

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 12 · Tuesday, December 10

Welcome to the final week of the Fall Veggie Box! Over the last twelve weeks, you've received 96 fresh, in-season produce items. You got to experience many varieties of familiar favorites—for example, over five varieties of Apples were in the box this fall! With your involvement, the Veggie Box program was able to support over 30 local farmers and businesses in the mid-Michigan region. Eating local doesn't only mean supporting local farmers and businesses, it also means learning how to eat and prepare seasonal foods.

Measuring the impact of Veggie Box goes beyond the sheer amount of produce that was distributed, however—supporting local food depends on building relationships between food producers and consumers and education around these processes. Through Veggie Box, we were able to support dozens of local mid-Michigan farmers and businesses while also providing a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables to the community, some of which you may have tried for the first time. We hope that being part of Veggie Box has pushed you to reimagine the way you understand, prepare, and consume food.

Veggie Box was likely difficult for you in some ways—you might have struggled to use what you get in your box if you were accustomed to eating, shopping, and cooking out-of-season produce that's easy to find in the grocery store. You might have had to try new types of produce you were unfamiliar with because they're not as commonly found at the grocery store and learn how to prepare them in a way you enjoyed. You might not have been as accustomed to eating the amount of fresh produce provided each week or weren't used to cooking as frequently. We hope Veggie Box helped open your mind and taste buds to understanding and enjoying food in a whole new way. Hopefully our tips and recipes about preparing the cornucopia of foods this season were helpful and we're thankful for all the Veggie Box members who shared their own recipes or tips with us and each other such as in the Veggie Box Facebook group! Thank you for prioritizing preparing and eating foods that were grown and produced right here in our communities by our family, friends, and neighbors. None of this would have been accomplished without your participation. Thank you for supporting local food, we'll see you in 2025!

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 *Watermelon Radish*

This extremely vibrant and colorful vegetable is available year-round, but has its peak season in the spring and the late fall. The watermelon radish is an heirloom Chinese Daikon radish. It is a member of the Brassica (mustard) family along with arugula, broccoli and turnips. Something pretty cool about this vegetable is that it produces its own chemical that acts as a natural pest repellent. Both the roots and the greens in the vegetable act as a wonderful source of Vitamin C, even more so when eaten raw. Many eat or pickle this root to keep its natural vibrant coloring -- no need to peel the skin of this variety. Their slightly sweet but peppery flavor is perfect for salads and garnishes.



What's in the Box?

Organic Collard Greens, Green Wagon Farm, *Ada*

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Ginger, Peckham Farms, *Lansing*

Organic Onions, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Goldrush Apples, Hillcrest Farms, *Eaton Rapids*

Organic Arugula, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Sweet Potatoes, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

Organic Watermelon Radishes, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*

Add-ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Cheesecake, Mr. Leslie's Cheesecakes, *Lansing's Eastside*

Meat Variety (Weekly), Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Salad

- 2 Veggie Box Watermelon Radishes, peeled and grated on the large holes of a box grater
- 3 Veggie Box Carrots, scrubbed and grated on the large holes of a box grater
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 bunch tender Veggie Box Collard Greens, washed, dried and tough stem ends removed, leaves cut in half lengthwise and then rolled up and cut very thinly crosswise
- 1 Veggie Box Apple, cored and finely chopped
- Generous 1/2 cup walnuts broken up or roughly chopped
- 2-3 teaspoons honey
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Put grated radishes and carrots in a salad bowl. Toss well with 1/2 teaspoon salt, and let sit for at least 5 minutes.

Toast broken up walnuts in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, tossing frequently until blackened in spots- be careful not to burn.

Mix honey, apple cider vinegar, oil, salt and pepper in a small bowl.

Add collard greens, apple, and toasted walnuts to the grated vegetables.

Add dressing and toss well and taste and adjust seasoning. Serve.

Adapted from cookwithwhatyouhave.com



Freeze Your Ginger!



Wrap ginger root tightly with plastic wrap and store in a freezer safe resealable plastic bag or airtight container for 3 to 6 months! This young, fresh ginger has a soft skin that does not need to be peeled. Simply use a microplane to grate off what you need, and return to the freezer for later use.

Brown Butter Sautéed Watermelon Radish

- 2 Veggie Box watermelon radishes - trimmed, scrubbed, and diced (skin on); about 2-3 cups diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoon butter - divided; can use salted or unsalted
- 1/8 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary - divided
- 2 teaspoon lemon zest

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil and 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium heat. Add the watermelon radishes, sea salt, and 2 teaspoon of the fresh rosemary to the pan.

Cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the radishes are tender and slightly browned. It may take a few more minutes depending on your stovetop, so adjust the cooking time as needed.

Add the last tablespoon of butter and the last teaspoon of rosemary, as well as the lemon zest, to the skillet. Cook for another couple of minutes. Remove from heat and serve warm!



Roasted Sweet Potato, Onion, and Arugula Salad

- Veggie Box Arugula
- 1 Veggie Box Sweet Potato, diced
- 1 Veggie Box Onion, diced
- Salt and pepper
- 2 oz goat cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

In a bowl, mix the diced sweet potato and onion with olive oil until evenly coated.

Place in a single layer on a greased sheet pan and season with salt and pepper.

Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the sweet potato and onion are soft.

Place arugula in a serving bowl, add the roasted sweet potato and onion, goat cheese, chopped pecans, and your favorite vinaigrette. Enjoy!

Adapted from beyondthebrambleberry.com