

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 11, August 10

Plants provide food, medicine, shelter, dyes, fibers, oils, resins, gums, soaps, waxes, latex, tannins, and even contribute to the air we breathe. Ethnobotany is the study of how people make use of native plants; the study of a region's plants and their practical uses through the traditional knowledge of a local culture and people. Current use of the term implies the study of Indigenous or traditional knowledge of plants. It involves the Indigenous knowledge of plant classification, cultivation, and use as food, medicine and shelter. However, many Indigenous peoples believe that this study can be exploitative in numerous ways. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that Richard Evans Schultes, 'the father of ethnobotany' was a white American. Though he was a conservationist and worked closely with Indigenous peoples, the person who tells a story or disseminates information, matters. The voices of Indigenous people and the interests and perspectives of Indigenous communities should lead discussions. The economic focus of biological prospecting "discoveries," has highlighted important issues concerning Indigenous rights, cultural knowledge, and traditional resources. A more "precautionary" approach to ethnobotanical inquiry would assist Indigenous communities in protecting cultural heritage. The issues raised by publishing Indigenous plant knowledge are intensified by the significant uncertainties surrounding subsequent impacts on Indigenous communities whose value systems, priorities, expectations, and time frames may differ from those of the academic community. How do we ensure Indigenous voices are prioritized? What does this have to do with our food system and Veggie Box?



What's in the Box?

Shishito Peppers, *Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms, Okemos*

Purslane, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*

Slicer Tomatoes, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Sweet Onion, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Basil, *Titus Farms, Leslie*

Bell Pepper, *Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms, Okemos and Felzke Farms, DeWitt*

Zucchini, *Titus Farms, Leslie*

Organic Yukon Gold Potatoes, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*

Meat Variety, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Coffee, *517 Coffee Company, Lansing*

Meat, *Heffron Farms, Belding*

Chicken, *Heffron Farms, Belding*

Beef, *Heffron Farms, Belding*

Pork, *Heffron Farms, Belding*

Producer Spotlight *Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms*

Blue Mitten Hydroponic Farms is an independently owned and operated, USDA GAP Certified farm located in Okemos Michigan. They provide area restaurants and markets with safe, sustainable, year-round hydroponic lettuce and microgreens. Hydroponics is the method of growing plants without soil in which the nutrients are specifically administered using mineral nutrient solutions in a constant flow of water. Coupling this modern farming technology with Blue Mitten's small but knowledgeable team of born-and-raised Michiganders, they have been improving their practices and providing high-end romaine, artisan greens, microgreens and herbs year-round, as well as seasonal offerings from their outdoor plots since December of 2016.

Crop Profile *Purslane*

Purslane, or *Portulaca oleracea*, is an annual trailing succulent that many of you may recognize as a wild weed because it thrives in poor soil. Despite being seen as a weed, it is actually a highly nutritious and edible vegetable that can be eaten raw or cooked! It is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids and is actually one of the best sources for omega-3 that comes from plants. Other names for the plant include hogweed, pigweed, fatweed, or even pursley. As a succulent, the leaves are 93% water and has a similar taste to spinach or watercress. Like other varieties of succulents, a single leaf cutting can grow roots and be propagated, making it somewhat of a hated weed in more formal gardening spaces. Purslane is a good reminder that plants designated as weeds can often very beneficial to our health and quite harmless when interplanted with other plants in our gardens. Store in the fridge as you would any other green and eat raw in salads or sandwiches or throw into a soup or stew!

Recipes and Tips!

Blistered Miso Shishito Peppers

- 1 1/2 Tbsp brown rice miso
- 1 1/2 Tbsp sake or rice wine
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 small hot chili, minced
- Veggie Box shishito peppers
- 1-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and minced

In a small bowl, stir the miso and sake until smooth. In a large skillet, heat the oil then add the chili, ginger, and garlic until fragrant. Add the shishitos and cook over high heat, tossing until tender and blistered in spots. Remove from heat, add miso sake and toss. Transfer to a plate and serve.



Bruschetta

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Veggie Box tomatoes, finely chopped
- kosher salt, divided
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh Veggie Box basil
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 large baguette sliced in 1/4" slices

In a medium skillet over medium-low heat, heat oil. Add garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly golden, 2 to 4 minutes. Let cool. Meanwhile, set a large strainer over a bowl. Add tomatoes and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Let sit for 5 minutes, then transfer tomatoes to a large bowl. Add basil, vinegar, red pepper, and salt to bowl with tomatoes and toss. Add garlic and oil from the skillet and toss again to combine. Let marinate for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 days. Preheat oven to 400°. Brush bread on both sides with oil and arrange on a large baking sheet. Toast bread. Arrange bread on a platter. Spoon tomatoes on top of bread just before serving.

Basil Zucchini Tomato Pasta

- 8 ounces pasta any type
 - Generous pinch salt to salt pasta water
 - 2 Tbsp oil
 - 1/2 to 1 Veggie Box sweet onion, sliced thin
 - 1 Veggie Box zucchini, cut in half lengthwise and sliced
 - Veggie Box tomatoes, chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, diced
 - Pepper flakes to taste
 - Veggie Box basil, thinly sliced (about 1/4 cup)
- Cook pasta according to package instructions- reserve 1/4 cup of pasta water before draining. Heat oil in a pan over medium heat and add sliced onion- sautee until translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Add zucchini and tomatoes then cook until soft and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add cooked pasta and stir in reserved pasta water and combine and stir until sauce thickens. Serve by garnishing basil and sprinkling with salt and red pepper flakes.**

Potato Bell Pepper Hash

- Veggie Box Yukon gold potatoes, diced
 - 1/2 to 1 Veggie Box tomato, diced
 - 1/2 to 1 Veggie Box sweet onion, diced
 - 1/2 to 1 Veggie Box bell pepper, diced
 - 4 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1/2 small bunch fresh parsley, chopped
 - 1 oz. Parmesan cheese, finely grated (about 1/4 cup)
 - 2 Tbsp oil
 - 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
 - Salt, pepper, paprika, and cumin to taste
- Place potatoes in a pot, add 1/2 tsp of salt and cover with water by at least an inch. Bring to a boil over medium high then reduce heat and simmer until fork tender. Drain potatoes and transfer to a baking sheet to air dry. Heat oil and butter in a large skillet over medium high heat until shimmering then add the onion, tomato, bell pepper, and seasoning and cook until beginning to soften, 3 minutes. Add potatoes and cook stirring occasionally until brown in spots, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and add parsley and parmesan and stir to combine. Taste and season with salt and pepper as desired. Enjoy!**

