

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 9: July 30

Wondering what you can do at home with surplus fruits or veggies? Canning is a great way to preserve the nutritional content of vegetables without compromising the quality and enjoy them well into winter. Canning is an important, safe method of food preservation if practiced properly. The canning process involves placing foods in jars and heating them to a temperature that destroys microorganisms that could be a health hazard or cause the food to spoil. Canning also inactivates enzymes that could cause the food to spoil. Air is driven from the jar during heating, and as it cools, a vacuum seal is formed. The vacuum seal prevents air from getting back into the product bringing with it microorganisms to recontaminate the food. Canning was first documented as a method of food preservation in the early 1800's, when a man named Nicholas Appert was the first person to introduce his method of heat-treated produce in sealed glass jars, preventing microbacteria from spoiling the food. Fifty years later, John Mason invented the familiar glass jar with screw on threads that we all know and love today. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

CBI's Giving Tree Farm

CBI's (Community Based Interventions) Giving Tree Farm is a seven acre, non-profit CSA farm just north of Lansing, MI between Old Town and Dewitt. The farm originally began as a community garden for people with disabilities.

As it's volunteer base grew, so did the available programs. The farm has established a heated greenhouse and eight hoop houses for year-round horticultural therapy programs. Monday through Friday, the farm provides vocational training for people who have suffered from traumatic brain injuries, allowing them to organically cultivate the produce provided to provide to the community.

Crop Profile

Calendula

Calendula is an flowering herb that has been used for centuries for medicinal purposes. It can be used topically to heal wounds, burns, and rashes, and the edible flowers are a traditional remedy for supporting the immune system while providing numerous antioxidants. The petals are edible and can be used fresh in salads or dried and used to color cheese or as a replacement for saffron. Calendula petals can be used in salads, salsas, scrambled eggs, quiches, teas, and many other dishes to add a festive pop of color. Whole flowers can be dried and added to soups and stews. Romans and Greeks used the golden calendula in many rituals and ceremonies, sometimes wearing crowns or garlands made from the flowers. One of its nicknames is "Mary's Gold," referring to the flowers' use in early Catholic events in some countries. Calendula flowers are sacred flowers in India and have been used to decorate the statues of Hindu deities since early times.

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Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Sweet Onions, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Organic Carrots, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt

Organic Cilantro, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt

Green Beans, *Felzke Farms*, Dewitt

Organic Kale, *CBI Giving Tree Farm*, Lansing

Organic Calendula, *CBI Giving Tree Farm*, Lansing

Organic New Potatoes, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma

Slider Tomatoes, *Hunter Park Garden House*, Lansing

Jalapeños, *Hillcrest Farms*, Eaton Rapids

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery*, Onondaga

Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery*, Onondaga

Eggs, *Grazing fields Cooperative*, Charlotte

Coffee, *Rust Belt Roastery*, Lansing

Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha*, Lansing

Sweet Treats, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Organic Navy Beans, *Ferris Organic Farms*, Eaton Rapids

Recipes and Tips!

Green Beans with Tomatoes

Veggie Box green beans
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 Veggie Box onion finely chopped
1/2 of a Veggie Box jalapeño
2 cloves garlic, minced
Veggie Box tomatoes, crushed
Veggie Box Calendula petals
Salt and pepper to taste

Wash and trim the ends of the green beans. Set aside. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for about 4-5 minutes or until the onion is translucent. Make sure to give it a few stirs. Add the red pepper flakes and the minced garlic and sauté for about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, and crush them as they cook. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to obtain a vigorous simmer. Simmer for about 10 minutes or until the sauce begins to thicken. In the meantime, bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Cook the beans for about 5 minutes. Beans should still be crisp. Drain and add to simmering tomatoes. Simmer, uncovered, until beans become tender but still firm (not mushy). If the sauce appears dry, add some water. Add the calendula during the last few minutes of cooking. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Spanish Rice

Veggie Box tomatoes
1 Veggie Box onion, peeled and quartered
1/3 cup vegetable oil
2 cups long-grain or basmati white rice
4 cloves garlic, minced
Veggie Box jalapeno, finely chopped (to tolerance)
2 cups vegetable stock
1 tablespoon tomato paste
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup Veggie Box cilantro, minced
Lime wedges for serving

Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. In a food processor or blender, puree the tomatoes and onions until smooth. Measure 2 cups of puree, pouring off and discarding any excess. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven or a 3-quart saucepan until shimmering. Add the rice and sauté, stirring frequently, until light golden in color, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeno and stir until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Stir in tomato mixture, broth, tomato paste, and 1 1/2 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil. Cover and bake until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed, about 30 minutes. Stir halfway through baking time. Fluff rice with a fork. Fold in cilantro and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with lime wedges.

Calendula Tea

Fresh Calendula blossoms
1 cup boiling water

Fill a cup or jar with fresh calendula blossoms. Pour boiling water over the blossoms, making sure to cover them completely. Cover and let steep for 10-15 minutes. Strain out the blossoms using a mesh sieve, cheese cloth, or coffee filter. Drink immediately or store in the fridge for up to two days.

Calendula & Thyme Shortbread Cookies

14 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg yolk
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp lemon zest
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup arrowroot powder or cornstarch
3-4 Tbsp Veggie Box fresh calendula flower petals, minced
1 Tbsp minced fresh thyme
Pinch salt

Cream together the butter and sugar, then add the egg yolk, lemon juice and lemon zest and stir to combine. Then add the flour, arrowroot, calendula, thyme, and salt. Gently stir everything together until the dough barely holds together. Take the dough out of the bowl and form it into a log shape. Wrap it tightly with parchment paper, twisting the ends to help hold it all together. Put in the fridge or freezer for about 30 minutes, or until firm. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 300. Slice the log into 1/4 inch rounds. Put them on a parchment lined baking sheet, about an inch or so apart. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Check them closely after 25 minutes, as they will start to brown pretty quickly. Take them out when only the edges just barely start to turn golden. The centers will still be fairly soft. Let them cool on the baking sheet for several minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack. Note: You can experiment with other herbs and flowers, such as violets, lavender, oregano, and sage!

