

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 9, April 29



Welcome to the ninth week of the Spring Veggie Box! What are the differences between big agribusinesses and small farms? The truth is, they both have their pros and cons. Large farms can sometimes be more efficient than small farms, since they can afford all the fancy machinery and they use mono-cropping (growing the same crop each year) which can yield greater profits. For this reason, large agribusinesses are able to sell their products at relatively low prices, which attracts many consumers. Despite efficiency, large farms tend to rely on chemical fertilizers and pesticides to restore their soil, since mono-cropping depletes the soil of its nutrients. These chemicals are often not handled responsibly and cause pollution- in fact, agriculture is the largest source of pollution of lakes and rivers. Additionally, large farms contribute to air pollution due to the miles of travel from farms to grocery stores across the country. Small local farms are better for the environment, as they require less travel, packaging, refrigeration, and usually less chemicals. Small farms also benefit their communities by maintaining open land and reminding neighbors where their food comes from. Local food is more nutritionally-dense, too. What are other differences? Thank you for helping the environment and our community as you support local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *Monroe Family Organics*

Monroe Family Organics is very much the fruition of a dream set in motion almost 20 years ago, & finally realized in 2011. After having a stall at the local Alma farmers market the summer he was 16, Fred Monroe was hooked on organic vegetable production. So off he went to Michigan State to earn his bachelor's degree in horticulture & agribusiness. During this time he worked at MSUSOF and interned at Angelic Organics, a very large CSA farm south of Chicago (where he met his wife Michele). In 2010, Fred & Michele set to work acquiring land, buying a house, & rounding up equipment for the first farm season. Over the next few years, they continued to add more crops, more animals, more CSA drop-offs, more delivery options, and more local mid-Michigan store and restaurant partners. 2019 marks Monroe Family Organics' ninth season.

## Crop Profile

### *Green Garlic*

Green garlic (also called young garlic or spring garlic) is simply garlic that hasn't fully matured. Green garlic often looks so similar to green onions and spring onions that you'll have to do a double-take. The best way to be sure you're getting green garlic is to notice that leaves are flat rather than tubular. Green garlic should be stored in the refrigerator. Wrap the green garlic in a damp paper towel and place it in a plastic bag; or for a non-plastic alternative, stick the green garlic in a tall glass with some water in the bottom. To prep, treat it like a small leek: trim off the very bottom and use all of the tender white and light green parts. Dark green leaves can be saved for stock, or used to add flavor to a soup (pop them in whole, like a bay leaf).

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Spring Mix**, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma  
**Spinach**, *Magnolia Farms*, Lansing  
**Foraged Ramps**, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma  
**Organic Beet Greens**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt  
**Organic Green Garlic**, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm*, Lansing  
**Bok Choi**, *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  
**Organic Black Turtle Beans**, *Ferris Organic Farm*, Eaton Rapids  
**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!

## Ramp Pasta

1 bunch of Veggie Box ramps cleaned and trimmed  
1 bunch of Veggie Box green garlic  
1 bag of Veggie Box spinach (about 4 oz)  
3 tablespoons olive oil plus more for serving  
Kosher salt to taste  
Freshly ground pepper to taste  
1 pound linguine or other long pasta  
½ cup dry white wine  
2 cups vegetable broth  
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes to taste  
½ cup heavy or whipping cream  
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan plus more to serve

**Slice the ramps, in half crosswise, separating the whites and greens into separate parts. Very roughly chop the bulbs, leaving some large pieces. Very roughly the leaves, leaving most of the greens in large pieces. Slice the green garlic at the top of the light green part, and discard the dark green stem and leaves (or use for stock). Slice the green garlic. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the white ramp bulbs, season with salt and pepper and sauté for about 5 minutes, then add the green garlic. After a few minutes, add the ramp leaves and spinach and saute everything for another few minutes until everything is tender. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. When it comes to a boil, add a generous amount of salt. Add the pasta cook according to package directions, just until al dente. Just before draining remove 1 cup of the cooking water, and after draining return the pasta to the pot. When the ramps are tender, turn the heat to high, add the white wine, and stir to reduce the wine by half and deglaze the pan. Scrape the ramps and remaining wine into the pot with the drained pasta, and place the pot over high heat. Add the broth, red pepper flakes, and about half a cup of the cooking water. Stir and toss until the liquid reduces a bit into a sauce and absorbs into the pasta, and the pasta become tender, adding more of the cooking water as needed/desired. Add the heavy cream, toss for another minute, then add the cheese, and stir until it melts into the sauce, and everything is hot and well combined. Serve hot, with extra grated parmesan, if desired.**

## Sautéed Beet Greens

1 large bunch beet greens  
Veggie Box green garlic  
1 shallot, chopped  
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons sherry vinegar

**Wash and trim the beet greens. If the stems are very thick, it's worth trimming them back a bit. In a large sauté pan over medium heat, sauté the garlic, shallot, and red pepper flakes in the olive oil until slightly browned. Add the black pepper, sugar, and salt. Place the beet greens in the pan, pour 1/4 cup water over them, and immediately cover. Once the greens have cooked down, 1 to 2 minutes, remove the lid and stir. Cook for another 1 to 2 minutes, allowing the water to evaporate. Just before serving, pour the vinegar over the greens. Serve and enjoy!**



## What to do with Greens?

**Pasta:** Sauté chopped greens in olive oil or butter, and add to any pasta dish.

**Soup:** Toss washed and chopped greens into any soup, homemade or store bought.

**Eggs:** Add greens into scrambled eggs or make a frittata.

**Freeze:** To freeze greens for later use, remove stems, clean and chop greens. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Blanch greens by cooking for one minute, then use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer to a bowl of ice water. Freeze cooled greens in one and two cup containers to use later in the week. Thaw and use in soups, stews, and sautés.

Really, try them in just about anything - Quesadillas, Burritos, Curries, Stir-Fry, Pizza and Smoothies.