

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 13, August 25

Welcome to week 13 of the Summer Veggie Box! Did you know that the average conventional food product travels about 1,500 miles from farm to consumer? By choosing to eat locally grown foods, you can drastically cut down on these “food miles.” Not only do fewer transport miles mean fewer emissions and larger benefits for local economies, but also results in less food waste. Around 40 percent of food grown in the United States is wasted during the process of transporting it from the farm to our table, according to research from the Natural Resources Defense Council. Some food waste we can control, some we cannot. We have a nation that demands perfect, soil- and blemish-free food. Many of these not-so-perfect specimens often wind up in the landfill rather than recycled or creatively used. From the “yucky” bits we trim off during our own cooking to the large portions that are discarded at restaurants, we are throwing away 50% more food than we did 40 years ago. Learning how to store fruits and vegetables properly allows them to stay fresh longer. Avoid food waste by freezing produce to preserve it longer or even canning surplus fruits and vegetables - especially abundant seasonal produce. Another great way is to meal prep, this idea helps you buy only the food you need for the week, reduce waste and organize what you purchase. What are other ways you can reduce food waste and prioritize sustainability? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Titus Farms

Titus Farms was founded by Rose and Paul Titus in 1982. Growing up, both farmers worked at their respective family farms until they got married and purchased a small 20 acre land. Paul and Rose both dedicated their lives into farming so that they can pass on ownership of the farm to their daughter Rebecca Titus. Titus farms is dedicated to producing the highest quality vegetables using sustainable organic farming methods, as well as producing unique varieties of vegetables that capitalize on great taste.

Crop Profile

Shishito Peppers

Shishito peppers are Japanese variety of the species *Capsicum annuum*, which also includes bell peppers, jalapeños, and cayenne peppers. The small, thin-walled peppers are usually harvested and when green, but if left on the plant they will turn red with a sweeter flavor. Most shishito peppers are mild, but about one out of every ten will display a bit of heat due to sunlight or other environmental factors. Originally from Japan, the shishito pepper is named after the appearance of its tip, which resembles the head of a lion (shishi in Japanese). Shishito peppers are often eaten as an appetizer where they are roasted, grilled, or fried until charred and blistered, then sprinkled with coarse salt. Charring helps to bring out the rich flavors of these mild peppers. Whenever they're cooked, a small hole should also be poked in them beforehand to prevent the peppers from bursting. They can also be used raw and added to salads, salsas, gazpachos, stews, and seafood dishes.

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Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Muskmelon, *Titus Farms, Leslie*

Organic Cherry Tomatoes, *Owosso Organics, Owosso*

Organic Beets, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

Salad Mix, *Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing*

Corn, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning*

Organic Cayenne Peppers, *Owosso Organics, Owosso*

Shishito Peppers, *Titus Farms, Leslie*

Organic Cooking Greens, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Sweet Treats, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Chicken, *Trillium Wood Farm, Williamston*

Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Coffee, *Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing*

Cold Brew, *Rust Belt Roastery, Lansing*

Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Organic Pinto Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*

Recipes and Tips!

Strawberry Muskmelon Salad

Strawberries, or other type of berries
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 Cooking Greens, washed and cut into 1 inch strips
2 large carrots peeled in strips or 1/2 cup matchstick carrots
1 onion, chopped
Veggie Box Shishito peppers, chopped
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 cooking greens, carrots, 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.

Sauteed Shishito Peppers

2 tablespoons olive oil
Veggie Box shishito peppers
Lemon juice
Sea salt

Heat oil in a large saute pan until hot. Carefully place peppers into heated pan (watch out for oil splatter) and cook a few minutes on each side until you hear the peppers make a slight popping sound and the peppers begin to blister. Shake the pan to ensure both sides get slightly blistered and peppers are tender, but not completely soft. Remove from heat. Squeeze fresh lemon juice and sea salt over the peppers before serving.

Beet Salad with Balsamic Vinaigrette

Balsamic Vinaigrette:
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon dijon mustard
1 garlic clove finely minced
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
Salad:
Veggie Box Beets (6 cups)
Veggie Box salad mix
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes
1/2 cup pecans
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup feta cheese

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Wrap each beet in a sheet of foil. Bake in oven for about an hour. Remove from oven, allow to cool, then peel skin and slice into halves then wedges. Toast 1/2 cup of pecans in a dry skillet, tossing until golden. Add salad mix to large mixing bowl, along with beets, tomatoes, cheese, pecans, and cranberries.

Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing: In a mason jar, combine all dressing ingredients and shake well to combine and add to the salad to taste. If not serving salad right away, shake the dressing again just before drizzling over the salad.