

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 11 · Tuesday, December 3

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 *Claytonia (Winter Purslane or Miner's Lettuce)*

Claytonia (*Claytonia perfoliata*), also known as winter purslane or miner's lettuce, is vitamin rich and can be eaten raw or cooked. It earned its nickname because gold rush miners used to snack on it, though they likely learned it was edible from Indigenous Americans, who'd been eating it long before. While Claytonia is often seen as a weed, a dinner-plate's worth contains a third of your daily vitamin C and can fetch a high price for gourmet chefs--more than \$15 per pound for some varieties! Enjoy yours in a fresh salad, as a fun garnish, or pureed into a sauce like pesto or chimichurri.



What's in the Box?

Garlic, Green Eagle Farm, *Onondaga*
Winter Squash, Tomac Pumpkin Patch, *Chesaning*
Daikon Radishes, Titus Farm, *Leslie*
Organic Beets, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
Organic Claytonia (winter purslane), Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*
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!

Purslane Pesto

- Full share Veggie Box Claytonia -- stems removed, some small stems OK
- 3 cloves Veggie Box garlic
- 1/2 cup toasted pine nuts, walnuts, or pistachios
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- salt and pepper to taste

Trim the Claytonia by removing all the large and medium stems. Keep the leaves, tops, and thin stems. You can taste the different parts to see which ones you want to keep. Quarter or roughly chop the garlic. Toast nuts over medium heat, keeping an eye on them to make sure they don't burn. Put the Claytonia, garlic, toasted nuts, and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper in a food processor or blender. With the food processor/blender running, slowly add the olive oil. Finely grate the parmesan into a medium-sized bowl. Add the contents of the food processor to the parmesan. Taste, then season with salt and pepper as desired.

Modified from ProportionalPlate.com.



Spicy Roasted Daikon Fries

- 3 1/2 tablespoons oil (with a high smoke point)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chili paste
- 1 teaspoon low sodium Tamari or soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger pulp, freshly grated
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
- Full share Veggie Box daikon radish, peeled & sliced

Preheat the oven to 475°F, and adjust a rack to the center. Make the seasoning sauce. In a small bowl, combine the oil, chili paste, soy sauce, ginger, sugar and salt.

Cut the Daikon into sections approximately 3-inches long, then cut about 1/4-inch slices off the side of each one, to make a base. Stand the sections on their bases, and cut them, vertically into slices about 1/4-inch thick. Stand these slices on top of each other, and then cut them into sticks about 1/4-inch thick. Add all of the Daikon slices to a baking sheet and set aside.

Drizzle sauce over radish slices, then use your hands to toss them until they're all evenly coated and in a single layer. Place the baking sheet in the preheated 475°F oven and roast until they are golden brown on all sides, about 30 minutes. Gently toss/flip them about halfway through the cooking time.

Transfer your fries to a double layer of paper towel on a plate to drain and cool.

Roasted Beet and Winter Squash Salad With Walnuts

- 1 Veggie Box winter squash
- 1lb Veggie Box beets
- Full share Veggie Box Claytonia
- 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 Claytonia, 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 Claytonia greens 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!

