

The Worm's Voice

Red Wiggler's CSA Newsletter

Spring 2024 Week 1
May 15 & 18

IN THE SHARE

“/” indicates a choice

- Radishes
- Hakurei Turnips
- Spring Onions
- Kale
- Pea Shoot Microgreens

PICK-YOUR-OWN

Look for the **BLUE** flags on items ready to pick!

RED

Lovage
Oregano
Chives
Tarragon
German Thyme

ORANGE

Fennel
Chamomile
Lamb's Ear
Sorrel

PINK

Parsley

YELLOW

Sage

NEED HELP?

Just ask any RWCF staff or volunteer. We're here for you!



Welcome to Red Wiggler's Spring CSA! We are thrilled to welcome new faces and old friends back to the farm for another season. As I was looking back at last year's newsletters, I remembered that I mentioned "wonky weather" in the first newsletter of 2023. And guess what folks, I'm going to do it again! Spring 2024 has been a doozy, and I suspect that "weird and wonky" is becoming the new normal! More details on that in a moment, but first, let's take a look at some new and new-ish features of the 2024 Spring CSA.

NEW and NEW-ISH in 2024

- **Online Recipe Index:** We've got a lot of great recipes from years past, so this winter, I decided to index them all based on the main veggies in them. That's now on the website (get to it via the CSA page). It's not fancy, but at least all the beet or carrot or tomato recipes are in one place and easier to find. Simply visit the [Recipe Index](#) page of our website, click on the veggie you want to use, and then click on the recipe title that makes your mouth water. That will take you to the newsletter the recipe was featured in, all the way back to 2013!
- **Compost Program:** This is the second full year of our expanded compost program, but it still bears highlighting. It's part of your CSA membership, so take advantage of it if you can. Ask any CSA staff member to get a bin for you to take home, and pick up a flyer with the [list](#) of what does/doesn't go in the bin. Check out page 5 of the [Member Handbook](#) for more info.
- **CSA Lending Library:** along the back of the barn, you'll notice shelves of books on topics related to cooking, farming and gardening, nature crafts, food philosophy, and more. There's some great stuff in there—I read several of them over the winter. You're welcome to borrow anything you like—just write it down on the clipboard and bring it back before the end of Spring session.
- **Limited Schedule Adjustments:** if you can't make it to CSA one week, the best thing to do is send a friend or donate your share. But this year, you *might* be able to switch days for that week, if produce availability allows. See page 7 of the [Member Handbook](#) for details and procedures.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SHARE

Remember, your CSA share isn't only about the veggies! To get the most value out of your CSA share, make sure you're maximizing all the benefits of membership.

- Spend time in the PYO each week—gathering herbs, flowers, and a little peace & quiet
- Utilize our compost services
- Bring your family on a [tour](#) (always free for CSA members and their guests)
- Participate in the [CSA Recipe Exchange page](#)
- Spend some leisure time at the farm. Bring a snack, a blanket, a book—during CSA pick-up, the park grounds and PYO areas are yours to enjoy!

We Need to Talk About...Spring

In a time of ever-increasing weather weirdness, Spring 2024 is going down in the RWCF history books as one of the weirdest! It was wet, wet, wet! And then it was dry, dry, dry! And then it was hot. And then it was cold. And then no sun for days. And then it was dry again. And then it was wet...again. And then no sun... again. You get the point. Couple all this with fertility issues in the greenhouse and increased pest pressure in the field and you've got yourself one really challenging spring!

Led by our ever-optimistic Farm Manager, Melissa McLearn, we sleuthed out the greenhouse problem (old/bad potting soil), replanted pest-eaten seedlings, experimented with different ways of planting (for example, direct seeding things we would normally transplant), trimmed and deadheaded plants that were blooming/bolting before their time, made back-up plans, and then made back-up back-up plans!

I am proud to say, our small but mighty team pulled through, and here we are at the first CSA with a full share of spring goodies for you! Pea shoot microgreens—one of our back-up plans—are fresh and sweet, and delicious sprinkled on anything from soups to salads. This week's kale bunches—a back-up, back-up plan—come from our dear friends at House in the Woods Farm. The radishes and turnips are sure to join bunnies and baby chicks on your "spring cuteness" list, and their greens are tasty too! The onion bunches are beautiful and flavorful, and one of my personal favorites. I chop and sprinkle them on everything!

As you probably know, we aim to distribute 50% of our produce (by value) to our food assistance partners. This is a goal that we care deeply about, and work hard to accomplish. However, we want our CSA members to know that you are always top of mind. Your shares always get planned and fulfilled first, and in challenging weeks like this one, you get everything we've got! I will be connecting the dots between our CSA and our food assistance partners in a variety of ways this season. But rest assured that we feed our CSA and staff first, then share our abundance with those in need.

NOTES ON THE PYO

- Parsley: the parsley is from last year, and we're not going to lie, it's seen better days. Some find it bitter, some find it tasty. Before you pick, taste a leaf and see where you fall. If you like it, pick away! It's going to make way for a new crop soon.
- Sage: it's flowering because it got so hot and dry recently. Luckily, the flowers are beautiful and the leaves are just as tasty. Make [sage flower jelly](#) or just pick stalks for a spring bouquet.
- Fennel: This patch is being retired, so pick as much as you like! Dry or freeze it to use all year.
- Chives: like the sage, these flowered due to stress. The flowers are edible, or can be used in a bouquet. Or use them to [infuse vinegar](#) for a fresh, spring flavor all year!

Recipes

VEG- Vegetarian DF- Dairy Free GF- Gluten Free

Green Goddess Dressing/Marinade GF Veg

Classic green goddess dressing is an easy and flavorful way to maximize the herbs in the Spring PYO. Full of fresh herbs, this quick concoction can be used as a dressing, dip or marinade. Pick herbs and make a batch every week, so you're always ready to whip up something delicious! Makes about 1 ½ cups.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 generous cup Greek yogurt (preferably full-fat)
- **Small handfuls of any or all: tarragon, parsley, chives, fennel, thyme, oregano, sorrel, and green onion. To equal about 1 cup chopped herbs.**
- 1-2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Water or milk, if needed for thinning



DIRECTIONS

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor and blend until smooth and green, with little flecks of herbs in it.
2. Add salt and pepper as desired.
3. Add small amounts of water or milk if you want a thinner dressing, until desired consistency is reached.

Lovage Soup GF Veg

I was intrigued by this recipe from [Spring 2021](#) when I came across it while creating this index over the winter (you're probably going to hear that kind of thing a lot this season, as I reintroduce "vintage" recipes!). I know lovage is related to and tastes similar to celery, but I haven't experimented with it too much. But this sounds like a perfect way to start!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter
- **1 bunch green onions, chopped**
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 3 medium Russet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- **1 bunch (~1 oz) lovage leaves finely chopped**
- heavy cream, to serve



DIRECTIONS

1. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed stock pot over medium-high heat. When it froths, reduce the heat to medium and stir in green and yellow onions. Fry until fragrant, about five minutes.
2. Pour in chicken stock and stir in chopped potatoes. Simmer, covered, about thirty minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in lovage and simmer, covered, a further five or six minutes.
3. Remove from heat and blend with an immersion blender until smooth. Season with sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Ladle into bowls, stir in a spoonful of heavy cream in each bowl, and serve.