

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 5 · Tuesday, June 25th

Want to take your meals from a humdrum weeknight chore up to a scrumptious experience, one that can invoke nostalgia while building new memories? Lean into the close link between smell and memory by using aromatics to create an unforgettable meal. Scents travel through the olfactory system in the brain, hardwiring aromas to the memory and emotion centers.

Aromatics are the spices, herbs and vegetables that add flavor and aroma to a dish. Take a second to remember some of the smells of your childhood kitchen – maybe it's the smell of sautéed garlic, onions, tomatoes, and basil. Or simmering cumin, cilantro, chilis, and garlic. Aromatics can taste all sorts of ways: sweet, spicy, zesty, or tangy. Whatever flavor profile, they can define the iconic flavors of a culture's cuisine, and amplify the taste of the delicious veggies in this week's box.

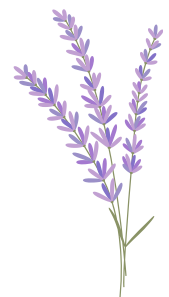
So, pause before tossing your aromatics on the swap table this week. Basil, thyme, lavender, garlic scapes, and even carrots could be the key to taking your dinner up a notch. Read our tips and recipes on the next page to incorporate these flavorsome items into your cooking.

Producer Spotlight *MSU Student Organic Farm*

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. MSU's multiple cafeterias source as much produce as they can from the MSUSOF and they also offer a weekly farm stand in the middle of campus for students and public alike.

Crop Profile *Lavender*

Lavandula (common name lavender) is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, Lamiaceae. It originates from the mountainous areas bordering Western Europe and the Mediterranean. Lavender has been shown to be one of the most preferred flowers to many pollinators, including bees! Historically, lavender has been used to treat depression, insomnia, anxiety, and fatigue. Current research supports the calming, soothing and sedative effects of lavender when inhaled. While both the foliage and flowers are fragrant, typically flower buds are harvested and dried to scent potpourri, sleep pillows, and other projects. The flowers are also used in teas, cookies, and other confections as well as savory dishes! These flowers can be hung upside down to dry or put into a container with water like you would any fresh cut flower.



What's in the Box?

Organic Garlic Scapes, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Organic Basil, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Organic Chard, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Thyme, Hunter Park GardenHouse, *Lansing*

Bok Choy, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

Culinary Lavender, Sixteen Sprigs Lavender Farm, *Alma*

Cucumbers, Swallowtail Farm, *Mason*

Organic Carrots, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Meat Variety: Pork Bacon, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Chicken: Breast, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Beef: Brisket, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Pork: Breakfast Patties, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

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

Recipes and Tips!

Chard Coconut Curry

- 1 bunch Veggie Box chard
- ½ share Veggie Box basil, chopped
- 6 Veggie Box garlic scapes, minced
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and minced (sub 2 tsp ground ginger)
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 3 Thai chilis, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 (13.5oz) can coconut milk
- 1½ lbs Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 (15.5oz) can chickpeas
- 2 tbsps curry powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ tsp coriander
- 1 tsp each salt and pepper, plus more to taste

Fold chard leaves in half lengthwise and slice away the stalk. Tear leaves into bite sized pieces, and chop stalks like celery. Keep separate.

Heat oil in deep skillet or pot over medium. Add garlic scapes, onion, and ginger, cooking until soft and fragrant. Add tomato paste, chard stalks, and chilis (if using), using a spoon or rubber spatula to incorporate the paste. Cook about 3 minutes, until tomato paste is sticking to base of the pot.

Stir in coconut milk until smooth and incorporated. Add curry powder, garam masala, cumin, coriander, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on medium-low until potatoes are tender, about 20min.

If the sauce is too thick, thin with water. When potatoes are tender, add chard leaves. Cover and steam on medium-low about 2 minutes, until bright green and softened. Remove from heat and stir in chopped fresh basil.

Serve over rice, noodles, chicken, or eat with naan.

Recipe adapted from FoodRepublic.com



Storing Herbs

Fridge, in Jar: Fill jar about 1/2 full with water and stand cut ends of herbs in it. Cover loosely with plastic produce bag.

Use for: Chervil, Cilantro, Dill, Fennel, Mint, Parsley, Tarragon

Basil: Extra Sensitive to cool temps. Store on counter, 55 degrees+. Use jar or towel method, but do not chill.



Lemon Thyme Lavender Shortbread Cookies

- 1 bunch Veggie Box thyme
- 1 bunch Veggie Box lavender
- 2 sticks of butter, cold to make rolling easier
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 3 cups of flour
- 1 medium egg
- 2 tsps vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Pinch of salt

Remove thyme leaves until you have one tbsp and set aside. Remove lavender buds until you have two tbsp and set aside.

In large bowl, cream together butter and powdered sugar until combined. Add egg, vanilla, salt, thyme, lavender, and lemon zest. Mix until combined.

Add flour 1/2 cup at a time and knead. If using a stand mixer, a dough hook may be used. Dough will be stiff, and hold together when pressed, but will be slightly crumbly. Wrap dough and refrigerate for a minimum of a half hour, to relax the gluten and make it easier to roll out.

To bake: Preheat oven to 375F. Roll out dough with a rolling pin to about ¼ inch. If desired, cut out shapes. Place on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake at 375F for about 10 minutes. Cookies should barely be turning gold on the edges. Reroll leftover dough to make more cookies. If dough becomes sticky and hard to roll, place back in the fridge for 10-20 mins.

Recipe adapted from MyKitchenCoop.com

Fridge, in Towel: Place herbs in a thin single layer on damp paper towel. Roll loosely, place in open plastic bag in fridge.

Use for: Chives, Lavender, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Savory, Thyme