

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 3, June 13

Climate change is on our minds after a month of drought, high temperatures, and poor air quality due to wildfires from beyond our borders. Agriculture is directly affected by climate change due to droughts, flooding, groundwater salinization, more frequent and extreme weather events, increasing species extinction, and the spread of old and new diseases. This season in particular, farmers have been suffering from the drought and facing high water bills. Farm labor is additionally made increasingly difficult and dangerous with high temperatures and poor air quality. Despite these difficulties, small farmers are essential to combatting climate change as their diverse crops reduce vulnerability to extreme conditions and increase resilience. Monoculture regions, or the cultivation of a single crop in an area, are more prone to disease and suffering from extreme weather events. In Michigan, many large farms grow subsidy crops, aka crops that

have a government incentive attached to them such as corn and soybeans. In the long-term, it is more sustainable to grow a wide array of crops through techniques such as food forests and permaculture. The small-scale farms who provide to Veggie Box grow a large variety of produce in structures like hoopouses and greenhouses, which ensures stability within the food system. To cope with a changing climate, we must transition to a slower and more local food system. Supporting local, diverse agriculture is an important first step towards this transition. Of course, the food grown in these smaller-scale, more sustainable ways are 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

### *Felzke Farms*

Felzke Farms is a family farm located in Dewitt, Michigan that was founded in 1960. They are the largest producer of strawberries in mid-Michigan, offering both U-Pick opportunities as well as pre-picked options at their indoor farm market that has been in operation since 1978. Felzke Farms also grows a variety of vegetables such as asparagus, summer squash, cucumbers, peppers, and more!

## Crop Profile

### *Strawberries*

Strawberries are one of the first fruits to emerge in the spring so it may seem strange to be getting strawberries in your box this first week of November. This is related to the variety of strawberry- while some varieties are June bearing and produce once a year, ever-bearing and day-neutral varieties grow two or more batches throughout the year. Strawberries are a perennial member of the rose family that are cultivated worldwide. Despite their name strawberries are not actually berries—unlike berries that have seeds on the inside, strawberries are considered an accessory fruit. While the popular garden strawberry started being cultivated in 18th century Europe, wild strawberries have been enjoyed since Ancient Roman times. Unwashed strawberries can be refrigerated for 3-5 days or can be frozen for up to two months to save for making smoothies, baked goods, and more with.



## What's in the Box?

**Garlic Scapes**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*  
**Radishes**, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*  
**Sweet Potatoes**, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*  
**Organic Cilantro**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*  
**Organic Spring Mix**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*  
**Strawberries**, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

### Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*  
**Meat Variety**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*  
**Chicken**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*  
**Beef**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*  
**Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*  
**Coffee**, *517 Coffee Company, Lansing*  
**Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Sweet Potato and Black Bean Tacos

8-10 tortillas  
2 14 oz cans black beans, drained  
2 Veggie Box sweet potatoes, diced (skin on or peeled)  
Veggie Box Cilantro  
1 Tbsp oil  
1/2 tsp each of cumin, paprika, chili powder, and garlic powder  
Salt to taste

**Roast sweet potatoes. Preheat oven to 375F then toss diced sweet potatoes with oil, salt, cumin, paprika, and chili powder. Roast for 25 minutes - flip halfway through bake time. Heat black beans in a pan with salt and garlic powder - stir occasionally and cook for 5-8 minutes. Assemble the tacos with tortillas, roasted sweet potatoes, black beans, cilantro over top. Serve and enjoy!**

## Strawberry, Radish, and Cilantro Salsa

1 cup Veggie Box strawberries, diced  
2/3 cup Veggie Box radishes, diced  
2/3 cup red onion, chopped  
1 Tbsp fresh jalapeño (more if you want it to be spicier), minced  
1/3 cup fresh Veggie Box cilantro leaves, chopped (keep the stems for added flavor)  
2 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
1 Tbsp honey  
Salt and pepper to taste, or tajin if you want to go wild

**In medium bowl, add strawberries, radish, onion, jalapeño, and cilantro leaves. In small bowl, whisk together lime juice, honey, salt and pepper. Pour lime juice mixture over strawberry mixture. Serve with chips or as a condiment with fish, tacos, salads, and more!**



## Chickpea Salad Sandwich with Garlic Scapes

2 15 oz cans chickpeas, 1 can, drained and rinsed  
1/4 cup red onion, diced  
3 Tbsp mayonnaise  
1/2 tsp dijon mustard  
1 finely diced Veggie Box garlic scape, head removed  
A splash of rice vinegar  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 Tbsp Veggie Box fresh cilantro or fresh dill from last week's box, chopped  
Veggie Box spring mix, to serve  
Bread, sliced, to serve

**In a medium mixing bowl, add chickpeas and mash with potato masher until a chunky texture is reached. Add the red onion, mayo, vinegar, Dijon mustard, garlic scapes, salt, pepper, and dill, and stir until well combined. Store chickpea salad in refrigerator for up to five days. To assemble sandwich, spread mixture onto bread and top with lettuce.**



## Cilantro Vinaigrette

1 large bunch Veggie Box cilantro (2 cups packed)  
1/2 cup olive oil  
2 Tbsp white vinegar  
1 clove garlic  
1 tsp kosher salt  
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes  
1/4 to 1/2 cup water, if needed

**Add all ingredients to a blender and blend for a minute until smooth. Add water if you need more volume in the blender. Season to taste. Use as a condiment for salads, tacos, quesadillas, rice, or anything else you'd like!**