

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5, March 30

Welcome to the fifth week of the Spring Veggie Box! The way we eat has a profound effect on how eco-friendly, ethical, and sustainable our lives can be. Choosing and using seasonal produce is key. But this isn't just about the perfect seasonal recipes – it's also about preserving the harvest to enjoy later in the year, and not letting food go to waste. Freezing, drying, pickling, and canning are effective ways to preserve the produce and herbs you get from Veggie Box. Freezing is an easy way to preserve a variety of vegetables and fruits. While it's a pretty simple method, it does involve more than just tossing vegetables into a zip-close bag and stashing them in the freezer. Before you freeze them, you should blanch (cook briefly in boiling water) many vegetables, such as kale, green beans, asparagus, rutabaga etc. Fruits like strawberries and blueberries can be frozen fresh. It's best to freeze things like strawberries and kale on a single layer on a sheet, and then put into a freezer bag so that it does not form one giant lump. Herbs and other types of produce can be dehydrated at a low temperature in the oven, or in a dehydrator. Feel free to pickle radishes, cucumbers, cabbage, beans, etc. You can do refrigerator pickles, which are soaked in a brine of water, vinegar, and salt, while fermented pickles are cured for longer. You can also *can*, which is a method of heat-treated produce in sealed glass jars, preventing microbacteria from spoiling the food. What methods have you tried? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

MSU Student Organic Farm

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

Crop Profile

Leeks

As a cousin to the onion, leeks offer a similar but more subtle taste when used in your kitchen. Leeks have been cultivated since the time of Ancient Egyptians and have been regarded as a superior vegetable throughout history. Associated with anything from improving your singing voice and purging your blood, to curing nosebleeds, the leek is commonly viewed as a healthy and virtuous plant. You can use leeks in place of an onion in most roasts and stews to add a dose of vitamins A, B, and K, magnesium, and dietary fiber.



What's in the Box?

Organic Collards, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing
Organic Leeks, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
Mini Bok Choi, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Organic Garlic, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt
Rosemary, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Organic Spinach, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Potatoes, Titus Farms, Leslie

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
Meat Variety, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
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
Organic Pinto Beans, Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids
Pork, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte
Chicken, Heffron Farms, Belding
Beef, Heffron Farms, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Udon Stir Fry

2-3 Veggie Box Baby Bok Choi, each leaf (and its stalk) removed and sliced down the middle.
1/2 pound of Veggie Box turnips (half of last week's turnips)
One Veggie Box leek sliced (white, and light green portion)
3 cloves of Veggie Box garlic
1 inch of ginger, grated
1 bunch of Veggie Box collards
1 lb fresh Udon Noodles
1 Tbsp Sesame Oil
3 Tbsp Soy Sauce
1 1/2 tsp of lemon juice
2 tsp Fresh chili paste or sriracha (or to taste)
splash of vegetable oil
4 eggs
Veggie Box scallions, sliced thin (from last week)
Veggie Box sun shoots (from last week)

Put oil in wok or large frying pan, and turn on medium heat. Begin by peeling turnips and slicing into quarter inch thin rings - if your turnips are huge, consider slicing them into half rings or smaller. Place turnips in oil and salt lightly. Fry the turnips for a few minutes on each side until it begins to become tender. Add the garlic and leeks saute for a few moments longer (until fragrant) and then put in the baby bok choy and collards. Turn the heat up to medium high, saute for a few minutes more, and then add in your fresh udon noodles and ginger. Pour the sesame oil, soy sauce, lemon juice and chili paste/sriracha. Cook until everything is incorporated and cooked well. Fry an egg and serve on top, garnished with scallions and sun shoots!



Potato Leek Soup

Veggie Box leeks (all of them from this week - about a pound)
2 Tbs butter
4 cups vegetable broth
3 cloves of Veggie Box garlic
Veggie Box potatoes, peeled and cubed (a pound and a half)
1 teaspoon sea salt, less or more to taste
1 sprig of fresh thyme
1 sprig of Veggie Box rosemary
1 bay leaf
Sprinkle of Tabasco sauce or other red chili sauce
White or black pepper to taste

Cut off the roots of the leeks. Cut the leeks lengthwise, fan them open under running water to dislodge any dirt or mud hiding inside. Cut off the tough dark green tops and discard (either compost or freeze for making stock). Slice the white and light green parts of the leeks crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices. Place the slices in a bowl of cold water and agitate them with your hands to dislodge any remaining dirt. Melt butter on medium heat in a 3 to 4 quart thick-bottomed pot. Add the the chopped leeks and minced garlic, stir to coat with the butter. Cover the pot and lower the heat to low, cook for 10 minutes until the leeks are softened. Check to make sure the leeks are not browning. Add the broth, diced potatoes, bay leaf, rosemary, thyme, and a teaspoon of salt to the pot. Increase the heat to high to bring to a simmer, then lower the heat to maintain a low simmer, and cook for 20 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked through. Remove and discard the bay leaf, thyme sprig, and rosemary sprig. Use an immersion blender or standing blender to blend about half of the soup if you want a chunky soup, or all of it if you would like your soup to be more smooth. Add a few dashes of Tabasco to taste. Add freshly ground pepper and more salt to taste.

