

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 11 August 12

Welcome to week 11 of the Summer Veggie Box! Do you know why local food is better for your family? Local produce often retain more nutrients since it is allowed time to ripen naturally, while food that travels long distances is often picked before it's ripe. When food is picked fresh and in season, the process is more natural. Another thing to account for when purchasing local food is that it doesn't have far to travel before being sold. This means less food miles leading to a lower carbon footprint. Choosing fruits and vegetables grown in-season and locally will also be nutrient dense! When researchers at Montclair State University compared the vitamin C content of broccoli grown in season with broccoli imported out of season, they found the latter had only half the vitamin C. This is because fruits and vegetables begin to lose their nutrients 24 hours after being picked so the fresher, the better! In addition, locally grown produce is safer for consumption. When they are imported and out of season, fruits and vegetables are often chemically ripened. By being a part of the Veggie Box program, you're choosing more nutritious, healthy, and safer food for your family. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Cinzori Farms

Cinzori Farms is part of an Agriculture Cooperative and was one of the first farms in Michigan to become organically certified in 1985. The farm has grown a great deal since it was first established, and now occupies more than 60 acres – all of which are used to propagate fresh herbs and produce. Cinzori Farms is owned and operated by father and son, Don and Anthony Cinzori, and sells at a number of Michigan farmers markets, as well as Michigan grocery stores.

Crop Profile

Shishito Peppers

Shishito peppers are a Japanese variety of the species *Capsicum annuum*, which also includes bell peppers, jalapeños, and cayenne peppers. The small, thin-walled peppers are usually harvested and used when green, but if left on the plant they will eventually turn red with an increasingly sweeter flavor. Most shishito peppers are mild, but about one out of every ten will display a bit of heat due to exposure to sunlight or other environmental factors, making for an enjoyable game of pepper roulette. Originally from Japan, the shishito pepper is named after the appearance of its tip, which resembles the head of a lion (shishi in Japanese). Shishito peppers have long been a popular snack in Japan, and in recent years they have gained a large following in the US. They're often eaten as an appetizer where they are roasted, grilled, or fried until charred and blistered, then sprinkled with coarse salt. Charring helps to bring out the rich flavors of these mild peppers, and because of their thin walls, shishitos will char and blister faster than many other varieties of pepper. Whenever they're cooked, a small hole should also be poked in them beforehand to prevent the peppers from bursting. They can also be used raw and added to salads, salsas, gazpachos, stews, and seafood dishes. Shishito peppers are rich in vitamins and minerals and are considered an excellent source of vitamin C.



What's in the Box?

- Organic Kale**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
- Organic Green Onions**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
- Eggplant**, *Lake Divide Farm or Clear Street Farms, Stockbridge or Lansing*
- Shishito Peppers**, *Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing*
- Organic Summer Squash**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
- Organic Cherry Tomatoes**, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
- Organic Fennel**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
- Blueberries**, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

Add-Ons

- Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
- Bread**, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*
- Chevre**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
- Cheese**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
- Coffee**, *The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
- Meat**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
- Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
- Beef**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
- Chicken**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Sauteed Shishito Peppers

2 tablespoons olive oil
Veggie Box shishito peppers
Lemon juice
Sea salt

Heat oil in a large saute pan until hot. Carefully place peppers into heated pan (watch out for oil splatter) and cook a few minutes on each side until you hear the peppers make a slight popping sound and the peppers begin to blister. Shake the pan to ensure both sides get slightly blistered and peppers are tender, but not completely soft. Remove from heat. Squeeze fresh lemon juice and sea salt over the peppers before serving.

Pasta With Fennel Pesto

1/2 Pound of Pasta

For the roasted vegetables:

Veggie Box fennel bulb (leaves set aside)
1 bell pepper (from last week's box!)
bulbs of Veggie Box green onions
Veggie Box eggplant
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp olive oil
Salt to taste
1/2 tsp ground black pepper

For the pesto:

Fennel leaves
2 cloves of garlic
1/4 cup nutritional yeast (optional, but great both nutritionally and for that cheesy flavor)
1/4 cup lightly toasted pumpkin seeds (or walnuts)
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp ground black pepper
Salt to taste

Dice the vegetables for roasting into 1-inch chunks and place in a bowl. Add the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt, and black pepper, and toss. Add to baking sheet and roast the vegetables in a 400-degree oven, stirring a couple of times during cooking, until they are fork-tender and coated with a balsamic glaze - about 35 minutes. Place all pesto ingredients in a food processor (except the olive oil) and process until coarsely powdered. With the motor running, pour in the olive oil until you have an even paste. Place the pasta, roasted veggies and the pesto in a bowl. Add: chopped, toasted walnuts, parmesan, or halved cherry tomatoes. Mix well and serve immediately.

Tomato Eggplant Squash Bake

Veggie Box Summer Squash
Veggie Box eggplant
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
3 large cloves garlic minced (from last week!)
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese divided
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil divided
2 tbsps of parsley, divided.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a deep 9x9-inch baking dish or similar 3 1/2-quart casserole dish with nonstick spray. Quarter the squash then cut into 1/2-inch slices and place in a large mixing bowl. Next, slice the eggplant into 1/4-inch rounds, then stack the rounds and cut into roughly 3/4-inch pieces. Add to the bowl with the zucchini. Chop the tomatoes and add them to the bowl. Drizzle the cut vegetables with the olive oil, then add the garlic, salt, pepper, 1/3 cup of the Parmesan cheese, and half of the basil and parsley. Toss gently to combine. Transfer the vegetables to the prepared baking dish. Bake for 25 minutes, cover the pan with aluminum foil, then continue baking for 10 to 20 additional minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan cheese, basil, and parsley. Serve warm.

Soy Glazed Shishito Peppers

Shishito peppers
1 Tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsps brown sugar
1 1/2 tbsps soy sauce
2 tsp rice wine vinegar
dash of ground ginger
dash of red pepper flakes

In a small saucepan, combine brown sugar, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, ginger, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes or until reduced by half. Remove from heat. Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add peppers to hot pan, turning regularly, until skin begins to blister on all sides. (*Note: these peppers cook quickly.) Remove from heat, add sauce, and toss to coat.