

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5, March 30

You may have heard of the term greenwashing, which is defined as misleading or lying about a company or product's environmental benefits or sustainability. While often associated with large corporations in the automobile and oil industries, did you know that greenwashing can also be used in the sale and promotion of food? While food companies such as manufacturers and grocery stores may overtly lie about specific products and their benefits, greenwashing is typically more covert. Many terms are unregulated by the FDA, meaning that companies can describe their products using these terms without being based in fact. Terms like natural, sustainable, eco-friendly, and local are defined differently by different groups, making their use potentially misleading when used by companies to advertise and sell food products. Next time you go grocery shopping take a look at the packaging to see what terms companies might be using and how they might be unregulated or different from your own definition. Also pay attention to the labeling and packaging—what makes a pasta sauce a “farmers market” or “all natural” sauce, for example? Have you noticed any brands that have changed to look more ‘green’ by changing their color schemes and associated imagery? Grocery stores themselves can also make themselves appear more sustainable or local by using terms such as ‘market’ or ‘neighborhood’ and rebranding their logos and marketing materials with lots of green and brown colors, and imagery of fresh produce, verdant farmland, and smiling farmers. While the movement of food companies to be more environmentally conscious and local-minded is promising, it's important to remember how this can be used as a marketing tactic and in some cases, to upcharge products that are no more sustainable or local than others offered.

Farmer Profile

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 Student Organic Farm and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for both students and the public alike.

Crop Profile

Shallots

Shallots, although classified as an onion variety, are not actually the same as common onions. Shallots have smaller, slimmer bulbs that grow in clusters rather than individually and have a slightly sweeter flavor when compared to regular onions. They are popular in a number of cuisines around the world including traditional French cuisine and in Southeast Asian dishes. They are a versatile root and can be eaten raw, pickled, dried, or cooked and caramelized just like regular onions. For a delicious treat shallot slices can be deep fried to make an excellent garnish to soups, salads, and stirfrys. Because the flavor is slightly milder, shallots are sometimes called the onion for people who don't like onions. Whole shallots will stay fresh and crisp the longest in a dry, well-ventilated storage area. Once cut, they can be stored in the refrigerator where they will keep for a few days.

ALLEN
NUTRITION CENTER

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Carrots, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Salad Mix, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*
Organic Baby Arugula, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*
Organic Shallots, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Organic Sweet Potatoes, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Granny Smith Apples, *Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*
Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Coffee, *517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Chicken, *Heffron Farms, Belding*
Beef, *Heffron Farms, Belding*
Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

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Recipes and Tips!

Arugula and Apple Salad with Shallot Dressing

Veggie Box Arugula, washed and dried
1-2 Veggie Box Granny Smith Apples, sliced
Optional: 3-4oz thinly sliced Manchego, ½ cup sliced almonds

For the Vinaigrette:

1 Tbsp cider vinegar
3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tsp honey or maple syrup
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/4 to ½ Veggie Box shallot, finely chopped (about 1 Tbsp)

Salt and pepper to taste

Make the vinaigrette by whisking all of the ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside. Place the washed and dry arugula in a serving bowl. Add the whisked vinaigrette little by little until well combined and greens are well dressed (you may have a little left over). Before serving, cut the apple into thin slices and toss into the salad with the Manchego and almonds (if using). Taste and adjust seasoning, then serve immediately.

Sweet Potato, Shallot, and Spinach Hash

2 Tbsp oil
1-2 Veggie Box Sweet Potato, peeled and cut into cubes (about 4 cups)
1 Veggie Box Shallot, thinly sliced
1 15oz can black beans, rinsed and drained
Salt and pepper to taste
½ tsp cumin, ½ tsp chili powder
5 oz baby spinach
1 Tbsp lime juice

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet. Cook sweet potatoes over medium high heat, stirring occasionally until tender, about 15 minutes. Turn flame down if they begin to blacken. Add the shallot, black beans, and seasoning, and saute for three more minutes. Carefully fold in spinach and cook until wilted. Drizzle with lime juice. Optional: Garnish with cilantro and/or sliced scallions. You can serve this with a fried egg, sliced avocado, and hot sauce or use it as a filling for breakfast burritos or breakfast tacos- just add salsa, sour cream, and/or cheese.

Roasted Veggie Salad with Hummus and Freekeh

1/2 cup Freekeh (sub with quinoa, bulgur wheat, or orzo if desired)

1 Veggie Box sweet potato, cubed

1-2 Veggie Box shallots, cut into wedges

1 Veggie Box carrots, peeled and grated

Handful of fresh mint leaves, stems stripped and chopped finely

Veggie Box salad mix or arugula (or a mix of both!)

1 lemon

Optional: chickpeas, pumpkin seeds, chili flakes

Rinse freekeh and add to a pot with lots of cold water and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook for 20-25 minutes until tender al dente. While freekeh is cooking, add shallot wedges and sweet potato cubes to a baking tray with a drizzle of olive oil and salt. Toss until evenly coated then bake at 400F for 20-25 minutes until softened. Combine drained freekeh and roasted veggies in the same pot and add the grated carrot and chopped mint. Add salad mix and/or arugula to a bowl and squeeze the juice of a lemon over them. Dollop hummus onto plates and spread it out with the back of a spoon. Optional: sprinkle hummus with chickpeas, pumpkin seeds, chili flakes. Serve salad with roasted veg and freekeh salad to the side and enjoy!



Fried Shallots

Thinly slice shallots and combine with oil in a wok. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently until shallots begin to bubble, 2-3 minutes. Continue stirring to ensure even frying until pale golden brown, 8-10 minutes longer. They will continue to cook in when heat is off so don't let them get dark. Turn off heat and remove shallots with a sieve or pour oil and shallots through a strainer into a heat proof bowl. Save the oil- it's excellent in stir frys! Transfer shallots to a baking sheet lined with paper towels and allow to drain. Cool to room temperature then store in the fridge or use immediately.