

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 14 · Tuesday, September 3rd

We are so glad that all of you decided to join this community of local food supporters! It's been tons of fun, and we mean "tons" literally. Over the past 14 weeks, the Veggie Box program has distributed over **16,000 pounds** - 8+ tons - of fresh, in-season produce from Mid-Michigan farmers.

This has not only lead to healthy, delicious meals and hands-on culinary knowledge for you and your family, but has also resulted in impressive economic impacts. You have helped to make small-scale farming a more viable way of life, and have put thousands of dollars back into our local economy. Small-scale, sustainable farms are often synonymous with family farms, but the greater Lansing area is diverse in farming models and your Veggie Box membership also supported educational farms training the next generation of professional organic growers, nonprofit farms, urban farms, and collective/cooperative farm models.

Buying local food is just *cool*. We can continue to grow the local food system by pushing for schools, restaurants, hospitals, and other places that sell and serve food to shop locally, too. Their purchasing power has the potential to drive our local economy forward!

We hope you've enjoyed trying this summer's array of produce, including some that you may not have tried before, like kohlrabi, ramps, tatsoi, shishito peppers, and more! If you or your family members enjoyed a specific type of produce or recipe, we would love to know which. We've loved providing fresh, local produce for you. As always, thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight *Peckham Farms*

Peckham Inc., a nonprofit vocational rehabilitation organization, provides job training opportunities for persons with significant disabilities and other barriers to employment. Peckham Farms' operation consists of about 15 acres of field production that uses sustainable practices to grow a diverse selection of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Peckham employees are given the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences in all aspects of growing and producing food. This includes planting, maintenance, and harvesting of crops, set up of greenhouse systems, tool and machine operation and maintenance, and customer service. They also provide employees with their own "garden plot," so they can put new skills to use and grow food for themselves and their families, free of charge.

Crop Profile *Tomatillos*

Tomatillos are a plant of the nightshade family bearing small, spherical, green or green-purple fruit inside of a papery husk. Tomatillos have a slightly more acidic, slightly less sweet flavor than tomatoes; more vegetal and bright, with an interior texture that is denser and less watery. Prepping a tomatillo is pretty straight forward. The husks are removed by hand and discarded. If you want to keep the flavor bright and play up their bracing acidity, use them raw. If you want to mellow out that acidity a bit and access the fruit's deeper, more savory qualities, then try them cooked! Tomatillos can keep fresh in the crisper drawer of your fridge in a paper bag for up to three weeks, or on your countertop for a few days. Keep their husks on until you are ready to use them.



What's in the Box?

Organic Spring Mix, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*
Organic Yellow Onions, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*
Red Fingerling Potatoes, Green Eagle Farm, *Onondaga*
Garlic, Green Eagle Farm, *Onondaga* and Highwater Farms, *Lansing's Eastside*
Young Ginger, Peckham Farms, *Lansing*
Organic Sweet Peppers, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*
Organic Tomatillos, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Add-ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
Meat Variety: Ground Beef, Heffron Farms, *Belding*
Coffee (Monthly and Bi-Weekly), 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*
Kombucha, Apple Blossom Kombucha, *Lansing*
Herbal Tea, ANC Youth Service Corps, *Lansing's Eastside*

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Tomatillo Salsa

- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 pint Veggie Box tomatillos
- 1/4 cup of Veggie Box onion, cut into large chunks
- 1/4 cup cilantro
- 2 Veggie Box garlic cloves
- 1 hot pepper (to taste)
- salt, to taste
- lime juice, to taste

Preheat oven to 400F. Quarter tomatillos and halve the cherry tomatoes. Arrange tomatoes and tomatillos in a single layer on a sheet pan and roast in oven for 20-25 minutes. While they are cooking, carefully de-stem, de-seed, and chop the hot pepper.

To a food processor or blender, add the roasted tomatoes and tomatillos, plus onion, garlic, and cilantro. Pulse briefly, then add seasonings (lime juice, salt and hot pepper) to taste. Remember, you can add more, but you can't take the hot pepper out. When in doubt, start mild and work your way up.

This recipe is a Veggie Box summer tradition!



Pim's Thai Ginger Stir-fry

- 1-2 tablespoons of oil
- 3oz Veggie Box ginger, very thinly sliced
- 2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup Veggie Box yellow onion, sliced
- 1 cup of mushrooms (ex: Shiitake, Oyster, white button)
- ¼ cup green onion, cut in 1 inch size
- 1 Veggie Box red sweet pepper, sliced
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1½ tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- (Vegetarian Option) ½ cup of firm tofu, cubed
- (Meat Option) ½ lb chicken, sliced

With Tofu:

Shimmering the oil in a wok, add garlic and ginger and turn the temperature to medium heat. Stir-fry for 1-2 minute, until ginger begins to brown. Add mushroom, onion, green onion, sweet pepper and tofu. Turn temperature to high and add soy sauce, oyster sauce and sugar. Stir fry briefly until combined and cooked through, approximately 1 minute. Serve with steamed jasmine rice. Enjoy!

With Chicken:

Marinate raw, sliced chicken in a plastic ziploc or covered dish with ½ teaspoon of oyster sauce for 10-15 minute. Shimmering the oil in a wok, add garlic and ginger. Stir fry over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, until ginger begins to brown. Add marinated chicken, stir frying until almost cooked, 5-7 minutes. Add mushroom, onion, green onion, and bell pepper. Turn temperature to high, and add soy sauce, oyster sauce and sugar. Stir fry briefly until combined and cooked through, approx 1 minute. Serve with steamed jasmine rice. Enjoy!

This recipe was shared by Veggie Box volunteer Pimpimon Kaewmanee. Pim was a 2023 MSU visiting Fellow through the Fulbright Exchange Program. She studies agricultural economics and carbon capture in Thailand.