

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Spring 2024 · Week 5 · Thursday, March 28th

When we talk about combinations of flavors, there are 5 main tastes be used to describe a flavor profile: sweet, bitter, sour, salty, and umami. Every taste is a message that tells our bodies something about the food we put in our mouths.

For example, **sweet** foods are rich in sugars. Relatively rare in unprocessed food, sugars are a type of carbohydrate: a high-value macronutrient that provides the body with quick energy and needed calories. Foods that taste **salty** contain salt, which provides the sodium ions necessary for the body to regulate hydration and electrolyte balance.

**Sour** is the taste your body uses to alert you to the present of acids in food. This give insight into whether fruit, in particular, is in its prime and good to eat. A fruit that is not fully ripe will often taste sour because of excess citric acid and under-developed sugars; a blueberry that is more sour than expected has not yet reached its peak nutrient stage. Similarly, **bitter** flavors are an alert system that a food may contain alkaloids, many of which are toxins (although many others are harmless). An unexpected bitter flavor warns us that a food could potentially cause harm.

The last flavor in food is **umami**, a savory taste that usually accompanies protein. Often experienced as deeply satisfying, umami helps the the body ensure it has enough protein intake for proper maintenance of body functions.

## Producer Spotlight *Phillips Orchard & Cider Mill*

Phillips Orchard and Cider Mill is a sixth generation family farm in St. Johns, founded in 1852. They grow 36 varieties of apples, 15 varieties of peaches, 2 varieties of plums, pumpkins, winter squash and a few other things. Phillips also operates an on-farm bakery 7 months of the year, making from-scratch pies, bread and other baked goods, and produces a variety of dry hard ciders.

## Crop Profile *Fuji Apples*

Apples originated in Central Asia and are part of the Rosaceae or rose family that also includes pears, strawberries, hawthorn, loquat, quince, and peaches. There are more than 7,500 known cultivars, some of which have very long histories. Older cultivars, though often considered more flavorful, are generally not available commercially due to lower production rates, susceptibility to disease, and being more difficult to grow. One of the benefits of eating locally is being able to access foods that are more difficult to produce at commercial scale. Veggie Box and local farmers markets often include varieties that you can't find in the grocery store. Even when buying commercially available varieties like this week's Fuji apples, I'm sure you'll agree that you can taste the local difference! For long-lasting storage, store apples in your fridge's crisper jar or in a cool location.



## What's in the Box?

**Fuji Apples**, Phillips Orchard & Cider Mill, *St. Johns*

**Herb - Fennel**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*

**Salad Mix**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*

**Shallot**, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

**Yellow Onion**, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

**Organic Turnip**, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*

**Organic Curly Kale**, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

**Organic Garlic**, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

## Add-ons

**Eggs**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

**Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

**Meat Variety: Pork Breakfast Sausage**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

**Chicken: Whole**, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

**Beef: Brisket**, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

**Pork: Sausage Links**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

**Coffee (Bi-Weekly; Monthly): Ransom**, 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*

**Tea: Firecracker**, ANC's Youth Service Corps, *Lansing*

**Kombucha**, Apple Blossom Kombucha, *Lansing*

**Organic Pinto Beans**, Ferris Organic Farms, *Eaton Rapids*

**Honey**, Behavior Ranch, *Ovid*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Pasta with Kale and Roasted Chickpeas

- 6 oz pasta (*any kind of pasta will work, but medium shells, orecchiette, or trottolo are a fun size and shape to combine with chickpeas*)
- 1-1/2 cups chickpeas (1 16oz can)
- 3 cloves Veggie Box garlic
- 1 share Veggie Box kale
- 1 lemon
- 1 Veggie Box yellow onion
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp capers
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 380°. Drain and rinse chickpeas; spread onto paper towel-lined sheet pan. Gently roll and pat chickpeas to dry very thoroughly; discard paper towels and loose chickpea skins. Drizzle with olive oil and season generously with salt, pepper, and paprika, tossing lightly to coat. Roast in a single layer 20 minutes, or until golden brown and crispy. Remove from oven and set aside.

While chickpeas are roasting: bring medium pot of salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente (still slightly firm to the bite). Reserve 1/2 cup of pasta water, and drain the rest.

Peel onion and garlic. Dice onion, mince garlic. Wash kale. Remove and discard kale stems; rough-chop leaves. Quarter and deseed lemon.

In a large pan, heat 2 tsp of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add onion and garlic and cook until slightly softened, 3 to 5 min. Add kale and 1/4 c water, stirring occasionally, for 3 to 5 minutes, or until kale wilts and water cooks off.

To pan of kale, add cooked pasta, capers, butter, juice from lemon wedges, and half of reserved pasta water. Cook, stirring vigorously, 2 to 4 minutes. (If sauce seems dry, gradually add remaining pasta water to desired consistency). Remove from heat and add salt to taste.

Add chickpeas to pan of pasta and sauce, and sprinkle with cheese.

*Recipe adapted from blueapron.com*

## What's the difference between a shallot and a scallop?

**Scallops** are a mollusc. Come on now.



## Fennel Vinaigrette Dressing

- 1 share Veggie Box fennel fronds
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2-3 stalks Veggie Box garlic
- salt
- 2 tbsp Veggie Box honey

Rough chop fennel fronds. Separate whites of green garlic from greens. Dice whites. (Slice greens and reserve for garnish on another dish.)

In a small saucepan over low heat, add oil, fennel leaves, diced shallot, and green garlic. Stir over low heat for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and whisk in honey and lemon juice. Refrigerate unused portion.

## What's the difference between a shallot and an onion?

**Shallots** grow one or more teardrop-shaped lobes in a papery husk, sort of like large irregular garlic cloves. They're sweeter, and are favored for getting onion flavor without heat in raw dishes.

**Onions** grow in ringed layers in a paper husk. Although they come in many shapes, sizes and colors, they are usually more pungent than shallots. Onions tend to be larger and rounder.

