

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 7: July 14th

Welcome to week 7 of the Summer Veggie Box! When talking about our food system, a topic that often comes up is the racial injustice within it. The food system we know today was built on the mistreatment of people of color - beginning with stealing land from indigenous people to the enslavement of Black folks to work in the fields, and the ongoing mistreatment of latinx farm workers - this is a system built on control and corruption. For centuries, the capitalist food system that we primarily know has concentrated its power in the hands of the privileged few and pushed social and environmental injustices primarily onto racially stigmatized groups. In the early 20th century, Black Americans owned nearly 16 million acres of farmland, by 1997 there was as little as 2 million acres owned. Farms are predominantly run by white farmers whereas farm workers are disproportionately people of color. These workers are often paid poverty level wages and experience high levels of food insecurity, wage theft and harassment. Race, poverty and food insecurity are all interconnected. Recognizing racism in our food system is an important step in creating a system that is rooted in equity. There is no food justice without racial justice. Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *Monroe Family Organics*

Monroe Family Organics is very much the fruition of a dream set in motion 20 years ago, & finally realized in 2011. After having a stall at the local Alma farmers market the summer 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, a very large CSA farm south of Chicago (where he met his wife Michele). In 2010, Fred & Michele set to work acquiring land, buying a house, & rounding up equipment for the first farm season. Over the next few years, they continued to add more crops, more animals, more CSA drop-offs, more delivery options, and more local mid-Michigan store and restaurant partners. 2020 marks Monroe Family Organics' tenth season.

## Crop Profile *Blueberries*

Blueberries are native to North America. In commercial cultivation, the smaller species are called "lowbush blueberries" and include managed collections of wild blueberries, while the bigger species are known as "highbush blueberries." The large, plump berries we know so well today are relatively new. Around 1910, Elizabeth White, a New Jersey cranberry producer, and the USDA botanist Frederick Coleman began breeding wild blueberries. By 1916, their work created the very first domestic varieties, which had larger, sweeter fruits and turned blueberries into a valuable commercial crop. Today, Michigan is the number one state in highbush blueberry production with over 100 million pounds harvested each year. Blueberries have also become one of the most well known superfoods, and are now icons of a healthy lifestyle. In the 1990s, scientists began studying the health benefits related to the blueberry's high level of antioxidants that produce its deep blue color. The antioxidants in red/purple fruits and vegetables have been shown to have multiple effects, including supporting the integrity of blood vessels and reinforcing collagen.

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Summer Squash**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Organic Kale**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Radishes**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

**Organic Beets**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

**Blueberries**, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

**Braising Greens (mature spicy salad mix)**,

*Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing*

**Fresh Onions**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

**Cherry Tomatoes**, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

**Cheese**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

**Chevre**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

**Meat Variety**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

**Pork**, *Grazing fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

**Chicken**, *Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston*

**Beef**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

**Eggs**, *Grazing fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

**Coffee**, *Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing*

**Cold Brew Coffee**, *Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing*

**Kombucha**, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*

**Sweet Treats**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Roasted Garlic-Parmesan Squash and Tomatoes

Veggie Box squash cut into 1/2-inch thick slices  
Veggie Box tomatoes, sliced into halves  
2 1/2 Tbsp olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced (from last week's box!)  
1 1/4 tsp Italian seasoning  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese  
Fresh or dried parsley, for garnish (optional)

**Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line an 18 by 13-inch rimmed baking sheet with a sheet of parchment paper or aluminum foil. In a small bowl whisk together olive oil, garlic and Italian seasoning (if possible let rest 5 - 10 minutes to allow flavors to infuse into oil). Place zucchini, squash and tomatoes in a large mixing bowl. Pour olive oil mixture over top and gently toss with hands to evenly coat. Pour onto prepared baking dish and spread into an even layer. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle Parmesan over the top of each. Roast in preheated oven 25 - 30 minutes until veggies are tender and Parmesan is golden brown. Garnish with parsley if desired and serve warm.**



## Kale Chips

Veggie Box Kale  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
salt

**Preheat the oven to 275°F. Tear the kale leaves into 1" - 2" pieces, discarding the ribs, and place in a bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and toss with your hands until evenly coated. Arrange the leaves in a single layer (with NO overlap) on ungreased cookie sheets. Sprinkle with salt, and bake for 20 minutes or until leaves are crispy - make sure to check them often to prevent burning!**

## Blueberry Zucchini Bread

1 large egg  
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed  
1/3 cup canola or vegetable oil  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/4 cup cup sour cream (lite is okay; or Greek yogurt may be substituted)  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup all purpose flour + 1/4 cup for tossing with blueberries  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste  
1 cup coarsely grated zucchini (don't wring out)  
1 cup (6 ounces) fresh blueberries

**Preheat oven to 350F. Spray one 9x5-inch loaf pan with floured cooking spray, or grease and flour the pan; set aside. To a large bowl, add the the first six ingredients, through vanilla, and whisk to combine. Add 1 cup flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and stir until just combined; don't overmix. Add the zucchini and stir to combine; set aside. To a medium bowl, add the blueberries, 1/4 cup flour (helps prevent them from sinking while baking), and toss to coat. Add the blueberries and all flour bits to the large bowl with the batter and stir until just combined; don't overmix. Turn batter out into the prepared pan, smoothing the top lightly with a spatula. Tip - Evenly sprinkle the surface with 1 to 2 tablespoons blueberries for a visual pop of color. Bake for about 55 to 60 minutes or until the top is golden, the center is set, and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, or with a few moist crumbs. Baking times will vary based on the moisture content of zucchini, blueberries, climate, and oven variances. Bake until done; watch your bread, not the clock and don't worry if it takes more or less time to bake than the baking time estimates provided.**

**\*Allow bread to cool in pan for about 15 minutes before turning out on a wire rack to cool completely before slicing and serving. Bread will keep airtight at room temperature for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for up to 6 months.**

