

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10 August 5

Welcome to week 10 of the Summer Veggie Box! By being a member of our multi-farm CSA, you are a major part of our local food system! A local food system is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of an area. Increasingly, communities are organizing “food hubs” around co-ops or other community wealth building enterprises to anchor local food systems. Food hubs help provide wider access to markets for small to mid-sized producers, and increased access to fresh healthy food for consumers, including underserved areas and food deserts. In 2011, ANC committed to create a multi-functional food resource center and food hub: the Allen Market Place. As envisioned, this would build upon our previous decade of food-related initiatives and allow creative bundling of additional programs to strengthen the food system of the Eastside and, indeed, the mid-Michigan region. It is through our Food Hub that the Veggie Box is possible, and in return, our local food system is strengthened. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Felzke Farms

Felzke Farms is a family farm located in Dewitt, Michigan that was founded in 1960. They are the largest producer of strawberries in mid-Michigan, offering both U-Pick opportunities as well as prepicked options at their indoor farm market that has been in operation since 1978. Felzke Farms also grows a variety of vegetables such as asparagus, summer squash, cucumbers, peppers, and more!

Crop Profile

Sweet Corn

Corn was domesticated from a grass called teocintle by the peoples of Meso-America approximately 10,000 years ago. The yellow corn commonly found in the United States pales in comparison to the shapes, sizes, and colors of the traditional maize varieties cultivated by the indigenous peoples of Mexico. The ears of corn may range from a couple of inches to a foot long, in colors that include white, red, yellow, blue, and black. Some varieties even have an assortment of colors on one ear. Sweet corn is a variety of maize with a high sugar content, and was grown by a number of indigenous tribes. Corn is also one of the three sisters in Iroquois agriculture and tradition, along with beans and winter squash. In a technique known as companion planting the three crops are planted close together. The maize provides a structure for the beans to climb, eliminating the need for poles. The beans provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants use, and the squash spreads along the ground, blocking the sunlight, helping prevent the establishment of weeds.



What's in the Box?

Organic Bell Peppers, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

Organic Red Norland Potatoes, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Garlic, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Organic Green Beans, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Banana Peppers, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

Tomatoes, *Hunter Park Greenhouse, Lansing*

Sweet Corn, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

Organic Pickling Cucumbers, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Organic Carrots, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Meat, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Elote (Mexican Street Corn)

Veggie Box Sweet Corn
Mexican Crema
Cotija cheese
Chili powder or smoked paprika
Limes
Cilantro

The husks will keep the corn safe from the direct heat on the grill so make sure you leave them on. To prepare the corn, just strip the husks back, remove the silk and then fold the husks back up. The real secret to grilling corn on the cob starts before it ever hits the grill. You need to fill your sink with cold water and 1-2 tablespoons of kosher salt. Drop the silk-free corn in the water and let it soak for a good 10-15 minutes. Soaking the corn will allow the corn to stay moist, plus the husks won't burn off to ash and the corn will be more flavorful thanks to the salt brine. You'll grill the corn first in the husks, then strip them back and turn the grill up, rotating the corn as soon as grill marks appear. Grilled corn on the cob in the husks won't dry out as easily and will make for juicier corn. As soon as you pull the corn off the grill, spread the Mexican crema all over each corn on the cob. If you can't find Mexican crema, you can use mayonnaise as a substitute. Sprinkle the cotija all over the corn that has been lathered in crema (can use feta in place of the cotija). The classic seasoning for elote is chili powder, but can also use smoked paprika. So maybe do a few cobs with each and see which one you prefer. You can sprinkle them on the corn with the cotija cheese and then squeeze fresh lime juice all over each corn on the cob. Top off each cob with some chopped fresh cilantro.



Veggie Box Pickles

Veggie Box pickling cucumbers
1 small sweet yellow onion
1 cup apple cider vinegar
1 cup water
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons pickling spice
3 clove of smashed Veggie Box garlic
5-7 sprigs of fresh dill
Veggie Box banana peppers,

Rinse the cucumbers well under cold water, pat them dry, and then set them on a towel to dry completely. Slice the cucumbers and onion, then pack them in the jars: With a sharp knife or a mandoline slicer, slice the cucumbers and onion into slices 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick. Firmly pack the cucumbers, onions, dill sprigs, banana peppers, and garlic into the jars, fitting in as many as you can without smashing the vegetables. Leave 1/2-inch or so of headspace at the top of the jars. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the vinegar, water, salt, and pickling spice up to a simmer. Stir occasionally and continue simmering until the sugar and salt are dissolved. If you have a canning funnel, use it here to make it easier to fill the jars. Carefully pour or ladle the hot brine into each jar, filling the jars until the cucumbers and onions are covered. It's ok if a few small pieces poke out the top. Screw on the lids, then let the jars cool to room temperature (about an hour). The cucumbers will start off bright green, but will become darker and more "pickle-colored" as they cool. Place them in the refrigerator. Wait at least 24 hours before eating the pickles in order to let the flavors develop. Use them within one month.

