

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 12, August 20

Welcome to week 12 of the Summer Veggie Box! What are the differences between big agribusinesses and small farms? The truth is, they both have their pros and cons. Large farms can sometimes be more efficient than small farms, since they can afford all the fancy machinery and they use mono-cropping (growing the same crop each year) which can yield greater profits. For this reason, large agribusinesses are able to sell their products at relatively low prices, which attracts many consumers. Despite efficiency, large farms tend to rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides to restore their soil, since mono-cropping depletes the soil of its nutrients. These chemicals are often not handled responsibly and cause pollution- in fact, agriculture is the largest source of pollution of lakes and rivers. Additionally, large farms contribute to air pollution due to the miles of travel from farms to grocery stores across the country. Small local farms are better for the environment, as they require less travel, packaging, refrigeration, and usually less chemicals. Small farms also benefit their communities by maintaining open land and reminding neighbors where their food comes from. Thank you for helping the environment and our community as you support our local farms.

Producer Spotlight

Beehavior Ranch

Ana Heck was introduced to beekeeping in Nicaragua while working on an organic farm and with a women's beekeeping cooperative from 2011 through 2013. She began keeping her own bees in 2015 at her aunt and uncle's home in Minnetrista, Minnesota in the same spot where her grandfather had kept bees. Her aunt and uncle referred to their home as the "Behavior Ranch" since some of Heck's cousins got sent to their rural home as teenagers when they were misbehaving. The "Behavior Ranch" turned into the "Beehavior Ranch" as the honey bee colonies thrived in the location. Heck moved her bees to Ovid, Michigan in the spring of 2019.

Crop Profile

Muskmelon

Muskmelons are large, hard-skinned fruits with sweet, juicy flesh and large seeds. A ripe muskmelon should smell fruity or musky and give slightly at the stem to gentle pressure. Did you know that all cantaloupe are muskmelons, though not all muskmelons are cantaloupe? Furthermore, most folks here in America have probably only ever eaten muskmelon that are sold as cantaloupe. A real cantaloupe is a European Cantaloupe, which is not grown commercially in the United States. Its rind has a harder texture and lacks the ornate, distinct netting endemic to muskmelon. The variety this week is the Sugar Cube Muskmelon, which grows as personal-sized melons, perfect for the Veggie Box! They are great eaten fresh, or using the halved melon as an edible bowl for ice cream.



What's in the Box?

- Muskmelon**, Titus Farms, Leslie
- Cherry Tomatoes**, Peckham Farms, Lansing
- Strawberries**, Peckham Farms, Lansing
- Leeks**, Mac's Market, Laingsburg
- Organic Radishes**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Organic Carrots**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Organic Tokyo Bekana**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
- Salad Mix**, Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing
- Garlic**, Wildflower Eco Farm, Bath
- Organic Cayenne Peppers**, Owosso Organics, Owosso

Add-Ons

- Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
- Sweet Treats**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
- Meat Variety**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
- Honey**, Beehavior Ranch, Ovid

Recipes and Tips!

Strawberry Muskmelon Salad

Veggie Box Strawberries
Veggie Box muskmelon, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon grated peeled fresh ginger
1/2 teaspoon grated lime zest plus 1 tablespoon juice
2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh mint leaves

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except mint. Cover and let stand 30 minutes. Stir in mint just before serving.

Veggie Box Stir Fry

For the Sauce:

2 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
2 cloves of Veggie Box garlic grated
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

For the Stir-Fry:

1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 pound of tofu, cut 1 inch chunks
Veggie Box Tokyo Bekana, washed and cut into 1 inch strips
2 large Veggie Box carrots peeled in strips or 1/2 cup matchstick carrots
Veggie Box leeks, chopped (white and light green part)
Veggie Box Cayenne peppers, chopped
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon parsley (optional)

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 tofu and cook for 5-7 minutes. Add in Tokyo bekana, carrots, leeks, onion, peppers, and sesame seeds. Stir continuously for 3 minutes and then add in sauce. Cook until sauce has coated the tofu and vegetables and heated through. Serve with a sprinkle of parsley, if desired.

Leek Frittata

1/4 cup milk
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
8 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (about 1/4 cup)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 large Veggie Box leek, trimmed, and thinly sliced
1/2 cup chopped and cooked Veggie Box Tokyo bekana
1-2 minced Veggie Box garlic cloves

Preheat oven to 350. Combine milk, flour, salt, pepper, eggs, basil, kale, and cheese in a medium bowl, stirring with a whisk. Heat oil in a medium ovenproof skillet over medium. Add leek and garlic to pan; cook for about 4 minutes. Add egg mixture; stir gently. Cover skillet, and reduce heat to low. Cook until eggs are partially set, about 6 minutes. Uncover skillet, and bake at 350 until center is set, 10 to 12 minutes. Loosen frittata from skillet, and slide onto a cutting board. Cut into 8 wedges.

Sesame Ginger Tokyo Bekana

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, crushed and chopped
1 teaspoon fresh ginger
Veggie Box Tokyo Bekana
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 Tablespoon soy sauce
1 Tablespoon water
Veggie Box Cayenne pepper, chopped
Sesame seeds for garnish

Combine sesame oil, soy sauce, water and pepper in a small bowl. Set aside. Heat the oil in a large skillet and cook the garlic and ginger until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Mix in the Tokyo bekana and cook 3-4 minutes. Add soy sauce mixture and cook for a few minutes more or until heated through and leaves are gently wilted. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.