

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 9 July 29

Bees are a critical aspect to the agriculture industry due to being a prominent pollinator, increasing farmers' yields, and creating a blossoming honey industry. Unlike wasps, who get their protein from other insects, bees receive their protein from pollen. Honey bees are the primary pollinator of crops whereas wild bees are responsible for pollinating wildflowers. Since bees carry such an important role in our agriculture system, their existence has major implications on the food system and food security as a whole. Over one third of the food we eat relies on pollination by bees, either directly or indirectly. Many fruits, nuts, and vegetables require pollination by bees and other insects in order to yield fruit, and without pollinators these crops could nearly disappear from grocery stores around the world. Honey bees are economically viable too - they contribute around \$24 billion annually to U.S. agriculture. Consumers can generate change for bees' health and population by adjusting a few critical aspects in our day to day lives. The first way to do this is to avoid using pesticides or buying from individuals who use them. Shopping for organic products ensures this! Growing your own garden or letting your grass grow can help increase bee population by providing a habitat in which to live. Native plant species can then begin to grow back in these landscapes since there is no industrial interference. Learning to live cooperatively with bees is beneficial not just for bee populations but also our food systems and in turn, for all of us too. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Green Eagle Farm

Steve and Chela of Green Eagle Farm are 30 year veteran farmers and stewards of the land. They take great joy in growing a variety of crops and experimenting with new and unique products, all while being earth friendly in their practices and their care for the environment. You know they care about what they do when you see the mature lemon and fig trees carefully protected from the Michigan winters in one of their hoop houses. Not long after Steve and Chela met, the two knew that they were destined to be together as life partners and land stewards.

Crop Profile

Eggplant

Eggplant is grown for its edible spongy absorbent fruit widely used in cooking. Most people consider it a vegetable despite its botanical definition as a berry fruit, a member of the genus *Solanum* related to the tomato and the potato. Like the tomato its skin and seeds can be eaten, but like the potato it is not to be eaten raw. Raw eggplant can have a bitter taste, with an astringent quality, but it becomes tender when cooked and develops a rich, complex flavor. The fruit is capable of absorbing large amounts of cooking fats and sauces, which may enrich dishes.



What's in the Box?

Organic Mixed Cooking Greens, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Organic Cherry Tomatoes, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Organic Eggplant, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

Onions, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*

Jalapeño, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Cucumbers, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath and Owosso Organics, Owosso*

Basil, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Parsley, *Green Eagle Farm, Onondaga*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Eggs, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Coffee, *The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing*

Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Chicken, *Heffron Farms Market, Williamston*

Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Pork, *Grazing Feilds Cooperative, Charlotte*

Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*

Organic Black Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Onondaga*

Recipes and Tips!

Summer Veggie Pasta

1/2 pound uncooked whole-grain linguine
Veggie Box eggplant, cubed
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes, halved
2/3 cup finely chopped Veggie Box onion
Veggie Box jalapeno, diced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons champagne or white wine
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp of red pepper flakes
1/2 Veggie Box basil, sliced thin.
1/4 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain. While the pasta cooks, heat the oil and dice the onion, garlic, jalapeno, and eggplant. Sauté until browned, and then add the wine. After that cooks down, add the tomatoes, salt, pepper, red pepper flakes, and basil. Add in the pasta and mix together. Add more seasonings to taste. Serve with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese on top

Spicy Roasted Eggplant, Tomato, & Ricotta Frittata

2 tbsp olive oil
Veggie Box eggplant diced
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes halved.
salt and black pepper, to taste
6 large eggs
1 cup milk
1 tsp red pepper flakes
1 lb ricotta

Heat oven to 450F. In a large bowl, toss olive oil and eggplant cubes. Season salt and black pepper. Spread on a parchment-lined baking sheet and roast for 20-30 minutes, or until eggplant is tender. Lower oven to 375F. In a second bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, and red pepper flakes. Grease a 9-inch pie or tart pan. Stir together the egg mixture with the vegetable mixture. Pour into the prepared pan. Top with the ricotta and tomato halves. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until set.

Eggplant Curry

1/2 cup basmati rice
1 Veggie Box eggplant
1 can of chickpeas
1 tbsp olive oil
1/2 of a Veggie Box onion, diced
2 cloves of garlic
1 tsp garam masala powder or curry powder
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground coriander
Veggie Box cherry tomatoes cut in half
1 1/2 cups coconut milk
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper

Cook rice. Cut the eggplant into small cubes. Fry in a large pan with the olive oil on high heat for 3-4 minutes. Stir well so it doesn't burn. In the meantime, dice the onion and throw it in too. Put it back to a medium heat and cook for 5-6 minutes. Crush or dice the garlic. Stir in the garlic, garam masala, turmeric and ground coriander. Cook for another 3-4 minutes, stirring well. Pour in the chopped tomatoes, chickpeas, and coconut milk. Add salt. Simmer for about 15 minutes. The coconut milk thickens so stop cooking when it is at the right consistency for you. Stir in a little sugar if you'd like it a bit sweeter. Serve with salt and pepper to taste.

