

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 6: July 9th

Buy local- you hear this phrase all the time, but why is it so important? Local produce is often much fresher and tastier since it is picked when in-season, compared to produce grown miles away that had been picked before it was ripe. Produce that is in season can be picked at peak ripeness and transported to local grocery stores or farmers markets usually within 24 hours. Produce grown locally also has greater nutrient value, since less time passes between harvest to your table. Food imported from far away can lose its nutrient value as it ages during transport. Similarly, food that requires fewer steps from farm to table has a smaller risk of becoming contaminated, which leads to a safer food supply. Another major benefit of buying locally is the environmental impact. Local foods require less travel, thus cutting down on fuel consumption and air pollution that long truck drives cause. Shopping at a farmers market also eliminates the need for packaging facilities and refrigeration. Supporting our local farmers helps keep their operations running, which prevents their farmland from being sold by developers who could destroy the land and its wildlife. Your support will also help prevent big businesses from buying out the farm and using non-eco-friendly farming practices. Thank you for shopping local and helping save our planet!

Producer Spotlight

Monroe Family Organics

Monroe Family Organics is very much the fruition of a dream set in motion almost 20 years ago. After having a stall at the local Alma farmers market when he was 16, Fred Monroe was hooked on organic vegetable production. So off he went to Michigan State to earn his bachelor's degree in horticulture & agribusiness. During this time he worked at MSUSOF and interned at Angelic Organics. In 2010, Fred & his wife Michele set to work acquiring land, buying a house, & rounding up equipment for the first farm season. Over the next few years, they added more crops, animals, CSA drop-offs, delivery options, and local mid-Michigan store and restaurant partners. 2020 marks Monroe Family Organics' tenth season.

Crop Profile

Cilantro

Cilantro is an herb from the fresh leaves of the coriander plant. This plant is a member of the parsley family, and the herb is also known as Chinese parsley and Mexican parsley. Fresh cilantro tastes pungent, bright, lemony, and a little peppery. To a certain percentage of the population, it tastes soapy due to the natural aldehyde chemical in the leaves. You will often find cilantro scattered on top of Indian dishes or used in salsa or as a topping in Mexican cuisine. Cilantro is best added to recipes at the end of cooking, since cooking will diminish its flavor. Cilantro is a great garnish for soups, fish, and meat.



What's in the Box?

Organic Summer Squash, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Cucumbers, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Cilantro, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Fresh Garlic, Ten Hens Farm, Bath

Organic Carrots, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Organic Mixed Cooking Greens, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Braising Greens (mature spicy salad mix), Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Meat Variety, Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston

Sweet Treats, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Recipes and Tips!

Vegetable Stir Fry

Sauce:

- 2 tablespoon Honey or maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated ginger, or 1/8 tsp dried
- 2 cloves Veggie Box Garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon Rice Wine Vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Soy Sauce

Stir Fry:

- 1 teaspoon light sesame oil
- Veggie Box cooking greens, cut into 1 inch strips
- Veggie Box carrots, peeled in strips or
- 5-6 onions, diced
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1/4 cup chopped Veggie Box cilantro

Stir together all the ingredients for the sauce and set aside. Heat sesame oil in a large wok or skillet over medium-high heat. Add in greens, carrots, onions and sesame seeds. Stir continuously for 3 minutes and then add in sauce. Cook until sauce has coated the vegetables and heated through. Serve with a sprinkle of cilantro. Suggestion: Add 1 package of extra firm tofu for protein

Squash & Carrots with Garlic & Herbs

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Veggie Box carrots, cut into fine julienne strips
- Veggie Box summer squash, cut into fine julienne strips
- 1-2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped Veggie Box cilantro
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh basil (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh oregano (or 1 tsp dried)

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over moderate heat. Add carrots, squash and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes or until just barely tender. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in fresh herbs. Serve immediately.

Cilantro Vinaigrette

- Veggie Box cilantro (1 large bunch)
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 clove Veggie Box garlic
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup water, if needed

Add all ingredients to a blender and blend for a minute until smooth. Add water if you need more volume in the blender. Season to taste. Use as a condiment for salads, tacos, quesadillas, rice, or anything else you'd like!



Lentil Soup with Carrots, Greens, & Turnips

- 1 cup organic green lentils
- 28 oz can diced tomatoes
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup diced onions (about 1 medium onion)
- 1 peeled sweet potato, roughly chopped
- 1 or 2 jalapeno peppers, chopped (or 1/4 tsp crushed red chiles)
- 2 cup sliced Veggie Box carrots
- 2 cups diced turnips
- 3 cloves Veggie Box garlic, pressed (or 1/4 tsp garlic powder)
- Veggie box cooking greens, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, finely chopped
- Veggie Box cilantro

Combine lentils, tomatoes, water, onions, sweet potato, peppers, carrots, and turnips in a medium-large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 45 minutes or until vegetables and lentils are soft. Stir occasionally, breaking up the tomatoes. Add garlic and cooking greens and continue to simmer until greens are soft. Serve topped with finely grated cheese and chopped cilantro, if desired. Season to taste with salt and pepper.