

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 7, April 15

ALLEN  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Veggie Box

Welcome to the seventh week of the Spring Veggie Box! Food traditions that have been passed through your family are more than just recipes – they're windows into the culture and history of those who came before you. For most people, there are specific foods and recipes that help to connect us to a culture or history that has been handed down for generations. The intersection of food with culture and history is understood through the study of foodways. Foodways are all of the traditional activities, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with the food in your daily life. Foodways include customs of food production, preservation, preparation, presentation, gathering, marketing (both buying and selling), uses of food products other than for eating and food folklore. Foodways connect people to a geographic region, a climate, a period of time, an ethnic or religious group, and a family. New foodways are being created or revived all the time - for example, there is a renewed interest in canning and preserving as a result of foodways being rediscovered. Considering how foodways are alive in your life can help create an appreciation for the role and importance that food plays in our lives. What role do you think Veggie Box play in foodways? Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *Hillcrest Farms*

Hillcrest Farms is a four season farm in Eaton Rapids that offers an extensive selection of fresh produce. Owner, Mark Kastner, started farming in 2008 gaining inspiration from his grandmother, a fantastic chef and farmer with whom he spent summers with as a child. Now he is known around town for his deliciously unique spinach and salad mix, as well as for the impeccable quality of the rest of his produce. His sustainable farming practices assure customers that products are safely produced with regards to environment and human health.

## Crop Profile

### *Winter Savory*

It is a mystery why Winter Savory is relatively unknown compared to its sister plant, Summer Savory. It is durable and has the same strong spicy flavor. Winter Savory is a one-foot, dark green, semi-woody, herbaceous perennial that is hardy in zones 5 to 11. It is easy to grow, and makes an attractive border plant for any herb garden. It makes for a great mixing herb. It blends well with different oreganos, thymes and basil, and it also cooks well meat, poultry or fish. Its small leaves are the perfect compliment to herb cheeses or as last-minute additions to sautés. It has a strong flavor when fresh, but does not hold up well in prolonged stewing.

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Arugula**, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma  
**Winter Savory**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing  
**Organic Spring Mix**, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma  
**Bok Choi**, *Hillcrest Farms*, Eaton Rapids  
**Organic Scallions**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt  
**Organic Red Radishes**, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma  
**Spicy Microgreen Mix**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt  
**Meat Variety**, *Heffron Farms*, Belding  
**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  
**Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte  
**Chicken**, *Heffron Farms*, Belding  
**Beef**, *Heffron Farms*, Belding

# Recipes and Tips!

## Crispy Tofu Bowls with Sesame Bok Choi

1 cup uncooked rice  
14 ounce block firm or extra firm tofu, pressed for 30 minutes  
2 teaspoons oil  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste  
1 head of Veggie Box bok choy  
1 tablespoon neutral oil  
1/4 cup soy sauce  
2 tablespoons honey  
2 tablespoons rice vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon sesame seeds  
Chili Oil or Crushed Red Pepper  
Veggie Box scallions  
Veggie box microgreens

**Begin cooking the rice. Then, preheat the oven to 400. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Dry the tofu and it into 3/4 - 1-inch cubes. Place the tofu in a large bowl. Toss the bowl with the oil to coat. Sprinkle in the cornstarch, salt, pepper, and seasoning of choice. Quickly toss the tofu to coat again. Arrange the tofu on the baking sheet. Slide the tofu into the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Take the tofu out and flip over all the pieces. Return the tofu to the oven and bake for another 15-20 minutes, or until golden and crispy on all sides. For the bok choy, heat a pan (that can be covered with a lid) over medium-high heat. separate each stem of the bok choy. Add the oil followed by the bok choy. Cook just until a nice sear develops on the stems and the greens are starting to brown. Turn heat to low, add about 3 tablespoons of water, cover, and let steam for a couple of minutes. The greens will begin to wilt and the stems will soften slightly. Once there, remove the lid and add the soy sauce, honey, rice vinegar, and sesame seeds. Spoon to coat the bok choy and cook for a minute or two more. When ready, assemble the bowls with the rice, crispy tofu, bok choy, and a small drizzle of the sauce left in the pan. Serve with soy sauce, extra sesame seeds, and chili paste if desired. Garnish with scallions and microgreens!**



## Mediterranean White Bean Soup

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 large onion chopped  
2 garlic cloves minced (from two weeks ago, or the green garlic from last week)  
1 large carrot chopped  
1 celery rib chopped  
6 cups vegetable broth  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon oregano  
a spring or two of Veggie Box winter savory  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
3 15-ounces canned white beans drained and rinsed  
2 cups baby spinach (from last week, or arugula from this week!)  
Grated parmesan cheese for serving  
Veggie Box scallions for serving

**In a large pot or saucepan, heat olive over medium high heat. Add onions and cook until onions are translucent, about 3-5 minutes. Add the garlic, carrots, celery, thyme, oregano, winter savory, salt and pepper, and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes. Add vegetable broth and beans, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes to combine all of the flavors together. Stir in the spinach and continue to simmer until the spinach wilts, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese and diced scallions, if desired, and serve immediately.**

## Arugula Pesto

2 garlic cloves, cut in half  
2 heaped tablespoons shelled walnuts  
4 ounces Veggie Box arugula (all from this week)  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/3 to 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil, as needed  
1/3 to 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan, to taste  
dash of lemon juice

**Place arugula, cheese, walnuts, olive oil, garlic, lemon, and salt in a food processor fitted with the dough/chopping blade attachment. Blend on high speed until thoroughly combined. Drizzle in more olive oil until texture reaches favorable consistency. Store in airtight container, refrigerate up to five days.**