

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5: July 2nd

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

### MSU Student Organic Farm

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long

intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

## Crop Profile:

### Lavender

Lavandula (common name lavender) is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, Lamiaceae. Lavender has been shown to be one of the most preferred flowers to many pollinators, including bees! Historically, lavender has been used to treat depression, insomnia, anxiety, and fatigue. Current research supports the calming, soothing and sedative effects of lavender when inhaled. While both the foliage and flowers are fragrant, typically flower buds are harvested and dried to scent potpourri, sleep pillows, and other projects. The flowers are also used in teas, cookies, and other confections as well as savory dishes!



## What's in the Box?

**Garlic Scapes**, *Side Hustle Farm*, Potterville  
**Organic Lavender**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt  
**Basil**, *Titus Farms*, Leslie  
**Organic Mint**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt  
**Organic Napa Cabbage**, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge  
**Organic Summer Squash**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt  
**Cherry Tomatoes**, *Peckham Farms*, Lansing  
**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!

## Lavender Cookies

1/2 cup butter, softened  
1/2 cup shortening  
1-1/4 cups sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract  
2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
Veggie Box lavender flowers  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt

**Preheat oven to 375°. Cream butter, shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in extracts. In a separate bowl, whisk flour, lavender, baking powder and salt; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto baking sheets lightly coated with cooking spray. Bake until golden brown, 8-10 minutes. Cool 2 minutes before removing to wire racks. Store in an airtight container.**

## 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.**



## Summer Veggie Pasta

1/2 pound uncooked whole-grain linguine  
Veggie Box squash  
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes, finely chopped  
2/3 cup finely chopped onion  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons champagne or white wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
Veggie Box garlic scapes, minced  
3 tablespoons panko, toasted  
1/3 - 1/2 of Veggie Box basil  
1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated (about 1/4 cup)

**Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain. While the pasta cooks, shave squash into thin ribbons using a vegetable peeler; place in a large bowl. Add tomatoes and all ingredients through garlic to bowl; toss to combine. Let stand 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to coat. Add pasta to vegetables, tossing gently to combine. Top with panko, basil, and cheese. Serve while the pasta is still warm!**

## 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.**