

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 9 · Thursday, November 14

When choosing which food to buy, one of the most common factors to consider is the cost. The price of local food products can sometimes be more expensive than buying at a chain grocery store like Kroger or Meijer.

Why is this? Industrial-scale farms grow “commodity” crops, like corn and soybeans. These crops receive government subsidies to mass produce animal feed, which leads to overproduction. 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 also reduce costs by incorporating large-scale infrastructure and machinery, while hiring workers at incredibly low wages. The desire to reduce costs often results in poor working conditions and environmentally harmful farming practices. Subsidies, labor cost, and large-scale mechanization and processing begin to explain how local food costs are often higher.

Considering everything it takes to get something like a mass-produced tomato to its spot on the super-market shelf: seeds; fertilizer; labor to sow, weed, irrigate and harvest; packaging; and transportation. What is more startling? That the true costs of supporting farmers, land, and community members with fair wages and sustainable farming practices are considered high? Or that mass-produced food is considered reasonable?

Producer Spotlight *Lake Divide Farm*

Helen and Jim, the owners of Lake Divide Farm, farmed on leased land in New Jersey for four years before deciding to buy a farm in Michigan. In 2016, they found a farm in Jackson County and began the arduous process of moving everything and making the house livable while maintaining the farm in New Jersey. They are also a first generation family farm. They fell in love with growing food because of the satisfaction of an honest day's work and the joy of doing something constructive and tangible for our community and the environment. They believe in food equality, that farming is an essential profession, and that producing food doesn't have to abuse the natural world. They plan on forging a business that affords the farmers, and those who work with them, a living wage, while making nutrient dense, fresh food available to all members of our community.

Crop Profile *Celeriac*

While you're probably familiar with its close cousin celery, this week's featured item is actually a root; celeriac! While its green top may look similar to celery, they are actually not the same plant! Celeriac is a bit more uncommon here in the US, but has been enjoyed for centuries throughout Europe. Initially, celeriac was used for religious and medicinal purposes throughout Italy, Greece, and Egypt. Celeriac, which was then widely cultivated throughout Europe by the end of the 1600s. Celeriac is great when paired with potatoes, used in stews, featured in a salad... there are a lot of great uses for celeriac! As we approach winter weather, it's the perfect time to try out a nice and warm celeriac recipe (hint: look for it on the back page and in the Veggie Box Facebook group!). We hope you enjoy this unsung hero.



What's in the Box?

Organic Garlic, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*
Organic Carrots, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*
Cooking Greens, Swallowtail Farm, *Mason*
Organic Celeriac, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*
Organic Parsley, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*
Organic Pea Shoots, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*
Ginger, Peckham Farms, *Lansing*
Jonagold Apples, Phillips Orchard & Cider Mill, *St. Johns*

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*
Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
Organic Dry Beans, Ferris Organic Farm, *Eaton Rapids*
Cheesecake, Mr. Leslie's Cheesecakes, *Lansing's Eastside*
Meat Variety (Weekly), Starlight Farms, *Lake Odessa*

Recipes and Tips!

Baked Celeriac

- Celeriac
- Olive oil
- Salt

Heat oven to 350.

Thoroughly wash whole celeriac and pat dry; brush the outside with olive oil, sprinkle liberally with coarse salt and bake for 1 to 2 hours--for celeriac, longer is better-- until the outside is roasted and evenly crisp and the inside is tender.

Remove from the oven, cut up if you like (you can also sprinkle with more oil and salt) and serve. You can even eat the skin!

Apple and Cinnamon Spaghetti Squash

- 1 last week's Veggie Box Spaghetti Squash
- 1 Veggie Box apple, sliced
- sprinkle of brown sugar
- splash of maple syrup
- pinch of nutmeg
- dash of cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh Veggie Box ginger
- 1 tablespoon butter or butter substitute

Preheat oven to 375F. Grease a baking sheet lightly with cooking spray. Cut your spaghetti squash in half. If you're having some trouble try heating it up in the microwave for a minute before slicing it! After cutting in half, scoop out seeds and place cut-side down on the baking sheet. Bake squash in the preheated oven until softened, about 30 minutes. Flip over with tongs. Place 1/2 tablespoon butter and 1/2 tablespoon ginger into each carved squash half. Sprinkle brown sugar and maple syrup inside. Dust squash with nutmeg and cinnamon to taste and fill with sliced apples. Continue baking squash until apple slices are tender, 30 to 40 minutes more. Divide apple slices among serving plates. Scrape squash out of the skin with a fork and drop over apple slices or dig right in with your squash as your bowl!



Glazed Carrots with Parsley

- Full share Veggie Box carrots, peeled with green removed
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped Veggie Box parsley

Cut the carrot into very thin slices. Place in a saucepan. Add salt, pepper, sugar, water, lemon juice and butter.

Cover tightly. Cook over moderately high heat, shaking pan occasionally. Cook about 7 minutes until carrots are tender, the liquid has evaporated and the carrots are lightly glazed. Take care they do not burn. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.



Parsley Olive Sauce

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup finely chopped parsley leaves and stems
- 1 cup Castelvetrano olives, pitted and torn into various-size pieces
- ¼ cup Castelvetrano olive brine
- 1 fresh chile, such as a jalapeño, thinly sliced
- 1 lemon
- Kosher salt and black pepper

Stir together ½ cup olive oil, parsley, olives, olive brine and chile. Add two teaspoons zest from the lemon (use a zester or the small holes of a box grater). Squeeze in half the lemon (about 1½ tablespoons juice), and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cut the remaining lemon half into wedges for serving if desired.

Enjoy on a grain bowl, on meat, or in place of the chopped parsley in the recipe listed above!

Tip: Carrot Tops and Storage

Carrot greens are tasty and can be enjoyed pureed into sauces like pesto and chimichurri, in salads, or cooked!

For storage, we suggest removing your carrot greens and storing them separately from the carrots. Wrap your greens in a damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag in the fridge.

