

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 12, December 1

Climate change will affect parts of the world in drastically different ways, with drier climates experiencing more severe droughts and wetter climates experiencing more intense rain and floods. Here in cloudy Michigan, we will see an overall increase in rainfall and higher temperatures. Ultimately, agriculture is directly affected by climate change, such as droughts and floods, salinization of groundwater, more frequent and extreme weather events, increasing species extinction and the spread of old and new diseases. So how can farmers combat climate change? As a rule of thumb, diversification will reduce vulnerability to extreme conditions and increase resilience. Monoculture regions, or the cultivation of a single crop in an area, are obviously more exposed and vulnerable to extreme weather events. In Michigan, many larger farms grow subsidy crops, or crops that have a government incentive attached to them; corn and soybeans are some of the largest. These subsidy crops are meant to ensure that we have a stable food system.

However, the overproduction and consumption of corn and oil seeds is not healthy for us or the environment. In the long-term, it is more sustainable to grow a wide array of crops through techniques such as food forests and permaculture – we must remember that nature is the most adaptable practice we have at our fingertips. The small-scale farms who provide to the Veggie Box grow a large variety of produce in structures like hoophouses and greenhouses, which ensures stability within the food system. We must transition to slower and more local food systems to ensure that we will be able to cope with a changing climate. Supporting local, diverse agriculture is an important first step to make towards this transition. Of course, the food grown in these smaller-scale, more sustainable ways is not grown in the volume we need to support a planet of people, but what could a solution look like? How do we combine what's practical and what's sustainable?

Producer Spotlight

Ferris Organic Farm

The Ferris family farm was established more than 160 years ago and was farmed organically until the early 1950's. The land was farmed conventionally until the 1970's when the farm transitioned to organic to improve the health of the soil. Now the 200-acre farm is certified organic and have an 'on-farm' certified organic dry bean and grain cleaning facility which was the first of its kind to be certified organic in the Midwest.

Crop Profile

Watermelon Radishes

This extremely vibrant and colorful vegetable is available year-round- but has its peak season in the spring and the late fall. The Watermelon radish, also known as Roseheart or Red Meat, is an heirloom Chinese Daikon radish. It is a member of the Brassica (mustard) family along with arugula, broccoli and turnips. Something pretty cool about this vegetable is that it produces its own chemical that acts as a natural pest repellent. Both the roots and the greens in the vegetable act as a wonderful source of Vitamin C, even more so when eaten raw. Many eat or pickle this root to keep its natural vibrant coloring -- no need to peel the skin of this variety. Their slightly sweet but peppery flavor is perfect for salads and garnishes.

ALLEN
NUTRITION CENTER

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Watermelon Radishes, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Salad Mix, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*

Organic Cabbage, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Organic Popcorn, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*

Organic Turnips, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Organic Rutabaga, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*

Meat, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Newsletters are available online at bit.ly/veggieboxnewsletters

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Stew

1/2 of your Veggie Box rutabaga
Veggie Box turnips (all from this week, 1#)
1 cup of onion (from last week!)
3 cloves of garlic (from last week!)
2 bay leaves
1 tsp of minced thyme (from last week)
1 tsp of paprika
salt and pepper to taste
Veggie Box cabbage, sliced thin
1 28oz can of petite diced tomatoes or crushed tomatoes (or fresh tomatoes!)
8 cups of vegetable broth (add more or less depending on how big your rutabaga and cabbage are, and how thick you want your stew!)
1 can of white beans
olive oil
Egg noodles (optional, and add in some extra broth)

Heat oil in stockpot and add in onions and garlic.

Peel your rutabaga and turnips, and add these cubed vegetables along with the cabbage to the pot.

Season with salt and pepper. Sautee for a few minutes until onions and cabbage have softened.

Add in the tomatoes, vegetable broth, thyme, beans, paprika, and bay leaves. Cover and let simmer for about 30 minutes. Add in the egg noodles if you would like, and some extra broth if necessary. Taste and adjust seasonings (more salt, pepper, thyme, or paprika). Ready to serve when egg noodles are done!

Pasty

For the Shortcrust Pastry:

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
10 tbsp unsalted butter , very cold, diced
3/4 cup lard , very cold
2/3 cup ice cold water

For the Cornish Pasties:

1 pound beef skirt steak or sirloin , cut into small cubes (for vegetarian option, leave out the meat and add more vegetables!)
1 lb. firm, waxy potato , peeled and diced in 1/4 inch cubes
1/2 pound of Veggie Box rutabaga , peeled and diced in 1/4 inch cubes
1 1/3 cup of onion , chopped (from last week!)
4 cloves of garlic, minced (from last week!)
salt and pepper to taste
unsalted butter (for cutting in slices to lay inside the pasties)
All-purpose flour (for sprinkling inside the pasties)
1 large egg , lightly beaten

To Make the Shortcrust Pastry: Place the flour and salt in a food processor and pulse a few times until combined. Add the cold butter and lard and pulse a few more times until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the water a little at a time, pulsing between additions, until the mixture begins to come together. Form the dough into a ball, flatten into a 1-inch thick disk, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours before using . **To Make the Cornish Pasties:** Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Roll the pastry dough into a log and cut it into 6 equal pieces. Wrap and keep the other 5 pieces chilled in the fridge while you're working on one at a time. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work surface to a 8 inch circle that's about 1/8 inch thick. Layer the filling, adding in salt and pepper, leaving about 3/4 inch space on the top and bottom edges of the pastry dough. Each ingredient to be divided out between 6 pasties, there may be some excess remaining. Lay a couple of pats of butter on top of the beef and sprinkle a little flour over the filling. Wet the tips of your fingers and lightly moisten the edges of the pastry dough. Bring the sides up and seal the pasty down the middle. Turn the pasty onto its side and crimp the edges. Use a sharp knife to cut a slit in the center of each pasty. Lightly brush each pasty with the beaten egg mixture. Bake for 40-50 minutes until golden in color.

Watermelon Radish, Orange & Goat Cheese Salad

1 Shallot or half of a small red onion
2-3 tbsp white balsamic vinegar kosher salt
2-3 Veggie Box watermelon radishes
2-3 oranges, clementines, grapefruit, or other citrus
Handful of walnuts, toasted and chopped
Goat cheese to taste
Chives, minced,
Olive oil to taste

Mince shallot. Place in small bowl. Cover with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the vinegar depending on how big of a salad you are making. Add a pinch of salt. Set aside. Cut off one end of the radish. Leave the other intact so you have a handle when you run the radish down your mandoline. Peel the radishes if you wish, though it is by no means necessary. Thinly slice on a mandoline. Arrange radish slices on a platter. Season all over with salt. Cut off each end of each clementine. Squeeze each end over the radishes, then discard. Use a sharp knife to remove the skin from the clementine. Cut in between membranes to remove each slice. Squeeze remaining membrane all over the radishes to extract any juice. Scatter clementines over the radishes. Scatter walnuts and goat cheese to taste over the radishes and oranges. Pour shallots and vinegar over top. Drizzle olive oil to taste (one to two tablespoons) over top. Scatter chives over top if using. Let sit a few minutes (or longer — it benefits from a brief rest) before serving.