

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 8, July 20

Food waste is an issue across the agrifood chain caused by multiple actors from farmers to consumers and contributes to climate change. On a household level it can also be expensive! Meal planning is a great way to reduce waste but can be difficult due to the time, knowledge, and space required. It takes experience to know what to expect during different seasons and how to swap out ingredients in recipes. Learning base recipes and the ratios for specific dishes can be a great starting point to prevent waste. A quiche for example requires a 1:1:8 ration of heavy cream, whole milk, and eggs, which a number of fillings can be added to. Vinaigrette is 3 parts oil and 1 part vinegar, which can be shaken in a jar with other ingredients like honey, Dijon mustard, and/or chopped aromatics like garlic or ramps to then be used over a salad. Hashes are generally 1:1 starchy vegetables like potatoes, turnips, sweet potatoes, rutabagas to add-ins like tomatoes, greens, squash, and onion. Fritters require 2 parts flour, 1 part liquid, and egg, plus any grated vegetables like zucchini, turnips, or potatoes that can also be mixed with greens like spinach. Learning what types of vegetables are similar can also help you figure out what can be substituted in recipes. Allium greens (chives, ramps, scallions, green garlic, etc.) can replace each other as well as dark leafy greens (kale, spinach, collards, etc.). Getting the hang of base recipes, proper storage techniques and how to preserve foods in different ways can be daunting but learning new ways to eat food is all part of the fun! Whether Veggie Box is your first foray into seasonal eating, or whether you're a pro who's been making dishes from local food for years, we're all on similar journeys to what works best for us. As always, the Veggie Box crew (and our lovely FB group!) is always here to answer questions or provide advice on ways to reduce food waste and plan for future meals.

Producer Spotlight *Magnolia Farms*

Magnolia Avenue Farms is a small family-owned operation located in Lansing Eastside's Urandale neighborhood. This urban farm also serves as an incubator farm that provides up-and-coming farmers an experience to serve as the farm manager and coordinate its operation without having to start from scratch! Magnolia Farms grows a diverse range of fruits, vegetables, herbs and more, using regenerative farming practices that focus on building and sustaining soil health. Their focus is on creating a farm that is human-powered instead of reliant on fossil fuels, and is resilient in the face of climate change.

Crop Profile *Banana Peppers*

Banana peppers, sometimes called yellow wax peppers, are a medium-sized chili pepper with a mild, tangy flavor. This capsicum annum variety is not considered a hot pepper, usually measuring only 1 to 500 scoville units (for reference, jalapenos are 4,000 to 8,500). Descendants of a native South American pepper, the banana pepper we know today are from Hungarian peppers that were introduced to the U.S. in 1932. To preserve the freshness of these sweet peppers, keep them in a paper bag in the vegetable crisper drawer of your refrigerator. They are a great source of vitamin C and are most commonly pickled and eaten on sandwiches, pizza, and more!



What's in the Box?

- Banana Peppers**, *Felzke Farms, DeWitt*
- Blueberries**, *Felzke Farms, DeWitt*
- Pickling Cucumbers**, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
- Basil**, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
- Green Beans**, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*
- Garlic**, *Magnolia Farms, Lansing*
- Organic Red Potatoes**, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Add-Ons

- Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*
- Meat Variety**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
- Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
- Coffee**, *517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
- Kombucha**, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*
- Organic Black Beans**, *Ferris Organic Farms, Eaton Rapids*
- Meat**, *Heffron Farms, Belding*
- Chicken**, *Heffron Farms, Belding*
- Beef**, *Heffron Farms, Belding*
- Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Recipes and Tips!

Crispy Smashed Potatoes with Pesto

Veggie Box red potatoes
1 1/2 Tbsp neutral oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Pesto
Veggie Box basil, washed with large stems removed
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic (from last week)
Optional: 3 Tbsp pine nuts or walnuts
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1 1/2 Tbsp nutritional yeast
2-3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, or other neutral oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Add potatoes to large pot and cover until submerged with water. Bring to a boil and cook uncovered for 15-20 minutes until fork tender. Meanwhile, prepare pesto by adding basil, garlic, nuts (optional), lemon juice, and nutritional yeast/parmesan to a food processor and blending to combine. Add 2-3 Tbsp olive oil a little at a time until a thick paste is formed. Preheat oven to 450F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. When potatoes are tender, place on the baking sheet and smash down using the bottom of a plate or back of a spoon. Drizzle with oil and season with salt & pepper then roast for 20-25 minutes until crispy and golden brown. Spoon pesto over the potatoes (you will have leftovers). Garnish with chopped basil, parsley, and cheese if desired.



Pickled Cucumbers & Banana Peppers

1 Tbsp sugar
1 1/2 Tbsp kosher salt
1/2 Tbsp whole black peppercorns
1/2 Tbsp dried minced onion (or onion powder)
1 tsp crushed red pepper
4 cloves Veggie Box garlic (from last week!)
1 1/2 cups white vinegar
2 Veggie Box pickling cucumbers, thinly sliced
3 Veggie Box banana peppers, thinly sliced
2-3 jalapeños, thinly sliced

In a sterilized, wide mouth quart mason jar, combine sugar, salt, peppercorns, minced onion, crushed red pepper, garlic, and vinegar. Shake vigorously for 30-45 seconds until sugar and salt are well dissolved. Add cucumber, jalapeño, and banana pepper slices to the jar and top off with water that fills the jar nearly full to the brim. Fasten lid and gently shake the jar to mix contents. Refrigerate for at least 2-3 days and up to 6 months before consuming.



Lemon Garlic Green Beans

Veggie Box green beans, trimmed
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 Veggie Box garlic clove, grated or finely minced
Juice of 1/2 lemon plus 1/2 teaspoon zest
Salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes, to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add red pepper flake and stir to coat the pepper in the oil. Add green beans and cook, stirring often until the beans are blistering, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic and salt and cook, stirring constantly until the garlic is fragrant and browning, about 30 seconds. Add lemon juice and immediately cover. Cook covered until the beans are bright green and crisp tender, 1 to 2 minutes.

