

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 2 · Thursday, June 6th

Welcome to the second week of the Summer Veggie Box, and happy Pride Month! Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan – often referred to as the tipping point of the LGBT+ Rights Movement. So why do we care about LGBT+ pride when we're talking about food systems and Veggie Box? The same reason we care about racial equity, Indigenous food sovereignty, poverty, and food insecurity. As a nonprofit neighborhood center with a focus on food, we understand that the sharing of food has brought people together since the beginning of time. It's how we make friends, nurture relationships, celebrate milestones, mend conflicts and feel gratitude for life. In most societies, families celebrate important events by sharing food, and mealtimes have traditionally been those times when whole communities or villages come together. Eating and sharing food together is a symbol of shared life. But what happens when oppressed, vulnerable populations aren't invited to the table? Where we sit at the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality makes us highly vulnerable and subject to the policing of our food and economic system. Discrimination and oppression can lead to lack of resources, and lack of resources often coincides with less autonomy and less opportunities. LGBT+ folks are disproportionately food insecure – these rates amongst LGBT+ adults are more than double the national food insecurity rate. So what happens when our LGBT+ neighbors are not allowed to express themselves, and as a result, have less input and influence into the development of our local food system? What happens when our local food system only adapts and changes based on the experiences of a few? What happens when foodways are stifled? Can recognition, affirmation, and pride make a difference? Thank you for supporting local food!

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 *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 rainbow 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 make up 20% of the world's sugar production, and are an important crop in Michigan. Beets contain a substance called geosmin, which is also 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.



What's in the Box?

Strawberries, Felzke Farms, *Dewitt*
Potted Basil, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*
Organic Lettuce Heads, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Baby Bok Choy, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Onions, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Beets, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Garlic Scapes, Wildflower Eco Farm, *Bath*

Add-ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
Meat Variety - Ground Beef, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Coffee, 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*
Tea, ANC's Youth Service Corps, *Lansing*
Kombucha, Apple Blossom Kombucha, *Lansing*

Recipes and Tips!

Strawberry & Roasted Beet Salad

- 1 ½ cups of Veggie Box beets
- 2 cups Veggie Box strawberries, sliced
- Veggie Box basil, roughly chopped
- 3 cups Veggie Box lettuce, washed and roughly chopped
- 1 spring onion, sliced thinly
- 3 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Salt & pepper to taste
- *Optional: ¼ cup walnuts/pecans*
- *Optional: 1 tbsp hemp/flax seeds*

Preheat oven to 400F. Peel beets as you would a potato, and chop into 1 inch cubes. Toss cubed beets in 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Transfer beets to a large baking dish wrapped tightly with aluminum foil. Roast for 60-70 minutes, or until beets are fork tender.

In a large bowl, whisk together remaining two tablespoons of oil, vinegar, and a tiny pinch of salt. Add in roasted beets, sliced strawberries, spring onion, and chopped basil. Gently toss until all ingredients are evenly dressed.

Plate by topping roughly chopped lettuce with strawberry-beet mixture. Sprinkle with optional nut pieces and seeds.

Recipe adapted from TheSophisticatedCaveman.com



Did You Know?

While people have been eating wild strawberries for centuries, the modern garden strawberry was invented in the 1750s. Strawberries imported to France from Chile had big fruit, but couldn't breed with European strawberries. Another species from eastern North America was imported, and now big, juicy strawberries are easy to come by!



Quick Garlic Baby Bok Choy

- 1 lb Veggie Box baby bok choy
- 1 Veggie Box onion, minced
- 3 Veggie Box garlic scapes, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsps soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- *Optional: 1 tsp crushed red pepper*

Clean baby bok choy and cut it into halves or quarters. Add oil to a large skillet or wok over medium high heat. Swirl to coat the surface of the pan. When oil is shimmering, add garlic and onion. Stir continuously for 1-2 minutes, or until fragrant.

Add bok choy, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Toss to coat. Cover pan, and cook 1-2 minutes. Uncover, toss, and recover. Cook until bok choy is desired level of doneness - 3 minutes for more crunch, 5 minutes for a softer bite. Sprinkle with optional red pepper.

Dip in a sweet chili sauce and enjoy as is, or top scrambled eggs or fried rice, serve with sauteed chicken, beef, or pork, or stir into your ramen - this side dish is so versatile!

Recipe adapted from TheForkedSpoon.com

Tips: Potted Basil



Care: Basil is a light lover, so more sun is always better! Water when the top inch of soil is dry, and when harvesting, always cut right above a set of two leaves to keep the plant growing.

Uses: Use as a topping for pizza, an addition to a fresh salad, blend into a pasta sauce, use as a garnish for roasted potatoes, or make a simple pesto for pasta and sandwiches.