

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8, July 21

Welcome to week 8 of the Summer Veggie Box! We all know that the problems facing the world's food systems are far from simple and straightforward. Each Veggie Box is imbued with a concern for the environment, farmers, the community, and personal health. The origins of our current industrial food system can be found within more than just the pursuit of food security but also in the consolidation and inequitable distribution of economic and political power, land, and resources. Going back centuries we can see a legacy that includes stolen land, lives, and labor. Michigan ranks fifth in the nation for registered migrant and seasonal farm workers. Michigan farmers are increasingly relying on the H-2A visa program, which brings foreign workers into the country temporarily, to meet seasonal labor demands. Beginning with the production side of the food system, approximately 75% of farmworkers in the U.S. are immigrants, both documented and undocumented, or migrant laborers. These farmworkers receive some of the lowest wages in our country and are very prone to work-related injuries due to the physically demanding labor of farming. Furthermore, within the production and processing of the food system, a majority of managers are white, whereas approximately 88% of the laborers are people of color. In order to have a more sustainable food system, we must also ensure that we are creating a more equitable food system. What might this more equitable food system look like? How do we make changes in our food system? Who should help decide these answers? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

MSU Student Organic Farm

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

Crop Profile

Basil

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is one of the most popular and easy to grow garden herbs. There are many varieties and related species that make up the group of annual basil, but all are warm-season, sun-loving herbs. Basil originally came from India, but found its way into popular Italian tomato and Thai recipes. This relative of mint is often used in tomato sauces, pesto sauce, and as a flavoring agent for oils, vinegars and teas. The name Basil is derived from the Greek word basilikos, roughly translating mean "herb worthy of a king," and this title was given to the aromatic plant for its widespread use in medicinal and culinary applications worldwide.

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Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Salad, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*
Organic Basil, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Blueberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Organic Mixed Cooking Greens, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*
Organic Cucumber, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Carrots, *Clear Street Farm, Lansing*
Tomatoes, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*
Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Recipes and Tips!

Blueberry Basil Limeade

1 cup fresh lime juice (about 7-8 medium limes)
1 cup Veggie Box blueberries
1/2 cup loosely packed Veggie Box basil leaves
1 cup granulated sugar
3 cups water

Combine lime juice, blueberries, basil, and sugar in a high-powered blender; blend until smooth. Strain the mixture through a fine mesh sieve into a large pitcher; discard solids. Stir in the water and serve over ice.

Blueberry Dutch Baby

3/4 cup whole milk, room temperature
3 large eggs, room temperature
2 tbsp maple syrup, or light brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp table salt
4 tbsp unsalted butter, sliced
3/4 cup Veggie Box blueberries
confectioners' sugar

In a bowl whisk together the whole milk, eggs, maple syrup, and vanilla extract. Add the flour and salt and whisk in until there is no dry flour. Set aside. Heat the oven to 425F. Place a 12 inch cast iron skillet in the oven as it heats. Add the butter and blueberries to the skillet and put it back in the oven for 1-2 minutes, or until the butter is fully melted. Swirl the skillet to make sure the whole bottom is coated with butter. Pour the batter into the skillet and give it a stir to distribute the berries. Bake the Dutch baby for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and dust with confectioners' sugar. Other toppings can include blueberry (or other) jam, whipped cream, lemon juice, vanilla Greek yogurt, and ice cream.



Creamy Tomato Basil Pasta

8 ounces uncooked pasta
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 tablespoon flour
3-4 cloves garlic minced (from last week's box)
1/4 cup dry white wine or chicken/veg broth
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard optional
1/4 teaspoon Italian seasoning
2 Veggie Box tomatoes chopped
1/2 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
1/2 cup Veggie Box basil (tear it up) or more, to taste
Salt & pepper to taste
red pepper flakes to taste

Boil a salted pot of water for the pasta and cook it al dente according to package directions. When the pasta is about 10 minutes away from being done, add the butter to a skillet over medium-high heat. Once it melts, make a quick roux by sprinkling the flour in and cook for about 1 minute, stirring fairly often. Add in the garlic, followed by the wine (or broth). Let it bubble until it's reduced by half (approx. 30 seconds to 1 minute). Whisk in the cream, red pepper flakes, Dijon mustard, and Italian seasoning until you've got a smooth sauce. Stir in the chopped tomatoes. Cook the sauce for another 5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened up a bit. Take the skillet off the heat and stir in the parmesan cheese and basil. Add the drained pasta to the skillet and toss until coated. Add a tablespoon or more of the pasta water if the sauce seems a little too thick. Serve immediately with more freshly grated parmesan if desired.

