

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10, May 4



Welcome to the tenth week of the Spring Veggie Box! As interest in native plants and local food blossoms in Michigan, foraging has become trendy. But what does foraging mean to your average person? Does foraging connect people with nature or encourage them to pillage it? Oftentimes, people view foraged food found out in nature as fair game and theirs for the taking - it is just growing wild, and it would either rot or animals would eat it, right? Natural ecosystems are much more complex than one might think. These habitats that have existed and adapted for thousands of years have many moving parts that all rely on one another to survive and maintain this sense of equilibrium. This is not to say that all foraging is wrong, but rather that we must be mindful in how we forage, and how we give back. Before taking any native plant from its ecosystem, you should not only know how to positively identify the plant, but also understand: Its role in the ecosystem; Its life cycle; How scarce it is, overall and locally; How long it will take to recover the part that you took from it; and what other living things use and need the plant. We can give back by planting native plants, seeds, and spores to make up for what we take. Plus, there are many invasive plants that do a lot of harm, but are also edible! For example, garlic mustard. Garlic mustard is a threat to the biodiversity of many native ecosystems. This plant spreads its seeds in the wind and gains a foothold in fields and forests by emerging earlier in spring than many native plants. By the time native species are ready to grow, garlic mustard has blocked their sunlight and outcompeted them for moisture and vital nutrients. Check out Fenner Nature Center to pull out this weed by the roots, but also make some tasty pesto. How else might we forage sustainably? How else can we decolonize the way we interact with the Earth? Thank you for supporting local food!

What's in the Box?

Foraged Ramps, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma
Organic Rosemary, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm*, Lansing
Cup Plant, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing
Arugula, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath
Golden Oyster Mushrooms, *Agape Organic Farm*, Dansville
Organic Power Green Mix, *Owosso Organics*, Owosso

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt
Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms*, Belding
Honey, *Beebehavior Ranch*, Ovid
Maple Syrup, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch*, Chesaning

Producer Spotlight

Owosso Organics

Owosso Organics is a family owned, certified organic vegetable and cut flower farm located four miles west of Owosso. Starting from a small postage stamp garden in 1978, Richard Bowie, Pooh Stevenson and their daughters Cody and Taylor now farm over seven acres of their eighty acre farm, along with eight greenhouses of over 15,000 square feet. They have been certified organic since 1994, and are currently certified with Global Organic Alliance. Their mission is to provide specialty artisan produce and flowers grown with great care and impeccable service available locally to enrich the lives and palates of all people who seek their business assisting in bridging urban and rural communities together.

Crop Profile

Golden Oysters

Pleurotus citrinopileatus, the golden oyster mushroom, is an edible gilled fungus. These mushrooms are a beautiful gold with a thinner, more delicate cap than the regular oyster mushroom. The golden oyster mushroom, like other species of oyster mushroom, is a wood-decay fungus. In the wild, *P. citrinopileatus* most commonly decays hardwoods such as elm. Despite the fact that it can be fragile when raw, they are sturdy and keep their shape when cooking. Many describe the flavor as having a nut-like quality. Though native to eastern Russia, northern China, and Japan, it now grows in the wild in the US. Scientific studies on the health benefits of oyster mushrooms are emerging, and it has been suggested that Golden Oyster mushroom health benefits may include lower cholesterol, heart health, higher immune function, and improved metabolic health.

Recipes and Tips!

Wild Ramp and Golden Oyster Mushroom Risotto

1 1/2 cups dry arborio rice
7-8 cups warm vegetable broth
Veggie Box ramps, rinsed and cleaned
Half an onion, diced.
2 T butter
1/2 cup dry white wine
1/3 c grated Parmesan cheese
Veggie Box golden oyster mushrooms, sliced
2 cups coarsely chopped Veggie Box power greens
juice of one lemon and all of its zest
salt and pepper to taste
Parsley to taste

Cut leaves off of ramps, starting at the stem. You should have two piles, one with leaves, one with stems. Coarsely chop the stems, then do the same with the leaves, keeping them separate. In a saucepan, melt the butter, then add the onion, pinch of salt, and stems of the ramps. Cook for about 2 minutes, until both are translucent. Then stir in rice and mushrooms, cooking for another 3-4 minutes. Add white wine, bring to a simmer and stir until absorbed. Add one cup of warm stock and stir until absorbed. Continue adding stock by the cup and stir, stir, stir, each time letting it absorb into the rice. (If you don't let it all absorb the rice will get gummy) Cook until rice is al dente, then stir in power greens mix and ramp leaves. These will only take about a minute to cook down. Finish the risotto by mixing in the lemon juice, lemon zest, and Parmesan. Add salt, pepper, and chopped parsley by 1/4 teaspoon to taste until flavors pop!



Spring Frittata with Charred Ramps

8 eggs (preferably at room temperature)
a quarter cup of milk
1/2 of Veggie Box ramps
Veggie Box golden oyster mushrooms, sliced
1 medium Yukon gold potato, thinly sliced
Cheese!
Handful of fresh chives, chopped
Half of the Veggie Box arugula
Salt
Black pepper

Preheat your oven to 400. Whisk together eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Set aside on your counter. In a skillet over medium heat, add some olive oil, and when hot, sauté the ramps whole (make sure they're dry when they go in) until softened. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Remove from heat and set aside. While ramps are cooking, warm a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add enough olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan. Add in potatoes and a sprinkle of salt. Cook for a few minutes, covered and stirring occasionally, and then turn the heat down to medium and add mushrooms with a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring gently until mushrooms have softened, and then add arugula and cook a minute more. Add the chopped chives, salt, and pepper to the waiting eggs, and give a good whisk. Pour over mushrooms, arugula, and potatoes. Tilt the pan so eggs cover vegetables and settle into any nooks. When the eggs start to set, arrange the ramps on top and crumble the cheese over everything. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the eggs have set. Enjoy!

