

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 12, December 1

The origins of the CSA, like so many agricultural practices in the United States, can be traced back to a black farmer. Dr. Booker T. Whatley was born in Alabama in 1915 and growing up saw how small farms, particularly those owned by black folks, were disappearing due to expansion of mass agriculture. He grew up and earned a degree in agricultural studies at Alabama A&M University, then served in the Korean War where he built and operated a hydroponic farm to supply the troops with fresh produce. After his service he went on to earn a PhD in Horticulture from Rutgers University and later a law degree from Alabama A&M. Dr. Whatley is best known for his work to help farmers “grow smaller and smarter” and to focus on “internal resources” such as “the sun, air, rain, plants, animals, people, and all the other physical resources that are within the immediate environment of every farm” through a number of different methods. He first advocated for farmers to grow high-value crops like berries or heirloom strains instead of commodity crops that would compete with commercial agriculture. He created his regenerative farming systems, a holistic approach to farming in a way that doesn’t damage the land and incorporates practices such as crop rotation, topsoil regeneration, and groundwater conservation. In addition to regenerative farming he pioneered the practice of Pick-Your-Own (also called U-Pick), something that you have probably done with your family at some point! He also created a “clientele membership clubs”, the original version of the CSA, in order to allow farmers to “plan production, anticipate demand & have a guaranteed market.” He recognized that a program like CSAs could benefit both the farmer and the consumer by connecting the two directly. Though often left out of history books, we have BIPOC farmers, horticulturalists, and scientists to thank for so many sustainable and community-based agriculture practices in use today.

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 *Purple Top Turnips*

Turnips are part of a large family more commonly referred to as Brassicas. This plant family is known for its rapid cool season growth and high yields. The brassica family includes crops such as radish, kale, rutabaga, rapeseed, and broccoli. Like others in this vast family, turnips are a cool season crop and grow best during the cooler periods of the year. Like closely related forage radishes, purple top turnips are not affected by light frosts. In fact, turnip palatability increases after cold weather arrives because the young leaves are somewhat bitter at first but turn sweeter as they mature with cooler temperatures. Some varieties of turnips produce more leaves than roots, whereas Purple Top Turnips are known more for their roots. ‘Purple Top’ comes from the fact that the shoulders of the round roots stick out above the soil line and turn purple, while the below ground root stays white. These storage crops have a somewhat spicy flavor and can be enjoyed raw or cooked. Purple top turnips have a distinct flavor that works well in braises and stews. Turnip root is high in Vitamin C, and the leaves are high in good source of vitamin A, folate, vitamin C, vitamin K and calcium.

ALLEN

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Purple Top Turnips, *Cinzori Farms*, Ceresco

Salad Mix, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Organic Arugula, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge

Organic Tokyo Bekana, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt

Microgreens, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing

Organic Cabbage, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge

Butternut Squash, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch*, Chesaning

Organic Watermelon Radishes, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte

Honey, *Beehavior Ranch*, Ovid

Recipes and Tips!

"Pumpkin Pie" Smoothie

1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) milk (any type)
1/4 cup (2 ounces) pure maple syrup
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 cup (8 ounces) pureed roasted Veggie Box
butternut squash (or your favorite winter squash or
pumpkin)
4 cups ice

Slice the butternut squash in half lengthways and rub with a neutral oil. Roast, cut side down, on a baking pan at 400 F until you can easily insert a knife or fork. Scoop out flesh and puree until smooth. Place all of the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serves 2.



Sesame Ginger Tokyo Bekana

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped
1 teaspoon fresh ginger
Veggie Box Tokyo Bekana
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 Tablespoon soy sauce
1 Tablespoon water
Cayenne pepper, to taste
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.

Bean Bake with Greens and Turnips

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 clove garlic
Veggie Box tokyo bekana or other hearty greens
2 cups cooked Corona beans (cannellini also work)
2 cups crushed tomato
1 teaspoon fresh minced rosemary
1 tablespoon of parsley
1/4 teaspoons salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
Veggie Box purple top turnips, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Heat a medium, oven safe skillet or cast iron pan over medium-low heat. Add the olive oil to the pan, followed by the garlic. Cook the garlic until fragrant and golden; 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the greens, turn the heat to low, and cook until the greens just begins to wilt, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir the beans, crushed tomatoes, rosemary, salt, and pepper into the greens mixture. Create a layer of the thinly sliced turnips on top. Place in the oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the tomato sauce is bubbling and the turnips are tender. Tips & Tricks: The turnips still have a bit of texture to them. If you're looking for completely tender turnips, I recommend slicing then steaming for a minute or two- just to take the crispness from the turnip.



Kitchen Tip!

What do you even do with microgreens?! Sure, you could just throw them in a salad, but microgreens are a great way to add freshness, crunch, and nutrients to a wide range of meals. For example: Put them on sandwiches, in salads, on tacos, pizza, soups, anywhere you'd put lettuce or sprouts. Cook them in stir fry. Use them as an eye-catching garnish or ingredient on virtually any dish. Throw them in a smoothie for an extra punch of vitamins. Blend them with other herbs for a tasty pesto spread! The possibilities are endless, so think outside of the salad box when it comes to microgreens.