

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 7: July 15th

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

Lake Divide Farm

Helen and Jim, the owners of Lake Divide Farm, farmed in New Jersey for four years on leased land before deciding to buy a farm in Michigan. In 2016, they found a farm in Jackson County and began the arduous process of moving everything and making the house livable while maintaining the farm in New Jersey. They are also a first generation family farm. They fell in love with growing food because of the satisfaction of an honest days work and the joy of doing something constructive and tangible for our community and the environment. They believe in food equality, that farming is an essential profession, and that producing food doesn't have to abuse the natural world. They plan on forging a business that affords the farmers, and those who work with them, a living wage, while making nutrient dense, fresh food available to all members of our community.

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.

ALLEN
NUTRITION CENTER

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Radishes, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Fresh Onions, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
Blueberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Organic Cabbage, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing*
Organic Parsley, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing*
Zucchini, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
Bell Peppers, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
Chard, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Organic Navy Beans, *Ferris Organic Farms, Eaton Rapids*

Recipes and Tips!

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 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.**

Balsamic Blueberry Vinaigrette

1 cup Veggie Box fresh blueberries
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp honey
1 Tbsp lemon juice
Pinch of salt and pepper
1/2 cup olive oil

In a blender, combine blueberries, vinegar, honey, lemon, salt, and pepper. With the blender running, slowly pour in oil, and continue blending until completely emulsified and creamy, about 30 seconds.



Creamed Chard & Onion Pasta

Veggie Box swiss chard, stems removed and diced, and greens cut into thin ribbons (don't dry)
2 green garlies, thinly sliced (whites and light green parts only)
1/4 cup Veggie Box onions, thinly sliced.
3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 cups milk
salt + pepper to taste
1/2 cup finely grated parmesan, plus more for serving
1/2 lb pasta

Cook pasta according to package directions in a large pot of salted water. Drain and reserve. In a pot, melt the butter and sauté the swiss chard stems, covered, for a few minutes. Then add in the onion and swiss chard greens and cook for another minute or two. Finally add the green garlic and whisk in flour. Cook roux about 4 minutes, whisking occasionally. Stream in the warm milk, and cook for about 4 more minutes, whisking constantly until sauce is thickened. Mix in parmesan and stir until smooth. Add the cooked pasta and taste and adjust salt and pepper. Serve with extra parmesan.