

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 11, May 10

Welcome to week 11 of the Spring Veggie Box! Plants provide food, medicine, shelter, dyes, fibers, oils, resins, gums, soaps, waxes, latex, tannins, and even contribute to the air we breathe. Ethnobotany is the study of how people make use of native plants; the study of a region's plants and their practical uses through the traditional knowledge of a local culture and people. Current use of the term implies the study of Indigenous or traditional knowledge of plants. It involves the Indigenous knowledge of plant classification, cultivation, and use as food, medicine and shelter. However, many Indigenous peoples believe that this study can be exploitative in numerous ways. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that Richard Evans Schultes, 'the father of ethnobotany' was a white American. Though he was a conservationist and worked closely with Indigenous peoples, the person who tells a story or disseminates information, matters. The voices of Indigenous people and the interests and perspectives of Indigenous communities should lead discussions. The economic focus of biological prospecting "discoveries," has highlighted important issues concerning Indigenous rights, cultural knowledge, and traditional resources. A more "precautionary" approach to ethnobotanical inquiry would assist Indigenous communities in protecting cultural heritage. The issues raised by publishing indigenous plant knowledge are intensified by the significant uncertainties surrounding subsequent impacts on Indigenous communities whose value systems, priorities, expectations, and time frames may differ from those of the academic community. How do we ensure Indigenous voices are prioritized?

Producer Spotlight

Stone Circle Bakehouse

Stone Circle Bakehouse, of Holt, Michigan, specializes in the European tradition of artisanal bread that is cut, scaled, and shaped by hand. Owner Kevin Cosgrove allows his dough to slowly ferment before baking it on the deck of his wood-fired oven. At Stone Circle Bakehouse, the innovative deliciousness stems from Cosgrove's desire to preserve traditional baking methods, rather than change them. Organic, local ingredients are prioritized when possible to bring customers fresh, environmentally and community friendly baked goods.

Crop Profile

Sorrel

Sorrel is a small edible green plant from the Polygonaceae family, which also includes buckwheat and rhubarb. The French translation of sour ("sorrel") is spot-on: These leaves have an intense lemony tang. In Vietnamese cuisine, sorrel leaves are known as rau thom (fresh herb), and it's called gowkemeat in Scotland. Sorrel can be pretty tart and even acidic, but it can be so exquisite when paired well: It has a fresh bite that epitomizes spring, and while it can be too much to eat on its own as a raw salad, there are so many dishes that brighten tremendously with a smattering of this green. Sorrel is loaded with vitamins A and C, which are great for your immune system. This leafy green also gives a good boost for your heart health. Its high potassium content can play a welcome role in lowering your blood pressure, and it increases blood circulation.

ALLEN

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Radishes, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Sorrel, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Ramps, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Salad, Monroe Family Organics, Alma OR Magnolia Farms, Lansing

Organic Potatoes, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco

Pea Tendrils, Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farm, Okemos

Add-Ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Bread, Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt

Chevre, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga

Cheese, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga

Coffee, The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing

Meat, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Pork, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Beef, Heffron Farms Market, Belding

Chicken, Heffron Farms Market, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Gongura Pappu | Sorrel Leaves Dal

2 cups of tightly packed Veggie Box sorrel leaves, chopped.

¼ Cup Toor Dal (Pigeon pea - can use black eyed peas or pinto beans as a replacement if need be)

¼ tsp Turmeric Powder

1 Onion Medium Size, Thinly Sliced

Veggie Box ramps

Salt As Needed

FOR TEMPERING

1 tbsp Oil

1 tsp Mustard Seeds

1 tsp Cumin Seeds

1 Red Chili

4 Green Chili Slit Vertically

Few Curry leaves

Roughly chop the sorrel leaves and set aside; these leaves are sour and hence we need to use only 2 cups or less. If we add more leaves then we need to increase other spices accordingly. Cook the toor dal until done. Once the dal is cooked, mash the cooked dal and set it aside. Heat oil in a pan. Add mustard seeds and cumin seeds and allow it to sputter. Then add curry leaves, red chili, green chili and saute for a minute. Once we are done with tempering, add the sliced onions and saute the onions till translucent. Add ramps and sorrel leaves and saute for a minute. Add 1/2 cup of water and cook the leaves for about 5-7 mins in medium to low. Then once the leaves are tender and the water is absorbed, add the mashed dal and give a good mix. Add salt and give a final mix. Cook on low for 5 more minutes. Serve and enjoy!

Pea Shoots with Garlic and Ginger

Veggie Box pea shoots

1-2 cloves of garlic minced

Veggie Box ramps, diced

1/2 inch slice of ginger peeled and minced

1-2 teaspoon olive oil

Salt to taste

Thoroughly wash pea shoots in cold water several times and trim them into 2-3 inch pieces. Add 1 teaspoon of olive oil to frying pan and sauté ginger and garlic until fragrant. Add pea shoots and ramps and sauté for 2-3 minutes.

Potato and Sorrel Gratin

2 pounds Veggie Box potatoes (all from this week)

Salt and pepper to taste

Veggie Box sorrel

Veggie Box ramps

Olive oil or butter for the baking dish

4 eggs

1 ½ cups milk (2 percent)

3 ounces Gruyère, grated (3/4 cup)

1 ounce Parmesan, grated (1/4 cup)

Gently boil potatoes for 20 minutes, or until tender all the way through but firm enough to slice. Drain, return the potatoes to the pan, cover and let sit for 15 minutes. Remove from the pot and using a towel to grip the potatoes if they are too hot to handle, slice about 1/2 inch thick, or if you prefer, dice. Transfer to a large bowl.

Meanwhile stem and wash sorrel leaves. Heat a wide skillet over high heat and add the sorrel, in batches if necessary. Stir until sorrel has wilted in the liquid left on the leaves after washing. The color will go from bright green to drab olive and the sorrel will melt down to what looks like a purée. When all of the sorrel has wilted, remove from heat and chop medium-fine. Transfer to bowl with the potatoes, toss together and season with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Oil a 2- to 2 1/2-quart baking dish with olive oil. Mince ramps and add to potato mixture. Beat eggs in a medium bowl. Add salt to taste. Whisk in milk. Add to potatoes and sorrel and stir well to distribute sorrel evenly throughout the mixture. Stir in cheeses and freshly ground pepper, and scrape into the baking dish. Bake 45 minutes, or until set and the top and sides are nicely browned. Remove from the heat and allow to sit for 10 minutes or longer before serving.

