

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5, March 31

Welcome to week 5 of the Spring Veggie Box! Who likes bland, tasteless, sad food? Nothing against any of the bland food lovers but let us introduce you to the importance of herbs, spices, and aromatics. Aromatic refers to aroma, and emphasizes that herbs and spices which carry a strong smell of the plant they were harvested from and in turn enhance the flavors of meals. In simple terms, herbs that smell good are good for you! Spices and herbs have been part of enhancing our food for ages, and were one of the earliest trades to cross the globe in trade networks. Take a second to remember some of the smells of your childhood kitchen – maybe it’s the smell of sautéed garlic, onions, tomatoes, and basil? Or another combination of simmering cumin, cilantro, chilis, and garlic? Maybe it’s something sweet, spicy, zesty, or tangy, and you remember not being able to wait to taste what’s cooking. That’s the aromatics talking to you. Week after week, we’ve noticed a mountain of herbs left on the swap table and we honestly want to convince you to not do that. We hope you like veggies - actually we really bank on your love for veggies and the new meals they can bring you with your devotion to Veggie Box. But keep in mind that herbs and spices can be a great way to explore your love of not only vegetables, but food and the multitude of tastes they bring. We all like to experience good food, so this week when you see the winter savory, pick it up with confidence. 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 wide 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 they they were destined to be together as life partners and land stewards.

Crop Profile

Cilantro

Cilantro is an herb from the fresh leaves of the coriander plant. This plant is a member of the parsley family, and the herb is also known as Chinese parsley and Mexican parsley. Fresh cilantro tastes pungent, bright, lemony, and a little peppery. To a certain percentage of the population, it tastes soapy due to the natural aldehyde chemical in the leaves that are also used as odorant substances in many soaps and detergents. You will often find cilantro scattered on top of Indian dishes or used in salsa or as a topping in Mexican cuisine. Cilantro is best added to recipes at the end of cooking, since cooking will diminish its flavor. Cilantro is a great garnish for soups, fish, and meat.

ALLEN

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Salad Mix, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Cilantro, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Organic Green Onions, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Organic Greens Mix, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Potatoes, Green Eagle Farms, Onondaga

Organic Turnips, Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge

Add-Ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Bread, Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt

Chevre, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga

Cheese, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga

Kombucha, Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing

Coffee, The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing

Organic Black Turtle Beans, Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids

Meat, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Pork, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Beef, Heffron Farms Market, Belding

Chicken, Heffron Farms Market, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Southwestern Avocado and Black Bean Salad

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained (or 1/2 cup of Veggie Box black beans, cooked)
1 1/2 cups corn kernels, defrosted if frozen
1/2 cup chopped Veggie Box green onions
1/2 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced, or 1/2 pickled jalapeño pepper, minced but not seeded
3 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1.5 tablespoons lime juice
2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
a few dashes of hot sauce
1 avocado, cut into chunks
1/2 to 1 teaspoon sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
Veggie Box salad mix

In a small bowl, whisk together the cilantro, oil, lime juice, sugar, and hot sauce. Mix all other ingredients, except the avocado, in a large bowl. Pour dressing overtop, and then carefully fold in avocado. Enjoy!

Cilantro Chutney

1 cup chopped Veggie Box coriander leaves (cilantro)
1 teaspoon chopped green chilis or 1 to 2 green chilis or as needed
1 inch ginger, chopped
½ teaspoon roasted cumin powder or ground cumin – optional
1 teaspoon lemon juice or as required
2 to 3 pinches salt
¼ teaspoon chaat masala – optional
1 to 2 tablespoons water

In a blender or chutney grinder, add the chopped coriander leaves, chopped ginger and green chilis. Add lemon juice, roasted cumin powder or ground cumin, black salt and pink salt, table salt or sea salt as required. You can add chaat masala at this step if you have it. Add water and blend or grind all the ingredients until smooth. Taste the chutney and add more salt or lemon juice if needed.

What to do with Greens?

Pasta: Sauté chopped greens in olive oil or butter, and add to any pasta dish.

Soup: Toss washed and chopped greens into any soup, homemade or store bought.

Eggs: Add greens into scrambled eggs or make a frittata.

Freeze: To freeze greens for later use, remove stems, clean and chop greens. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Blanch greens by cooking for one minute, then use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer to a bowl of ice water. Freeze cooled greens in one and two cup containers to use later in the week. Thaw and use in soups, stews, and sautés.

Really, try them in just about anything - Quesadillas, Burritos, Curries, Stir-Fry, Pizza and Smoothies.

Parmesan Crusted Crushed Turnips

1 pound of Veggie Box turnips, peeled (all of this week's turnips)
Salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (or as needed)
Chopped fresh Veggie Box scallions for garnish

Place peeled turnips in a pot of salted water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cook 20 or so minutes or until turnips can be pierced easily with a paring knife. Drain. Let cool slightly. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place the turnips on a clean kitchen towel or double layer of paper towels. Gently press each one down until it's approximately 1/2-inch high. Let them drain for 15 minutes then carefully flip them over onto a dry section of the towel or onto fresh paper towels so the other side drains and dries a bit. Combine garlic, olive oil and salt and black pepper, to taste in a small bowl. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or nonstick aluminum foil. Place the flattened turnips on the lined baking sheet. Brush each turnip with a little of the olive oil and garlic combination. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over each turnip, gently pressing it down. Carefully and quickly flip each turnip over. Repeat with the remaining olive oil and garlic combination and cheese. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Flip each turnip and bake an additional 15 minutes. Garnish with chopped fresh scallions and serve.