

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10 August 3

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

### *Wildflower Eco Farm*

Drawn to farming due to the combination of physical and mental work, Phil Throop achieved his MS in Horticulture from Michigan State University and has continued farming ever since. He established his own 3.5 acre farm in Bath Township, MI, and named it for the wonderful array of wildflowers throughout the property. Wildflower Eco Farm specializes in using sustainable growing practices with over sixty types of fruits and vegetables. They offer their own CSA and are familiar faces at many of the area's Farmer's Markets.

## 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 Jalapeños**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

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

**Garlic**, *Wildflower Eco Farm, Bath*

**Pickling Cucumbers**, *Titus Farms, Leslie*

**Green Beans**, *Yoder Family Cooperative, Leslie*

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

**Organic Beets**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

**Cherry Tomatoes**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

**Sweet Corn**, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

**Meat**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Buttermilk Cornbread with Jalapenos

- 1 1/2 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 scant teaspoon salt
- 3 to 4 tablespoons sugar (or to taste)
- 1 or 2 Veggie Box jalapeno peppers (to taste)
- 2 Veggie Box ears of corn, kernels cut off the cob
- 1 cup Mexican blend cheeses (finely shredded)
- 1 2/3 cups buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 6 tablespoons butter (melted)

**Preheat the oven to 400 F. Grease and flour a 9-inch square baking pan. In a mixing bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, soda, salt, and sugar. Add the chopped jalapeño peppers, corn kernels, and shredded cheese. Stir the mixture to combine thoroughly. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter. Add the wet mixture to the dry ingredients; stir until well moistened. Spread the batter in the prepared baking pan. Bake the cornbread for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until it is firm and browned around the edges.**



## 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
- 1 Veggie Box jalapeño,
- 1 Veggie Box banana pepper

**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, jalapeño, 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.**

