, and creating a blossoming honey industry. Unlike wasps, who get their protein from other insects, bees receive their protein from pollen. 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 as a whole 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 from grocery stores around the world. 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. The first way to do this is to avoid using pesticides or buying from individuals that 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. Native plant species can then begin to grow back in these landscapes since there is no industrial interference. Learning to live cooperatively with bees is beneficial not just for bee populations but also our food systems and in turn, for all of us too. Thank you for supporting local food!



What's in the Box?

Lettuce, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Beets, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Strawberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Organic Zucchini, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
Collards, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
Curly Kale, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
Garlic Scapes, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*

Producer Spotlight

Titus Farms

Titus Farms was founded by Rose and Paul Titus in 1982. Growing up, both farmers worked at their respective family farms until they got married and purchased a small 20 acre land. Paul and Rose both dedicated their lives into farming so that they can pass on ownership of the farm to their daughter Rebecca Titus. Titus farms is dedicated to producing the highest quality vegetables using sustainable organic farming methods, as well as producing unique varieties of vegetables that capitalize on great taste.

Crop Profile

Collards

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!

Recipes and Tips!

Quick Collard Greens

Veggie Box Collard Greens

1 ½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon fine sea salt

1/2 Veggie Box garlic scapes, minced.

Pinch of red pepper flakes

A couple lemon wedges, for serving

To prepare the collards: Cut out the thick center rib out of each collard green. Stack the rib-less greens and roll them up into a cigar-like shape. Slice over the “cigar” as thinly as possible (1/8” to 1/4”) to make long strands. Shake up the greens and give them a few chops so the strands aren’t so long.



Heat a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat, then add the olive oil. Once the oil is shimmering, add all of the collard greens and the salt. Stir until all of the greens are lightly coated in oil, then let them cook for about 30 seconds before stirring again. Continue stirring in 30-second intervals until the greens are wilted, dark green, and some are starting to turn browns on the edges (this is delicious). This will take between 3 to 6 minutes. Once the collards are just about done, add the garlic and red pepper flakes (if using). Stir to break up the garlic and cook until it’s fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove the pan from the heat. Immediately divide the cooked collards onto plates, and serve with a lemon wedge each.



Blanched Collard Wraps

4 Veggie Box Collard Leaves

2 tbsp mayo

1 small cucumber

Handful of sliced onion

(Add any other veggies or sauces you would like!)

Boil a large pot or wide skillet of water. It doesn't need to be very deep, so long as you can fit 1-2 of your collard leaves inside. Trim off the long, woody ends of the stems. Place the leaf face down and carefully slide a paring knife from one end of the thickest part of spine to the other, to cut the rounded spine flat. Alternately, you could pinch the leaf, lifting the spine off your cutting board, and cut off the rounded spine with your paring knife, but this only works better if your knife is very sharp.

One or two at a time, add to boiling water. Blanche for 1-2 minutes, or until bright green and softened slightly. Immediately transfer the to an ice bath (a large bowl with water and ice) to stop the cooking process. Pat the leaves dry with a paper towel and store in an air-tight container until you're ready to enjoy them!



Lay one collard wrap flat on a cutting board. Fill (but don't over-fill) with mayo and veggies. Fold the sides in and roll carefully into a burrito-style wrap. Cut in half with a sharp knife and enjoy!

