



Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 11 · Thursday, December 5

It has been a chilly couple of weeks here in Michigan and you may be wondering—how do farmers continue to grow food during the winter months? While the cold temperatures will kill most vegetable plants if left outside, there are a variety of techniques and tools that farmers can use to continue growing in the winter. This is generally referred to as season extension. While many farming methods and tools prioritize giving farmers more space to grow, season extension allows farmers to farm for more time. This is critical for farmers living in areas with a limited growing season like ours so that they can continue to make revenue. Hoophouses, also known as high tunnels, are a popular season extension technique. While similar in intent, greenhouses are different from hoophouses in the way that they regulate temperature—greenhouses use heaters and exhaust fans while the temperature in hoophouses relies on passive solar, and is manually controlled by opening and closing the end walls. Hoophouses and greenhouses can be expensive and require additional knowledge to build and use which can be a limitation for small farmers. Initiatives like the Ingham County Community Greenhouse, which offers space to Lansing-based farmers to share transplant production space, is an example of making season extension more accessible. Less permanent structures like caterpillar tunnels and low tunnels also help with growing later in the season and are generally more affordable and easy to maintain. Lastly, season extension doesn't just involve being able to grow during the winter, but being able to store crops like root vegetables more effectively. Advanced storage technology enables crops like squash, potatoes, onions, and apples to be harvested late in the season, stored, and sold throughout the winter.

Producer Spotlight *Green Eagle Farm*

Steve and Chela of Green Eagle Farm are 30 year veteran farmers and stewards of the land operating out of Onandaga, Michigan. Not long after they met, the two knew that they were destined to be together as life partners and land stewards. They take great joy in growing a wide variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs, including heirloom and open-pollinated varieties, all while being earth friendly in their practices and care for the environment. They feel committed to passing on heirloom types by saving seed and supporting seed companies that offer heirlooms. You know they care about what they do when you see the mature lemon and fig trees carefully protected from the Michigan winters in one of their hoop houses. All their produce is ecologically grown, following organic standards.

Crop Profile *Ancho Peppers (dried poblano peppers)*

Poblano peppers are a mild chili pepper that originate from Puebla, Mexico. While this pepper is typically mild in flavor, it occasionally can be surprisingly spicy! On the scoville scale poblano peppers range from 1,000 to 2,000 heat units. Not only are poblanos very tasty, they also have some surprising health benefits. These peppers are rich in both vitamins A and C and antioxidants, which can help protect your body against free radicals. When poblanos are dried out, otherwise known as ancho chilis, they contain higher levels of vitamins A and B2.



What's in the Box?

Garlic, Green Eagle Farm, *Onandaga*
Winter Squash, Tomac Pumpkin Patch, *Chesaning*
Organic Salad Turnips, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Beets, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Ancho Peppers, Owosso Organics, *Owosso*
Organic Mini Cabbage, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*
Organic Spinach, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Add-ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*
Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*
Coffee (Bi-Weekly), 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*
Meat Variety (Weekly), Heffron Farms Market, *Belding*
Chicken, Heffron Farms Market, *Belding*
Beef, Starlight Farms, *Lake Odessa OR Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Pork, Heffron Farms Market, *Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Cabbage and Turnip Slaw

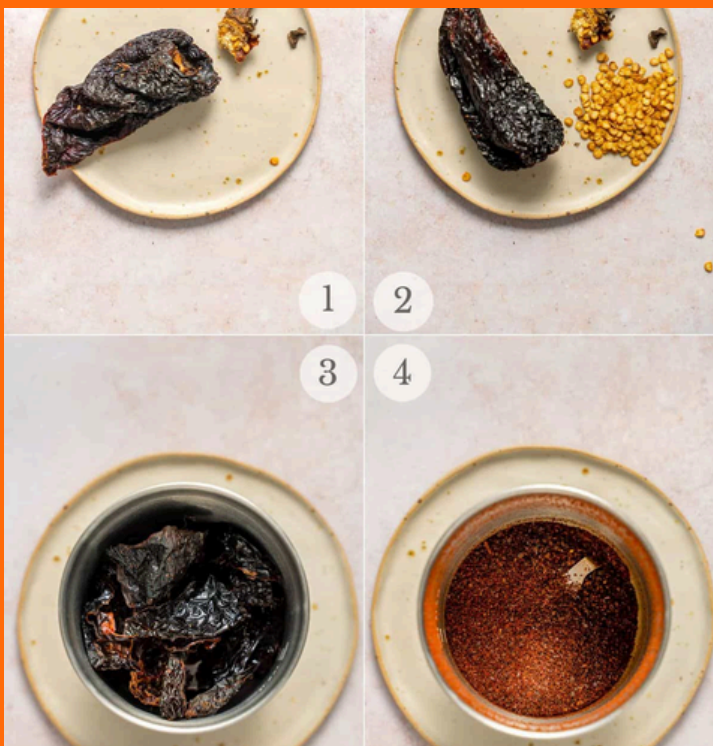
- 1 large garlic clove
- 1 teaspoon plus 1 pinch kosher salt, more to taste
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1.5 tablespoons cider vinegar
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Black pepper
- Full share Veggie Box cabbage
- Full share Veggie Box salad turnips, peeled, and julienned or coarsely grated
- ¼ cup chopped dill

Finely chop garlic. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt; using the flat side of a knife, mash garlic to a paste. In a small bowl, whisk together garlic paste, 1 teaspoon salt, yogurt, vinegar and oil. Season with pepper. In a large bowl, combine cabbage, turnips, dressing and dill. Toss well to combine. Let stand 10 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning; serve.

Roasted Beet and Winter Squash Salad With Walnuts

- 1 Veggie Box winter squash
- 1lb Veggie Box beets
- Full share Veggie Box spinach
- 1 Veggie Box garlic clove, minced or put through a press
- 1 tablespoons red wine or sherry vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoons mixed chopped fresh herbs, like parsley, mint, tarragon, chives

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Scrub beets and place in a baking dish or ovenproof casserole. Add about 1/4 inch water to the dish. Cover tightly with a lid or foil and bake 35-40 minutes, until the beets are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment and brush with olive oil. Peel the squash and cut in 1/2-inch thick slices. Toss with 2 teaspoons of the olive oil and salt to taste, then place on the baking sheet. Roast for 20-30 minutes, turning halfway through, until lightly browned and tender. You can do this at the same time that you roast the beets, but watch carefully if you put the baking sheet on a lower shelf. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Wash and dry spinach, then set aside. Mix together the vinegars, garlic, salt, pepper, and remaining olive oil. When the beets are cool enough to handle, trim the ends off, slip off their skins, cut in half, then slice into half-moon shapes. Toss with half the salad dressing. In a separate bowl, toss the roasted squash with the remaining dressing. Place spinach on a platter, leaving a space in the middle. Arrange the beets and squash in alternating rows in the middle of the platter. Sprinkle with fresh herbs and chopped walnuts. If desired, sprinkle on crumbled feta. Serve!



Homemade Ancho Chile Powder

- Full share Veggie Box ancho peppers

Remove the stem and seeds from the dried peppers. Tear the dried whole ancho chiles into pieces and add them to a spice grinder or small food processor. You could use a dedicated inexpensive coffee grinder used only for grinding spices. Any spice grinder can be used. Grind until it becomes finely ground ancho powder. For extra fine ancho chile powder, sift and re-grind until desired consistency. Store in an airtight container away from direct sunlight or heat sources. Begins to lose freshness after about six months.

Variations:

- Make it spicier. If you want your ancho chile powder to have some heat, you can leave some seeds when grinding into a powder.
- Mixing in other spices. Depending on your taste, you can add other ingredients like garlic powder, onion powder, cumin, and salt to enhance the flavor.