



Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 7, July 10

Welcome to week 7 of Summer Veggie Box! Holistic, resilient, self-sustaining communities are rooted in ideals of shared-responsibility and mutual aid. Often, we think of 'giving back' as a way to address the cracks in our existing systems that do not provide adequate support to marginalized communities. While these call-to-actions are helpful and emphasize good-will, if a mindset as to what 'giving' entails is limited to dire situations when folks are experiencing an extreme moment of vulnerability and need, we are also emphasizing power imbalances and systems of oppression. What does this mean? Giving back to your community and supporting those around you should be a staple in your day-to-day life. Fostering feelings of solidarity and kinship, a feeling of neighborhood and place, should exist before and after extreme moments of need. This also means *you* should be willing to ask for and receive help! Giving back and investing in your community builds trust, and the capacity to

recover quickly from difficulties. A resilient community is one that is well connected socially, widely aware of community vulnerabilities, and has accessible programs to promote human wellbeing. Volunteering can play a big role in helping to foster this community resilience because it can provide a direct route for individuals to become more socially connected and informed in their area. But 'giving' can also include donating money, giving socially by participating in community events and getting to know your neighbors, sharing resources and knowledge, and asking for help when you need it -- giving others the opportunity to care for you. A resilient community strengthens the social and physical well-being of the community and its individuals on a daily basis to reduce the negative impacts of both routine and extreme challenges. What are other ways to give back?

Producer Spotlight *Peckham Farms*

Peckham Inc. is a nonprofit vocational rehabilitation organization which provides job training opportunities for persons with significant disabilities and other barriers to employment. The agricultural arm of the organization is Peckham Farms, which is around 15 acres of field production and uses sustainable practices to grow a diverse selection of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Peckham employees gain new skills and experiences in all aspects of growing and producing food. This includes planting, maintenance, and harvesting of crops, set up of greenhouse systems, tool and machine operation and maintenance, and customer service. They also provide employees with their own "garden plot," so they can put new skills to use and grow food for themselves and their families, free of charge.

Crop Profile *Fennel*

Fennel is a flowering plant in the carrot family that is native to the Mediterranean region. There are two main types of fennel: herb fennel and Florence fennel, or the Italian finocchio. The stems, seeds, and feathery leaves are all harvested and used as an herb and seasoning. Florence fennel, however, is grown primarily for its large, bulb-like bottom that is eaten as a vegetable. Typically, the trimmed off green tops garnish dishes. Regardless of type, fennel has a strong anise or licorice flavor. The crisp bulbs can be eaten raw by cutting into thin slices for salads and slaws. If it's cooked, the bulb's flavor becomes softer, sweeter and more mellow. In various cultures, fennel has a long history for its uses as an herb, food source, and object in important rituals. It has also been traditionally considered a carminative (a plant used to reduce gas, bloating, and nausea), and was baked or boiled along with other foods to make them easier to digest. Today, fennel is still used in many of the same ways and may make a helpful digestive aid in addition to being a delicious vegetable or spice.

What's in the Box?

Green Tomatoes, *Peckham Farms*, Lansing

Blueberries, *Felzke Farms*, DeWitt

Garlic, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Salad Mix, *Swallowtail Farm*, Mason

Pea Shoots, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge

Fennel, *Cinzori Farms*, Ceresco

Cucumbers, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt

Meat Variety, *Heffron Farms Market*, Belding

Beef, *Heffron Farms Market*, Belding

Chicken, *Heffron Farms Market*, Belding

Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte

Recipes and Tips!

Fennel and Cherry Tomato Pasta Sauce

Veggie Box fennel bulb, leaves and bottom removed, thinly sliced

Cherry tomatoes, sliced in half

2 tbsp Veggie Box fennel leaves, roughly chopped

1/3 cup white wine

Oil

3 cloves of Veggie Box garlic, thinly sliced

4 Tbsp of Veggie Box basil, minced

Salt, pepper, and red chili flakes to taste

Sauté fennel in oil. When slightly soft, add 1/3 cup white wine and reduce until completely softened. In a separate pan, over medium heat, sauté garlic. Add tomatoes, 2 tbsp fennel leaves, red chili flakes, and stir. As tomatoes break down, add more wine to reduce for about 10 minutes. Add sautéed fennel to tomato mixture and allow to cook down. Serve over your favorite kind of pasta with your choice of cheese. Garnish with sprinkle of fennel fronds.

Southern Fried Green Tomatoes

Veggie Box green tomatoes

1 egg mixed with a splash of buttermilk/regular milk

Shallow bowl of flour

Shallow bowl of cornmeal

Paprika, salt, pepper to taste

Slice the tomatoes into 1/4 inch slices, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and paprika on both sides. Next, dredge the tomato slices in flour, then the egg/milk mixture, and finally the cornmeal. Heat oil 1/4 - 1/2 an inch of oil in a cast iron skillet until hot, and then fry each side until golden brown. Commonly, fried green tomatoes are served with a mayonnaise/ ketchup dipping sauce (flavored with cayenne or paprika and garlic powder). Enjoy!

Sweet Fennel Butter

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

3 tablespoons chopped fresh fennel fronds

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice

2 teaspoons freshly grated orange zest

1 teaspoon honey

Salt and pepper to taste

Mix together butter, fennel, orange juice, zest and honey until smooth, either in a food processor, in an electric mixer, or by hand. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Scrape butter into a decorative small bowl and serve.

Blueberry Basil Popsicles

Veggie Box blueberries

2 stalks of Veggie Box basil

Sugar or honey to taste (about 1/8 cup)

1/3 cup water

juice of 1/2 a lemon

In a small saucepan, simmer the blueberries, 1 basil stalks, and water over low heat until blueberries have softened, around 10 minutes. Remove basil stalk, add in sugar, and stir until dissolved. Let mixture cool for 10-15 minutes. Once cooled, blend with the juice of half a lemon and the leaves from the other basil stalk. Blend until smooth and pour into popsicle molds. Enjoy once frozen!



Oi-muchim 오이무침 Spicy Cucumber

1-2 Veggie Box cucumbers, washed, cut in half lengthwise then sliced diagonally into thin slices

1/4 cup thinly sliced onion

1 green onion, chopped

2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, minced

2 Tbsp soy sauce

2 tsp gochugaru (korean hot pepper flakes)

2 tsp sesame oil

2 tsp toasted sesame seeds

1 tsp sugar (optional)

Put the sliced cucumber into a large bowl with onion, green onion, garlic, soy sauce, hot pepper flakes, toasted sesame oil, sesame seeds, and sugar. Mix well with a spoon until the sugar is well dissolved. Serve as a side dish for rice, noodles, or BBQ!

