

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5, June 29

The South is distinctive in its customs, dialect, and cuisine. It's made up of many different people who came to the region, each contributing to what is now called Southern cuisine. For example, indigenous peoples had a strong influence in the early beginnings of Southern food: crops like corn, and techniques like frying and barbecuing. However, Spanish explorers in the 1500s brought pigs with them, introducing pork to the region. West Africans carried some of their traditional foods with them, such as watermelon, eggplant, collard greens, and okra, when they were brought by force as slaves beginning in the 1600s. Creoles, known for their unique use of spices, are descended from French and Haitian immigrants who later mingled with Spanish settlers in the New Orleans area. "Cajuns," also recognized for their unique style of cooking, were originally Acadians, French settlers in Nova Scotia who were driven out by the British in the 1700s and made their way to New Orleans. However, African slaves have had the largest impact on this cuisine by far: the intersections of African food preparations, class status, laws that prevented equal access and innovative survival prevailed and mixed with other cultures to create what we consider Southern Cuisine. Another interesting fact - much of the distinct nature and flavors of Southern foods come from preservation methods. Using salt and frying foods were used to make food last longer without refrigeration, as was drying meats to make jerky. Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight *Peckham Farms*

Peckham, Inc., a nonprofit vocational rehabilitation organization, provides job training opportunities for persons with significant disabilities and other barriers to employment. Peckham Farms' operation consists of about 15 acres of field production that uses sustainable practices to grow a diverse selection of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Peckham employees are given the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences in all aspects of growing and producing food. This includes planting, maintenance, and harvesting of crops, set up of greenhouse systems, tool and machine operation and maintenance, and customer service.

## Crop Profile *Kohlrabi*

Kohlrabi is a hardy, annual vegetable that is primarily consumed in some European countries, although it has also become a staple vegetable in northern India. It is actually a cultivar of cabbage and was specifically bred as a hardier version of cruciferous vegetables, which often can't grow in as harsh of conditions. The small or large bulbous vegetable is encased in two harder shells of leaves, which typically do not soften when cooked. However, kohlrabi can be eaten raw or cooked and has been a staple of German cuisine for hundreds of years. You can use the kohlrabi root as well as the leaves in your diet. They both have significant amounts of nutrients and minerals like copper, potassium, manganese, iron, and calcium, as well as vitamins, such as vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, vitamin A, and vitamin K. Kohlrabi tastes somewhat like a broccoli stem, although somewhat more palatable, and is often softer, even taking on the consistency of an apple at times. While the roots/stems are often used in salads in a similar way as carrots or broccoli.



## What's in the Box?

**Organic Mint**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*  
**Organic Green Onions**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*  
**Collard Greens**, *Titus Farms, Leslie*  
**Organic Kohlrabi**, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing*  
**Green Tomatoes**, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*  
**Organic Spring Mix**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*  
**Organic Lavender**, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing*  
**Organic Summer Squash**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

## Add-Ons

**Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Coopeartive, Charlotte*  
**Bread**, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*  
**Maple Syrup**, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning*  
**Chevre**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*  
**Cheese**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*  
**Kombucha**, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*  
**Coffee**, *The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing*  
**Organic Pinto Beans**, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*  
**Meat**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*  
**Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*  
**Beef**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*  
**Chicken**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Fried Green Tomatoes

Veggie Box green tomatoes

1 egg mixed with a splash of buttermilk (or regular milk)

A shallow bowl of flour

A shallow bowl of cornmeal

paprika, salt, and pepper to taste

**Slice the tomatoes into 1/4 inch slices, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and paprika on both sides. Next, dredge the tomato slices in flour, then the egg/milk mixture, and finally the cornmeal. Heat oil 1/4 - 1/2 an inch of oil in a cast iron skillet until hot, and then fry each side until golden brown. Commonly, fried green tomatoes are served with a mayonnaise/ketchup dipping sauce (flavored with cayenne or paprika and garlic powder). Enjoy!**



## Lavender Mint Simple Syrup

1 cup loosely pack Veggie Box mint leaves

1 tablespoon Veggie Box lavender buds

2 cups sugar

2 cups water

**Bring sugar, water, mint leaves, and dried lavender buds to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Boil 2 minutes. (Do not stir.) Remove from heat. Press through a wire-mesh strainer into a bowl, using back of a spoon to squeeze out liquid; discard solids. Cool completely (about 30 minutes). Transfer to a jar; cover and refrigerate up to 3 months.**

## Southern-Styled Collard Greens

Veggie Box collard greens, sliced 3in strips

1 small yellow onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced (Veggie Box garlic scapes from last week)

2 tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Red pepper flakes (to taste)

Dash of hot sauce

Apple cider vinegar (to taste)

1 cup vegetable broth

Veggie box bacon, sliced 1/2in pieces (optional)

**Heat a large skillet on medium heat. Cook the bacon until it begins to brown around edges. Add the onions and cook until softened and starting to brown. Add the garlic, salt, pepper, sugar, and red pepper flakes until fragrant. Add the collard greens, broth, vinegar, and hot sauce and bring to a simmer. Reduce to medium-low heat and stir occasionally until the collard greens wilt and lose their brightness.**

## Kohlrabi Coleslaw

Veggie box kohlrabi, peeled and grated

1/4 head cabbage, shredded (from last week!)

2 medium carrots, peeled and grated

1/2 red onion, grated

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

**Combine the kohlrabi, cabbage, carrots, onion, in a large bowl. In a smaller bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, cider vinegar, sugar, and salt. Pour the dressing over the slaw, and mix until fully coated. Chill before serving.**

