

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 3 · Tuesday, June 11th



When choosing which food to buy, one of the most common factors to consider is the cost. That being said, the price of local food products are often more expensive than buying at a chain grocery store like Kroger or Meijer. Why is this? Industrial-scale farms that manufacture crops like corn and soy receive government subsidies to mass produce animal feed which leads to overproduction of these crops. This creates a surplus of corn and soy, which industrial food manufacturers use to produce cheap ingredients—like high fructose corn syrup and soybean oil—for highly processed foods.

Mass producers of fruits and vegetables are also able to reduce costs by incorporating large-scale infrastructure and machinery while also hiring farmworkers at incredibly low wages. This desire to reduce cost often results in poor working conditions and environmentally harmful farming practices. These factors coupled with an understanding that industrial farms already have millions of dollars in profit in supermarket contract sales (regardless of the sale price), it begins to make sense how production costs of local food are often higher.

Considering everything it takes to get something like a mass-produced tomato to its spot on the supermarket shelf including the seeds, labor, packaging, and transportation, what is really more startling? That supporting farmers and community members with fair wages and using sustainable farming practices costs more? Or that mass-produced food associated with low-wages, poor working conditions, and huge profit margins costs less? Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight *Wildflower Eco Farm*

Drawn to farming due to the combination of physical and mental work, Phil Throop achieved his MS in Horticulture from Michigan State University and has continued farming ever since. He established his own 3.5 acre farm in Bath Township, MI, and named it for the wonderful array of wildflowers throughout the property. Wildflower Eco Farm specializes in using sustainable growing practices with over sixty types of fruits and vegetables. They offer their own CSA and are familiar faces at many of the area's Farmers Markets.

## Crop Profile *Kohlrabi*

Kohlrabi is a hardy, annual vegetable that is primarily consumed in some European countries, although it has also become a staple vegetable in northern India. It is actually a cultivar of cabbage and was specifically bred as a hardier version of cruciferous vegetables, which often can't grow in as harsh of conditions. The small or large bulbous vegetable is encased in two harder shells of leaves, which typically do not soften when cooked. You can use the kohlrabi root as well as the leaves in your diet. They both have significant amounts of nutrients and minerals like copper, potassium, manganese, iron, and calcium, as well as vitamins, such as vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, vitamin A, and vitamin K. Kohlrabi tastes somewhat like a broccoli stem, although somewhat more palatable, and is often softer, even taking on the consistency of an apple at times. While the roots/stems are often used in salads in a similar way as carrots or broccoli. The whole stem can be hollowed and stuffed with meats, grain, and veggies and then baked, or you can make a simple roast with parmesan to enjoy these hardy roots.

## What's in the Box?

**Strawberries**, Felzke Farms, *Dewitt*  
**Garlic Scapes**, Wildflower Eco Farm, *Bath*  
**Organic Hakurei Turnips**, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*  
**Kohlrabi**, Hillcrest Farms, *Eaton Rapids*  
**Organic Sweet Onion**, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*  
**Organic Baby Red Kale**, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*  
**Kale**, Magnolia Avenue Farms, *Lansing*  
**Herb: Organic Parsley**, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*

## Add-ons

**Eggs**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*  
**Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*  
**Meat Variety: Pork Chops**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*  
**Chicken: Sausage**, Heffron Farms, *Belding*  
**Beef: Short Ribs**, Heffron Farms, *Belding*  
**Pork: Spare Ribs**, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Garlic Scape and Kale Stuffed Shells

- Full share of Veggie Box kale, rinsed and tough stems removed
- Full share Veggie Box garlic scapes, tough ends removed
- 12oz of jumbo shell pasta
- 2 ½ cups ricotta cheese
- ½ cup of grated parmesan
- 2 eggs, or 4 tbsps mashed potatoes/potato flakes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 cup Marinara sauce
- ½ cup Shredded mozzarella
- Salt & pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375F. Cook shells according to package directions, rinse with cold water, drain, and set aside. Combine kale and scapes in food processor and pulse until finely chopped (for a roasty-er flavor, briefly saute scapes and kale in olive oil with a dash of red pepper flakes). Transfer finely chopped vegetables to a large mixing bowl.

Add ricotta, parmesan, and eggs (or mashed potatoes) to the vegetables. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then mix to combine. Transfer mixture into a ziploc or piping bag, snip off a corner or the end, and pipe filling into the cooked shells.

Place stuffed shells in a single layer in a baking dish, top with marinara and mozzarella and bake for 35-40 minutes.

*Recipe adapted from MyKitchenAddiction.com*



## Turnip and Kohlrabi Hash

- Full share Veggie Box Hakurei turnips with tops
- Full share Veggie Box kohlrabi
- 1 Veggie Box sweet onion, finely diced
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp chopped thyme leaves
- 2 tbsps butter
- 4 eggs
- Salt and pepper to taste

Heat a skillet over medium heat. Wash turnips and kohlrabi, chop off rinsed leafy tops. Chop vegetables into bite size pieces. Cut leafy tops into thin slices.

Add olive oil to preheated skillet, and saute onions and garlic until onions are translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add turnips and kohlrabi chunks, stir to combine, and cook 5 to 8 minutes until vegetables are evenly tender and browned. Add thyme and stir. Add sliced turnip and kohlrabi greens. Lightly season with salt and pepper again. Cook until greens are wilted and soft, then add butter and stir to coat evenly.

Make four small wells in the mixture and crack one egg into each. Season tops of eggs with salt and pepper, then cover skillet with a lid for 20 seconds to cook the tops of the eggs. Remove cover and cook eggs to preferred doneness.

*Recipe adapted from EdibleNortheastFlorida.ediblecommunities.com*

## Tips: Kohlrabi Storage

**Kohlrabi bulbs will typically stay fresh in the refrigerator for several weeks.**

Simply store in a paper or plastic bag in the refrigerator until ready to use.

**Kohlrabi can also be blanched and flash frozen!**

