

Veggie Box Newsletter

Spring 2024 · Week 7 · Thursday, April 11th



Veggie Box just went global (specifically, the intern) and I can't wait to tell you about it! Hello! My name is Truman and for my Spring break I conducted a two-week research trip in West Bengal, India. I'm an undergraduate student at Michigan State University studying Environmental Studies & Sustainability and Comparative Cultures & Politics, where I'll be graduating at the end of this month. My research focused on how climate change, increased floods, cyclones, and erratic rainfall are impacting rural agricultural livelihoods in West Bengal. I was on this trip with a Bengali researcher. We visited three villages where it didn't rain once (it's currently the dry season). In those villages rice, fish, and prawns were the main agricultural products being cultivated—I was lucky enough to get my fill during my two-week stay. If you've ever had the big tiger prawns, they may have come from this region of India! There was an impressive variety of crops being grown including bananas, pumpkins, tomatoes, bitter melon, jute, amaranth, and a whole laundry list that would take up this whole page. We spoke with various farmers, maintaining small and large tracts of land, to understand how their livelihoods were being impacted. One thing was clear, climate change was impacting these villages significantly. First, flooding of saltwater from the ocean damaged the soil, putting farmers in a precarious position and forcing many of them to migrate out of the area. Second, women worked in the fields in only the poorest of areas because of lack of alternative opportunities. Third, political tensions in the area caused the slow-walking of aid after major cyclones and disasters. My internship with Veggie Box showed me how to act locally and gave me the perfect skill set for my time in India. If there's one thing I realized, farmers from all over the world are more similar than you think.

– Truman Forbes, Veggie Box Intern and MSU Undergraduate Student

What's in the Box?

Rosemary, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*
Head Lettuce, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*
Beets, Titus Farms, *Leslie*
Rutabaga, Titus Farms, *Leslie*
Organic Arugula, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Carrots, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Red Onions, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*
Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
Meat Variety: Chicken Breast, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Chicken: Ground, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Beef: Ground Beef, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Pork: Bacon, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Coffee (Bi-Weekly): 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*

Producer Spotlight *Titus Farms*

Titus Farms was founded by Rose and Paul Titus in 1982. Growing up, both farmers worked at their respective family farms until they got married and purchased a small 20-acre land. Paul and Rose both dedicated their lives to farming so that they could pass on ownership of the farm to their daughter, Rebecca Titus. Titus Farms is dedicated to producing the highest quality vegetables using sustainable organic farming methods, as well as producing unique varieties of vegetables that capitalize on great taste.

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 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! Since they are a root vegetable, they can be kept in the vegetable crisper drawer for up to three weeks without the greens. Use these delicious, nutrition packed veggies in the Eastern European beet soup, borscht, either hot or cold. You can also enjoy them 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 leave two inches of stem.

Recipes and Tips!

Rutabaga Curry

Last fall, ANC's Chef Matt offered a special cooking class for Veggie Box members. There, we tackled our rutabaga fears and made this delicious rutabaga curry together. Now you can try Chef Matt's recipe in your own home!

- 1 tsp coriander seed
- 1 Tbsp garam masala
- 1 Tbsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 6 cloves garlic
- 2 Tbsp fresh ginger, diced
- 2 cups onion, diced
- 1 Veggie Box rutabaga, peeled and chopped
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup water, or vegetable stock for a richer flavor
- 3/4 cup plain coconut yogurt
- Cilantro for garnish
- 1 Serrano or fresh chili (REQUIRED, otherwise it's overly sweet)
- Green Onion

Heat coriander seeds in hot pan and then add oil. Once oil is hot, sauté garlic, ginger, and onions. about 5 mins until translucent and aromatic. Add peeled and chopped rutabaga to the pot, along with all the seasonings and tomato paste to deglaze the pan.

Stir in water (or vegetable stock) and let simmer until rutabaga is fork tender.

Finish with coconut yoghurt and a sprinkle of cilantro.

Serve with seasoned rice or naan bread.

Optional: Add stewed beef.



Mix this sweet syrup into a refreshing sparkling water, or with warm milk for a cozy treat! It'd even make a fun addition to sponge cake or waffles.

Honey Rosemary Simple Syrup

- 1 cup honey
- 1 cup water
- Full share of Veggie Box rosemary

Add everything in a heavy bottom pan and bring it to boil.

Lower the heat to low and let it simmer for 15 minutes.

Let it cool down completely, then remove the rosemary sprigs. Store the rosemary honey simple syrup in a glass airtight jar in the refrigerator. You can use the syrup at this point, but it's even tastier the next day after the flavors meld.

Beet, Carrot, and Onion Medley

- Veggie Box beets, peeled and cubed
- Veggie Box carrots, chopped
- 1 cup thickly chopped Veggie Box red onion
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- coarse salt to taste
- ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Combine beets, carrots, and onion in a casserole dish. Pour vinegar over vegetable mixture; season with salt and pepper. Cover dish with aluminum foil. Bake in the preheated oven until vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Eat the medley as is, or use as a topping on this week's Veggie Box arugula along with a sprinkle of feta cheese for a hardy salad.

