

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 7, April 11

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The history of the environmental justice movement (covered in this week's email!) paved the way for the concept of food justice. Similar to how communities of color were left out of the early environmental movement, alternative food movements that lauded local and sustainable food production have also been criticized for prioritizing the interests of white, middle-class consumers. While the accessibility and affordability of so-called 'good food' is called into question, food programs that aim to address food insecurity are often criticized for providing food considered unhealthy and unsustainable. Food justice attempts to address the intersection of these criticisms by prioritizing the myriad ways that race, class, and other forms of inequality impact the ownership, production, and distribution/exchange of food. For example, it interrogates how land use and ownership, food system labor, and food distribution and consumption interact with structural inequality. Examples include how farmland was historically acquired through the displacement of indigenous people or how farmworkers who are majority people of color often face harsh working conditions and low wages. Ultimately, the goal of the food justice movement is to create a food system that is both socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Because of this broad goal, many different types of justice initiatives exist including the creation of community-owned co-ops and gardens built on antiracist principles, providing training, support, and land for BIPOC farmers, or engaging with policy.

Farmer Profile

Monroe Family Organics

Monroe Family Organics is the fruition of a dream set in motion almost 20 years ago, and finally realized in 2011. After having a stall at the local Alma farmers market the summer he was 16, Fred Monroe was hooked on organic vegetable production. While at MSU studying horticulture and agribusiness, he worked at the MSU Student Organic Farm and interned at a large CSA south of Chicago. In 2010, Fred and his wife Michele set to work acquiring land buying a house, and rounding up equipment for the first farm season. Over the next few years, they continued to add more crops, more animals, more CSA drop-offs, more delivery options, and more local mid-Michigan store and restaurant partners. 2023 marks their 13th growing season!

Crop Profile

Green Garlic

Green garlic is not fully matured garlic, sounds like it has some growing up to do! It looks like a large version of a green onion and normally has a white or slightly pink bulb. Green garlic typically comes from soft-necked varieties of garlic while garlic scapes normally come from hard-necked varieties. To use, cut the very bottom of the bulb with the roots off and use the white and light green parts however you like. If the dark green portion of the leaves are still tender, they can be sliced up to eat as well. Green garlic is milder than regular garlic but stronger than green onions in taste. It can be prepared in many different ways including raw like in a salad, pickled, or cooked like in a stir fry.



Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Head Lettuce, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Organic Green Garlic, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Organic Radishes, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Braising Greens, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing
Organic Bok Choy, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Organic Kale, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Rosemary, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Add-Ons

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

Recipes and Tips!

Rosemary Lemon Pasta

4-6 oz of spaghetti or linguini pasta
(reserve some pasta water)
1/4 cup panko bread crumbs
1 Tbsp Veggie Box rosemary, chopped
2 cups Veggie Box braising greens, stems removed and chopped
1 clove Veggie Box garlic (from previous week), minced
1 lemon (plus some zest)
2 Tbsp olive oil
Red pepper flakes
Salt to taste

Cook the pasta in salty boiling water until al dente. While the pasta cooks, get out a medium/large skillet and toast the panko, rosemary, and a pinch of salt. When the panko starts to brown a little bit, remove from the pan and set it aside. Wipe out the pan and add a drizzle of olive oil, the braising greens, a few pinches of salt, a bit of garlic, and a good squeeze of lemon. Cook until mostly wilted (a few minutes). Add the pasta, and toss with a small dab of butter, a squeeze of lemon, and some reserved pasta water if necessary to loosen it up. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil. Remove from heat and toss with the rosemary-panko mixture, a bit of lemon zest, and a pinch of red pepper flakes.



Grilled Green Garlic

Veggie Box green garlic
Olive oil
Salt & pepper to taste
Trim roots and dark green leaf tops from garlic stems and slice in half lengthwise. Toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Place on the top rack of the grill with the heat on low and until tender. Makes a great topping for grilled pizzas, pasta, steak, or even eggs.

Stir Fry Bok Choy

Veggie Box bok choy, chopped in half or into thirds
Veggie Box green garlic, chopped
3 slices ginger
1 tsp sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
1 Tbsp oyster sauce
1 tsp light soy sauce
1/2 tsp sesame oil
1 Tbsp water

Rinse the bok choy. Heat some oil in a pan. Sauté the coarsely chopped green garlic and ginger over low to medium heat until fragrant. Add the bok choy to stir-fry over high heat. Season with salt, sugar, and pepper. Add some water if it is too dry, 1-2 tbsp at a time, Stir-fry until the bok choy is tender-crisp. Bring the oyster sauce, soy sauce, sesame oil, and water to a boil in a small pan to thicken it. Set aside. Drizzle the sauce on the bok choy. Serve.



Radish and Kale Salad

Veggie Box kale, tough stems removed
1 Tbsp olive oil
Veggie Box radishes, leaves removed
2 to 4 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1 Tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp apple cider or balsamic vinegar
Salt and Pepper to taste

Place kale leaves into a large bowl. Use your hands to massage oil and salt into the leaves. Transfer the leaves to a cutting board and finely chop. Return chopped leaves to the bowl. Cut the radishes into small, thin strips then add to the bowl with the kale leaves. In a small bowl, combine garlic, soy sauce, and vinegar to make the dressing. Stir. Add dressing to kale and radish mixture, and toss to coat. Serve immediately.