

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 9 July 27

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

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 farmer's markets, as well as Michigan grocery stores.

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 Peppers, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Carrots, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Organic Pearl Onions, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Tomato, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Organic Eggplant, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Cabbage, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco

Organic Kohlrabi, Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge

Organic Basil, Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Meat, *Grazing Feilds Cooperative*, Charlotte

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

Recipes and Tips!

Eggplant Curry

½ cup basmati rice
Veggie Box eggplant
1 tbsp olive oil
1/2 of Veggie Box onions, diced
2 clove garlic
1 tsp garam masala powder or curry powder
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground coriander
Veggie Box tomato roughly chopped
1 ½ cups low fat coconut milk (use regular if you prefer)
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper

- **Cook rice according to packet instructions.**
- **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 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.**



Kohlrabi Fritters

Veggie Box kohlrabi
1 clove of garlic (from last week's box)
1 large egg
1/4 a cup of Veggie Box onions, diced
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 cup canola oil

Peel the kohlrabi. Grate the kohlrabi on the large holes of a grater into a bowl. Wring out the shredded veggies in a thin towel. Add the minced garlic and finely diced onions. Add the egg and mix with a fork. Sprinkle the mixture with the flour and salt and stir to combine thoroughly. Heat a generous layer of oil (about 1/4-inch deep) in a large frying pan or pot over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers when you swirl the pan. Fry the fritters on medium-high heat for 4-5 minutes on each side or until nicely browned.

Spicy Roasted Eggplant, Tomato, & Ricotta Frittata

2 tbsp olive oil
Veggie Box eggplant diced
Veggie Box tomato, sliced.
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 slices. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until set.

