

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 4, March 23

ALLEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Veggie Box

Welcome to the fourth week of the Spring Veggie Box! Have you ever thought about the impact that climate change can have on local farming? In 2018, we saw one of the driest summers that Mid-Michigan, and even the country, had seen in some time. Our farmers had to adapt, working even longer and harder than normal to deal with droughts. Then in 2019, after the brutal polar vortex in winter, farmers faced a cooler and wetter spring than normal, including excessive flooding, which set back their crop plans. In 2020, though the weather wasn't too wild, we experienced a global pandemic, which does have some connections to broader climate change. Ultimately, agriculture is directly affected by all indications and consequences of climate change, such as droughts and floods, salinization of groundwater, more frequent and extreme weather events, increasing species extinction and the spread of old and new diseases. So how can farmers combat climate change? As a rule of thumb, diversification will reduce vulnerability to extreme conditions and increase resilience. Monoculture regions, or the cultivation of a single crop in an area, are obviously more exposed and vulnerable to many of the described consequences. Systems which grow a wide variety of crops, known as permaculture, can still produce sufficient yields even if one crop suffers or fails. Here in Michigan, many larger farms grow subsidy crops, or crops that have a government incentive attached to them; corn and soybeans are some of the largest. However, the small-scale farms who provide to the Veggie Box grow a large variety of produce, and do so in hoophouses and greenhouses, which can help control the climate. Which model seems more sustainable given the threat of climate change? 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

Swiss Chard

Native to the Mediterranean region, Swiss chard is one of the most nutritious vegetables around, ranking second only to spinach in many studies of nutrient richness. Containing at least 13 different antioxidants, eating Swiss chard can help your body regulate blood sugar and reduce inflammation. Aside from multiple health benefits, Swiss chard is simply delicious! When boiled, braised, juiced, steamed, or sautéed, chard leaves have a wonderfully rich flavor while the stems may be slightly sweeter. The plant is a derivative of the beet, so you may find it tastes similar to beet greens or spinach.

What's in the Box?

Organic Swiss Chard, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing

Organic Scallions, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Easter Egg Radishes, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Organic Beets, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Sun Shoots, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Organic Turnips, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Salad Mix, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Meat Variety, Heffron Farms, Belding

Honey, Beebehavior Ranch, Ovid

Recipes and Tips!

Creamed Chard and Spring Onion Pasta

1/2 pound bunch of Veggie Box Swiss chard, thick stems sliced thin and leaves sliced into ribbons (all of this week's chard)

Veggie Box scallions (1 bunch), ends trimmed, white and green parts sliced

3 cloves of garlic (minced)

3 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 3/4 cups milk

Salt and pepper

1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese with more to toss with

1/2 -3/4 lb pasta of choice

Sun shoots for garnish

Saute Swiss chard for about 6 minutes until the greens wilt and the stems become somewhat tender. Heat milk or cream in a small saucepan over moderate heat, stirring, until warm. Keep warm. Meanwhile, cook onion and garlic, if using, in butter in your wiped-out large pot over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, about six minutes. Whisk in flour and cook roux, whisking, about three minutes. Add warm milk or cream in a slow stream, whisking constantly to prevent lumps, and simmer, whisking, until thickened, three to four minutes. Stir 1/4 cup finely grated parmesan into the sauce while cooking, and keep extra on hand for serving. Stir in chard, then salt and pepper to taste and cook, stirring, until heated through. Toss with 1/2-3/4 lb cooked pasta of your choice and serve. Garnish with a little more parmesan cheese and sun shoots.



Roasted Beet and Turnip Salad

Salad

Veggie Box salad mix

1 cup of 1/2 inch cubed Veggie Box beets

1 cup of 1/2 inch cubed Veggie Box turnips

1 T olive oil

salt to taste

Dressing

2 T whole grain mustard

1 T honey

5 T olive oil

Preheat oven to 425°. Peel beets and turnips. Slice clean beets and turnips into cubes and arrange in a single layer on parchment paper, placed over a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt. Place in oven for 15 minutes, turn, then roast for 12-15 more minutes or until turnips are slightly golden on edges and beets are tender. Allow to cool slightly, then place on a bed of salad. In a separate bowl whisk mustard, honey, olive oil together to create the dressing. Drizzle over the salad and serve!

Parmesan Crusted Crushed Turnips

1 pound of Veggie Box turnips, peeled (all of this week's turnips)

Salt

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 clove garlic, minced

Freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (or as needed)

Chopped fresh Veggie Box scallion greens (for garnish)

Place peeled turnips in a pot of salted water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cook 20 or so minutes or until turnips can be pierced easily with a paring knife. Drain. Let cool slightly. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place the turnips on a clean kitchen towel or double layer of paper towels. Gently press each one down until it's approximately 1/2-inch high. Let them drain for 15 minutes then carefully flip them over onto a dry section of the towel or onto fresh paper towels so the other side drains and dries a bit. Combine garlic, olive oil and salt and black pepper, to taste in a small bowl. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or nonstick aluminum foil. Place the flattened turnips on the lined baking sheet. Brush each turnip with a little of the olive oil and garlic combination. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over each turnip, gently pressing it down. Carefully and quickly flip each turnip over. Repeat with the remaining olive oil and garlic combination and cheese. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Flip each turnip and bake an additional 15 minutes. Garnish with chopped fresh scallions and serve.