

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 4, June 20

Happy Belated Juneteenth! This week's email talked about the history of Juneteenth, but what does this holiday have to do with food and foodways? As a day that celebrates the emancipation of enslaved peoples in the United States, Juneteenth, offers a way for us to recognize how much our food system has been influenced by centuries of slavery and colonization that continues to echo today from the high levels of food insecurity experienced by minority communities to the still dire labor conditions experienced by farmworkers. Like many holidays we know and love, Juneteenth also has its own food traditions that center Black history and culture, which depending on a community's roots and location can result in very different menus! For some this means celebrating with Southern soul food, including classic dishes like fried fish, cornbread, and stew. Related to soul food, eating prosperity foods that are normally eaten in the new year like collard

greens, black eyed peas, pork, and corn, are also commonly eaten on Juneteenth. Others might gather around the grill to celebrate with barbecue and sides like potato salad and more. Eating red foods like watermelon, strawberries, Juneteenth punch, red velvet cake, red beans or hot sauce, however is perhaps the most significant tradition to Juneteenth. Because many foods eaten back in the day were brown or green, red foods were seen as a treat associated with celebration. This tradition is also related to diaspora—many of the enslaved Africans in Texas at the time of Juneteenth were either part of or familiar with the Yoruba and the Kongo, for whom the color red was highly significant. Whether you celebrated with food or not, take the time this week to look into the history of Juneteenth and reflect on the way that people before us have molded our food system into what it is today. Thanks for supporting local food!

Farmer Profile *Hunter Park GardenHouse*

The Hunter Park GardenHouse, a project of Allen Neighborhood Center, is a hub for year-round farm and garden education, where neighbors volunteer to grow food, flowers, and community, and youth develop job and life skills in service to the neighborhood. Since 2008, the Hunter Park GardenHouse has empowered neighbors to grow, prepare, and eat healthy food to better their health and become better connected with the community.

Crop Profile *Beets*

Beets refer to the taproot of a beet plant, although both the root and its leaves are edible. They are in the same family as swiss or rainbow chard and have similar tasting leaves. Originally domesticated in the Middle East, they were also cultivated in Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Today, sugar beets, which are typically farmed as a monoculture, make up 20% of the world's sugar production. They contain a substance called geosmin, which is responsible for the fresh soil scent in your garden following rain. Because humans are quite sensitive to geosmin, people tend to either love or hate the beets! Beets can be enjoyed pickled, roasted, sauteed, or raw! Store your beets in the fridge for up to three weeks in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer -- make sure to cut off the greens and store them separately, leaving two inches of stem on the beet for optimal storage.



What's in the Box?

Organic Salanova Lettuce, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Organic Beefsteak Tomatoes, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*

Organic Beets, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Zesty Salad Mix, *Hunter Park Garden House, Lansing*

Strawberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*

Garlic Scapes, *Wildflower Eco Farm, Bath*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*

Recipes and Tips!

Juneteenth Strawberry Punch

Veggie Box strawberries, tops removed, washed, and chopped

1 46oz can pineapple juice, chilled

1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 quart (4 cups) ginger ale, chilled

Ice

Chop strawberries and place in a punch bowl, drink dispenser, or pitcher that holds at least 4 quarts or a gallon. Add pineapple juice and lemon juice then stir. Just before serving, stir in 1 quart ginger ale and ice. Serve chilled and enjoy!



Summer Beet and Tomato Salad

Veggie Box Beets, stems removed, scrubbed

4 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided

Salt and pepper to taste

1/4 cup pearl barley

3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

1-2 Veggie Box tomatoes, sliced

Zesty Salad Mix

3 Tbsp chopped fresh herbs (e.g. parsley, basil)

Salad dressing of choice (e.g. balsamic vinaigrette)

Preheat oven to 425F. Line baking pan with aluminum foil and place beets with 1 Tbsp drizzled olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper then wrap foil around beets to form a packet. Transfer to oven and cook 45-60 minutes or until tender. Remove from oven and let stand in packet for 10-15 minutes or cool enough to handle. Rub skin off beets using a paper towel then thinly sliced. In a small bowl whisk lemon juice, remaining 3 Tbsp of oil, salt and pepper to taste until well combined. Arrange zesty salad mix on a platter then arrange tomatoes and beets on top. Sprinkle with herbs, drizzle with lemon juice or other salad dressing then serve immediately. Optional: serve with slices of mozzarella cheese or crumbled feta.



Pickled Garlic Scapes

Veggie Box Garlic Scapes

1 dried chili pepper, optional (you can also use red pepper flakes)

1 cup apple cider vinegar

1 cup water

4 tsp fine sea salt

4 tsp sugar

Pint mason jar

Trim garlic scapes and place them in a pint jar with a tight fitting lid. You can either straighten them out so you stuff them in the jar vertically (like you would asparagus) or curl them so they stack from the bottom up then fill the center. Place dried chili into jar if using. In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring vinegar, salt, and sugar with 1 cup of water to a simmer. Cook, swirling pan if necessary until fully dissolved. Pour warm vinegar mixture over garlic scapes until covered, leave about 1/2 an inch of headspace between the top of the liquid and where the lid will be. Screw lid on then let sit until cool. Store in fridge for at least four weeks and up to six months. They will get more tender over time but the flavor will stay garlicky!

Beet and Tomato Bruschetta

2-3 Veggie Box Beets

3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

1 Veggie Box tomato, chopped

2 tsp garlic, finely chopped

2 tsp sugar

Salt and pepper to taste

12 basil leaves

1 baguette

Optional: crumbled feta or chevre

Preheat oven to 400F. Place beets on a baking sheet wrapped in aluminum foil with 1 Tbsp of olive oil. Roast for an hour. When roasted and cool, peel the skin off. In a small saucepan, place balsamic vinegar and sugar and reduce on medium-high heat for 5-7 minutes or until a syrupy consistency, set aside. Dice tomatoes and beets and place in a medium bowl. Add finely diced garlic, salt, and 1 Tbsp olive oil, mix well. Stack basil leaves on top of each other, roll into a cigar, then finely slice into strips. Cut baguette into rounds and place on a sheet pan. Drizzle with 1 Tbsp olive oil then toast in broiler for 1-2 minutes—flip and repeat. Place a heaping tsp of bruschetta mix on each baguette round and place on a serving platter. Drizzle with balsamic reduction and sprinkle with basil.