

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 7 · Tuesday, July 16th



For some, Veggie Box can feel like a big lifestyle change. If you find yourself racing to get through the week's produce, check out our Produce Storage Guide: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A252XjT2wJB7kWS6XiXoP-g-Sbd3lw2yX1udXI7hwY> (link also available in your "What's In the Box" email). Our previous food hub assistant manager, Faith, created this great resource for how to best store your produce, and ensure you enjoy all your Veggie Box splendor. Enjoy this guide they put together to assist with storage and preservation techniques.

Proper food storage is essential for maintaining the freshness and quality of produce. Preventing food waste is beneficial to your household and the planet: using the food you've already invested in saves you money, and prevents methane emissions from landfills. When your food is stored well, you're able to get the full advantage of the inputs used growing your fruits and veggies, including water and food miles.

Some quick rules of thumb:

- dark leafy greens do best when they are rinsed and then wrapped in some type of towel, and then sealed in either a plastic bag or Tupperware container.
- Tomatoes should be kept at room temperature and out of the way of direct sunlight. Once tomatoes are completely ripe, they can be kept in the fridge. Store tomatoes in the fridge if they have been sliced.
- If you cannot eat your produce right away, freezing is a great way to maintain the nutrients. A trick to preventing freezer burn is blanching it before sticking it in the freezer! To do this, boil your veggies for 1-2 minutes, then place them in a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet before transferring to a bag to prevent clumping. They are good in the freezer for up to a year!

Producer Spotlight *Owosso Organics*

Owosso Organics is a family-owned, certified organic vegetable and cut flower farm located four miles west of Owosso. Starting from a small postage stamp garden in 1978, Richard Bowie, Pooh Stevenson and their daughters Cody and Taylor now farm over seven acres of their eighty acre farm, along with eight greenhouses of over 15,000 square feet. They have been certified organic since 1994, and are currently certified with Global Organic Alliance. Their mission is to provide specialty artisan produce and flowers grown with great care and impeccable service available locally to enrich the lives and palates of all people who seek their business assisting in bridging urban and rural communities together.

Crop Profile *Dinosaur Kale*

Kale's popularity has risen in recent years, but this leafy green has been an important crop for a long time. It was one of the most popular greens throughout Europe until the end of the middle ages. During World War II, food rationing caused widespread malnutrition. Increased kale crops provided a source of important vitamins. Kale has lots of iron, Vitamins C and K, calcium, and antioxidants! Kale is frequently used in salads, soups, smoothies, and casseroles. To store kale, wrap the bunch in paper towels in an open plastic bag and store in the fridge crisper drawer.

Dinosaur Kale is named after its dramatic bumpy texture, which reminds people of dino skin! This variety, also called Lacinato Kale, is common in Italian cuisine.



What's in the Box?

Zucchini, Khoua's Veggies, Lansing OR Felzke Farms, Dewitt

Blueberries, Felzke Farms, Dewitt

Organic Salad Mix, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Scallions, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt

Dinosaur Kale, Titus Farms, Leslie

Organic Carrots, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Organic Eggplant, Owosso Organics, Owosso

Garlic, Swallowtail Farm, Mason

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt

Meat Variety: Whole Chicken, Heffron Farms, Belding

Chicken: Thighs, Heffron Farms, Belding

Beef: Ground Beef, Heffron Farms, Belding

Pork: Bacon, Heffron Farms, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Crispy Kale Chips

- Veggie Box Kale, thoroughly washed and dried
- 1 tbsp of olive oil
- Salt and any seasonings to taste

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Tear the kale leaves into 1-2 inch pieces and discard the stems. Place in a bowl and drizzle with olive oil (leaves should be coated but not sopping). Sprinkle with salt and any seasonings (e.g. chili powder, nutritional yeast, paprika, etc.) to taste. Toss with your hands until evenly coated. Arrange the leaves in a single layer (with NO overlap) on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 15 minutes or until leaves begin to brown on the edges - make sure to check them often to prevent burning! Tip: You can also make these in a toaster oven using smaller batches!

Honey Garlic Carrots

- 1 pound of Veggie Box carrots diagonally cut into about 2 to 3-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoons honey
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- Optional: chopped fresh parsley for garnish

Preheat oven to 400F. Grease a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray or oil. Melt butter over medium-heat in a large nonstick skillet. Add garlic and cook for 3 minutes, or until lightly browned, stirring very frequently. Remove from heat and stir in the honey; stir until thoroughly combined. Toss the carrots with the prepared sauce either in the skillet, or pour the sauce over the carrots in a mixing bowl. Season with salt and pepper, and mix until well combined. Transfer carrots to previously prepared baking sheet. Arrange in one layer and bake for 22 to 25 minutes, or until carrots are browned and tender. Remove from oven and transfer to a serving plate. Taste for seasonings and adjust accordingly. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley if desired. Enjoy!



Eggplant and Zucchini Fritters with Garlic Dill Sauce

Fritters:

- 1/2 cup flour
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup chopped Veggie Box scallions, white portion
- 2 tbsp grated cheese
- 2 cups coarsely shredded zucchini and eggplant
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup canola oil, for frying

Sauce:

- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 1/2 tbsp Dijon-style mustard
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 1/2 tsp chopped fresh dill
- 3 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced

Squeeze excess liquid out of your eggplant and zucchini mixture through a cheesecloth or with a clean towel. Thoroughly mix flour, eggs, scallions and cheese with grated eggplant and zucchini. Add salt and baking powder and mix again. Heat about an inch of canola oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. To test the oil, dip the handle of a wooden spoon in the oil. If little bubbles rapidly appear around the base of the spoon, the oil is ready. Using a 1/4 cup measuring cup, carefully drop batter into oil. Using a spatula, flatten the fritters into patties. Fry on each side until golden brown, about 5-6 minutes. Remove from oil and put on paper towels to drain excess oil. The middle should be thoroughly cooked. Whisk together the sauce, and enjoy!

Tips: Freezing Blueberries



It is usually best not to wash berries, as it keeps them from freezing together and losing their natural protective layer. To freeze, you'll need a rimmed baking sheet, parchment paper, and a zip-top plastic bag. Sort your berries and pick out any mushy berries, selecting nice, firm ones to freeze. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place berries in a single layer. Freezing will take 2-4 hours, or overnight. Label and date your bag, pour in your blueberries, squeeze out as much air as possible, and return to freezer. Enjoy for up to a year!

