

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 4, March 24

Are you looking for things you can do to improve your garden this season or ways to live a more sustainable lifestyle? Composting can meet both of those goals. Homemade compost builds the health and disease resistance of the plants in your garden while diverting organics from the landfill which reduces green house gas emissions. Compost is decomposed organic matter, and requires five basic ingredients:

- Carbon-rich materials ("brown materials" or "browns"), such as leaves, straw, bark, paper, corn stalks, wood chips or sawdust
- Nitrogen-rich materials ("green materials" or "greens"), such as grass clippings, vegetable scraps or coffee grounds
- Water
- Oxygen
- Microorganisms, such as bacteria, molds and fungi

Microorganisms, with the right amount of water and oxygen, break down carbon and nitrogen sources to create a final product that helps plants retain water and nutrients, and improves drainage and soil structure. Plus, turning yard and food waste into fertilizer can greatly reduce your landfill contribution. Adding compost to your garden soil will improve its fertility, consistency, drainage and health. It builds up the beneficial microorganisms in the soil leading to healthier garden overall. Composting also helps stop soil loss and helps save water. Organic material retains at least 18 times its weight in water. There are multiple ways that you can compost outside and indoors. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home> to get more information on the various methods of composting. You can find a method that works best with the space you have at home. Thank you for supporting local food!



What's in the Box?

Organic Beets, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Head Lettuce, *Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms, Okemos*

Sun Shoots, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*

Organic Spinach, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Organic Carrots, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*

Garlic, *Green Eagle Farms, Onondaga*

Organic Red Onions, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*

Meat, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Producer Spotlight

Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms

Blue Mitten Farms is an independently owned and operated, USDA GAP Certified farm located in Okemos Michigan. In June of 2016 Blue Mitten began renovations of an existing 14,000sqft greenhouse and updated it with hydroponic systems, reverse osmosis water filtration, a nutrient auto-dosing unit, new shade cloth, supplemental lighting and automated controllers. Coupling this modern farming technology with their small but knowledgeable team of born-and-raised Michiganders, they have been improving their practices and providing artisan greens, microgreens and herbs year-round, as well as seasonal offerings from outdoor plots.

Crop Profile

Sun Shoots

Sun shoots are very young sunflower plants, harvested for their delicious stems and leaves. They're crunchy and nutty and it turns out they're super-nutritious, too: like miniature concentrated salad greens. Though miniscule in size, concentrated in nutrients. Studies have shown that microgreens are loaded with nutrients - up to 40 time more than the mature leaves of the same plants. Raw sun shoots make a lovely and delicious garnish or addition to soups, salads, grain bowls, sandwiches, wraps, dips, or pretty much anything else you can think of. They may be a little dirty, but it's because they store longer if washed just before use.

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Frittata

12 eggs, whisked just until the egg yolks and whites are blended
3 tablespoons milk
Veggie Box spinach
Veggie Box sun shoots
3/4 cup of Veggie Box red onion, sliced
2 cloves of Veggie Box garlic, minced
3/4 grated feta cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon fresh pepper
crushed red pepper flakes to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Crack the eggs into a medium mixing bowl. Add your milk, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Whisk just until the egg yolks and whites are blended. Whisk in all or half of the cheese (you can reserve the other half for topping the frittata before baking, if desired). Set the mixture aside. In a 12-inch cast iron skillet (or any other large skillet that's oven safe), warm the olive oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add the vegetables, starting with chopped onions and garlic. Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, then add the spinach. Whisk the eggs once more and pour the mixture over the vegetables. Stir with a spatula briefly to combine and distribute the mixture evenly across the pan. If you reserved any cheese, sprinkle it on top of the frittata now. Once the outside edge of the frittata turns lighter in color (about 30 seconds to 1 minute), carefully transfer the frittata to the oven. Bake for 7 to 14 minutes (keep an eye on it), until the eggs are puffed and appear cooked, and the center of the frittata jiggles just a bit when you give it a gentle shimmy. Remove the frittata from the oven and place it on a cooling rack to cool. Garnish with sun shoots, slice with a sharp knife, and serve.

Beet, Carrot, and Onion Medley

Veggie Box beets, sliced
1/2 of Veggie Box carrots, sliced
1 cup sliced Veggie Box red onion
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
coarse salt to taste
ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Combine beets, carrots, and onion in a casserole dish. Pour vinegar over vegetable mixture; season with salt and pepper. Cover dish with aluminum foil. Bake in the preheated oven until vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes.

Carrot Cake Loaf

Carrot Cake:

1 cup granulated white sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups carrots, grated, well packed
1 cup walnuts, or pecans, finely chopped (optional)
2 large eggs
1 cup all purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
Pinch salt

Cream Cheese Frosting:

4 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature
2 Tbsp butter, at room temperature
1 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups icing/confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 350F. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt. Set aside. Line a 4 1/2 x 10-inch or 9 x 5-inch loaf pan with parchment paper and set aside. In a large bowl with an electric beater or the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream together the white sugar and oil. Add the shredded carrots and mix in. Add the eggs and beat in. Add the nuts and stir to combine. Stir in the flour mixture and mix until well combined. Pour batter into prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven for 40-50 minutes, or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool the loaf in the pan for 15 minutes, then lift out to a cooling rack to cool completely. To make frosting: Beat together the cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Add the icing sugar and beat until fluffy and smooth.