

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall Week 2, Thursday September 21

Fresh fruits and vegetables are bountiful now, but we all know that a long and cold winter is coming soon. Luckily, there are ways to preserve the abundance of summer and fall, so we can continue to enjoy local in winter!

Fermentation is an ancient method of food preservation: yogurt, kombucha, kefir, sauerkraut, sourdough, and kimchi are all examples of fermented foods. The process of fermentation involves bacteria or yeasts breaking down the carbohydrates of different foods into alcohol or acids, which extends the shelf life. In some cases it also provides health benefits, as some fermented foods contain probiotics that are great for gut health and digestion. **Pickling** is a method of food preservation, using vinegar and fermentation. Use strong vinegars, kosher or pickling salt, and store jars in a dark and cool place until opened. **Fridge pickling**, which has a shorter shelf life, is another easy way to create delicious food without having to worry about storage life -- if you're sure you'll eat the delicious results within a few weeks, this is a quick method! **Canning** is a popular way to preserve fruits and vegetables into things like jams, jellies, sauces, and more. Water bath and pressure canning are two types of canning, both of which require exact timing and temperatures to ensure your canned goods are safe. Fermenting, pickling and canning require following recipes with precise times and temperatures, so as to not accidentally make and consume harmful bacteria. **Dehydrating** is another method of preserving food, especially herbs and fruits! You can dehydrate foods with a dehydrator, toaster oven, or home oven. **Freezing** is another quick preservation method. Many vegetables benefit from being **blanched** (briefly added to boiling water, 2-3 minutes, then transferred to an ice bath) before freezing to retain color, texture and taste.

Producer Spotlight *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 *Komatsuna*

Komatsuna is a flavorful leafy vegetable, also called Japanese Mustard Spinach. It is very similar to Bok Choy and can be used in many similar dishes. Toss it into curry, soups, or stir fries for a spicy addition full of nutrition. It's great in cooked dishes, because the fully matured leaves stand up very well to high heat and cooking temperatures. This vegetable gets its name from the first region it was known to be grown in- the Komatsugawa District in Japan. **Storage:** Loosely wrap the leaves in a paper towel and put inside a plastic bag or sealable container - they can be kept fresh for up to a week.

Crop Profile *Hakurei Turnip*

Like all turnips, the **Hakurei turnip** is a member of the Brassica family. Also known as a Tokyo turnip or salad turnip, this Japanese variety has a crisp, delicious raw flavor. Unlike other turnip varieties, hakurei do not need to be cooked. They have an even-textured density and the flavor pairs well with a variety of different food items. Eat them raw (just whole, or chopped/grated in salads), make a quick pickle, or cook to enhance their natural sweetness. **Storage:** For long term storage, cut off the greens and store in the crisper drawer with a slightly damp cloth. They can last 4-5 months if stored correctly.



What's in the Box?

Organic Hakurei Turnips, *Lake Divide Farm*, Stockbridge
Komatsuna, *Hunter Park Gardenhouse*, Lansing
Lemongrass, *Hunter Park Gardenhouse*, Lansing
Cabbage, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath
Garlic, *Wildflower Eco Farm*, Bath
Cherry Tomatoes, *Peckham Farms*, Lansing
Organic Yellow Onions, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma
Organic Pie Pumpkins, *Monroe Family Organics*, Alma
'Autumn Crisp' Apples, *Hillcrest Farms*, Eaton Rapids

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt
Meat Variety, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte
Tea, *ANC's Youth Service Corp*, Lansing
Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha*, Lansing
Organic Dry Beans, *Ferris Organic Farms*, Eaton Rapids
Coffee, *517 Coffee Company*, Lansing

Recipes and Tips!

Shoyuzuke (Japanese Soy Pickled) Komatsuna

Pickling Liquid

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1+1/2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp sugar

Pickling Vegetables and Seasoning

- 1 large Veggie Box komatsuna
- 3 cloves Veggie Box garlic
- 1 tsp Veggie Box hot pepper (from last week), finely diced
- 1 tsp freshly grated ginger (optional)

Cut komatsuna into 2-inch slices. Add komatsuna to large bowl. Add hot pepper, sugar, soy sauce, and rice vinegar to jar. Mix well. Transfer to large jar or pan that has a lid. Place a large, flat plate on top of komatsuna, and weigh plate down with something heavy, like a mason jar full of water. This will express liquid.

Cover container, and let sit at room temperature for 6 hours. After 6 hours, squeeze out liquid from greens and transfer to an airtight container. Store, refrigerated, for up to a week.

Serve as a piquant side salad, or use as a sandwich topping.



Stuffed Pumpkin

- 1 small Veggie Box pie pumpkin
- 1/4 pound of stale bread, thinly sliced and cubed
- 1/4 pound of cheese (of your choice), cubed
- 2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup chives
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste

Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350F. Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment, or use a Dutch oven with a diameter that's just a tiny bit larger than your pumpkin. Using a very sturdy knife cut a cap out of the top of the pumpkin. Clear away the seeds and strings from the cap and from inside the pumpkin. Season the inside of the pumpkin generously with salt and pepper, and put it on the baking sheet or in the pot. Toss the bread, cheese, garlic, and herbs together in a bowl. Season with pepper and pack the mix into the pumpkin. Stir the cream with the nutmeg and some salt and pepper and pour it into the pumpkin. Put the cap in place and bake the pumpkin for about 2 hours. Check after 90 minutes that everything inside the pumpkin is bubbling and the flesh of the pumpkin is tender enough to be pierced easily with a fork. Because the pumpkin will have exuded liquid, remove the cap during the last 20 minutes or so, so that the liquid can bake away and the top of the stuffing can brown.



Lemongrass Tips! Use lemongrass as you would a bay leaf: Boil or simmer it in any sauce, tea or dish for a delightful citrus flavor, but remove stalk from the finished dish. Make a quick and fragrant **Lemongrass Tea** by boiling half a Veggie Box lemongrass stalk and several Veggie Box apple slices, and sweeten to taste with maple syrup.