

# The Worm's Voice

Red Wiggler's CSA Newsletter

Fall 2024 Week 4  
October 9 & 12

## IN THE SHARE

- Winter Squash
- Garlic
- Radishes
- Greens Choices
- Summer Choices

## PICK-YOUR-OWN

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

### **RED**

Lovage, Oregano, Chives  
Tarragon, German Thyme,  
Peppermint, Spearmint,  
Lavender, Russian Sage,  
Marigolds, Dill, Jasmine-  
Scented Nicotiana

### **ORANGE**

Sorrel, French Thyme,  
Gomphrena, Celosia,  
Tithonia, Snapdragons,  
Calendula, Lamb's Ear,  
Cosmos, Roselle

### **PINK**

Parsley, Zinnias, Statice,  
Basil (lemon/Thai/Italian),  
Cilantro, Strawflower, Dill,  
Pincushions, Cosmos

### **BROWN**

Verbena  
Fennel Seeds  
Black-Eyed Susan

### **YELLOW**

Lemon Balm  
Sage

**Need help finding or using the flowers and herbs in the PYO? Just ask a RWCF staff member or volunteer!**

## Meet Our Food Assistance Partners: Part 1

Each season, as you probably know, Red Wiggler distributes 50% of its produce to organizations that serve Montgomery County residents who are experiencing food insecurity. This week and next, we'd like you to meet our closest partners:



Founded in 1983 with a single pledge of \$3100 and a donation of 16,000 pounds of food, [Manna Food Center](#) has grown into a multi-faceted organization that distributes 12,000 pounds of food a day, acts as an education center, and helps connect folks with the services they need to flourish. Manna funds our Farm to School CSA program, and helps us organize gleanings to harvest excess produce from our fields.



A program of Manna, [Community Food Rescue](#) is like a dating service for food pantries. Donors (farms, grocery stores, etc) who have food to give away list their offerings, and food pantries claim them. Then, volunteer drivers pick up the food from the donor and take it to the food pantry. CFR is helping our county make great strides in reducing food waste, while alleviating 2 major pain points for food pantries: sourcing and transportation.



Birthing out of the 2020 COVID pandemic, [Community FarmShare](#) has a 2-part mission: feed hungry people fresh, nutritious food, and pay local farmers a fair price for their work. CFS operates mobile farmers markets that distribute produce in neighborhoods that are considered food deserts, send bags of fresh produce to families at area elementary schools, and coordinates a "veggie Rx" program where doctors prescribe patients fresh, local produce.

## PYO Highlight: Fennel Seeds



*Foeniculum vulgare*, commonly known as fennel, is a flavorful culinary herb and medicinal plant. Fennel is productive and tasty all season, but at this time of year, the frilly leaves give way to fireworks-like bursts of seeds. Our big fennel patch in the Brown PYO is currently full of both ripe and dried seed pods. Fennel seeds are delicious from a culinary perspective—use the fresh green seeds whole in salads, or crushed in dressings, marinades or sauces; use the cracked dry seeds on meats and roasted vegetables. Medicinally, fennel is used in many parts of the world to ease everything from menstrual cramps to bad gas. It has also been traditionally thought to aid digestion, inhibit appetite to aid in weight loss, and increase lactation in new mothers. New to—or unsure about—fennel? Start with a simple [fennel tea](#), [candied fennel seeds](#), [fennel seed pork roast](#), or even this fun [fennel brittle](#)!

# Recipes

VEG- Vegetarian DF- Dairy Free GF- Gluten Free

## Bok Choi and Ramen Salad with Sesame Dressing **DF Veg GF (w/modifications)**

*Let's be real: there are going to be a lot of greens coming at you this Fall! And even though there are a million different ways to use greens in your cooking, I, for one, get stuck in the rut of just sauteeing them as a side dish. So when I saw this fun recipe at [Culinary Hill](#), I was reminded that I can get out of my rut and think outside the typical greens box!*

### INGREDIENTS

For the sesame dressing:

- ¼ cup light brown sugar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- **1-2 cloves garlic, crushed (optional)**
- **1-2 teaspoons minced garlic (optional)**

For the salad:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 package ramen noodles crumbled, seasoning packet discarded
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- **1 bunch bok choy, sliced**
- 5 scallions, chopped
- **Handful of chopped cilantro for garnish (optional)**



### DIRECTIONS

1. To make the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk together brown sugar, olive oil, vinegar, sesame seeds, and soy sauce. Allow flavors to blend at room temperature while preparing the salad.
2. In a large sauce pan over medium heat, heat olive oil until shimmering. Reduce heat to low. Add ramen noodles and almonds; sauté until toasted, about 10 minutes, stirring frequently to avoid scorching.
3. In a large bowl, combine chopped bok choy, chopped scallions, and crunchy mix. Drizzle salad dressing over the top and toss until uniformly combined. Top with chopped cilantro, if desired. Serve at room temperature.
4. This recipe is great to make ahead. If making ahead, store the chopped veggies, crunchy mixture, and dressing separately. Then combine thoroughly just before serving.

**Join us at the last CSA volunteer opportunity of the season!**

*Volunteer with us at AfriThrive's Friday food distribution  
Friday, October 11th from 8:30am to 11:30am in Silver Spring*

**Click to register now!**

## Spaghetti Squash Gratin **GF Veg**

*I love winter squash in all its forms—from acorn to butternut and everything in between, it's one of my favorite things about fall. Even spaghetti squash, which (unfairly!) gets a bad rap, makes my mouth water. If you're spaghetti squash-curious, this recipe from NYT Cooking (via the [CSA Archive](#)) is a creamy, cheesy way to ease into its deliciousness!*

### **INGREDIENTS**

- **1 spaghetti squash, about 3 pounds**
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- **2 garlic cloves, minced**
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup milk
- **2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil (¼ cup leaves)**
- ½ -1 cup grated Gruyère cheese
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan or pecorino romano cheese



### **DIRECTIONS**

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Pierce the squash in several places with a sharp knife. Cover a baking sheet with foil, and place the squash on top. Bake for one hour, turning the squash every 20 minutes until it is soft and easy to cut into with a knife. Remove from the heat, and allow the squash to cool until you can handle it. Cut in half lengthwise, and allow to cool further. Remove the seeds and discard.
2. Scoop out the flesh, and place in a bowl. Run a fork through the flesh to separate the spaghetti-like strands, squeeze excess moisture out of strands, then chop coarsely. Measure out 4 cups squash.
3. Heat the oil over medium heat in a large, heavy skillet, and add the onion. Cook, stirring, until tender, about five minutes. Add the garlic and a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring, for another 30 seconds to a minute until fragrant. Add the squash. Cook, stirring often, for five minutes until the strands of squash are a little more tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and remove from the heat.
4. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Add milk, salt (about ½ teaspoon), pepper and basil. Stir in the squash mixture and the Gruyère, and combine well. Scrape into an oiled 2-qt gratin or baking dish. Sprinkle the Parmesan or pecorino over the top, and gently press down to moisten.
5. Bake 40 to 45 minutes until nicely browned and sizzling. Remove from the heat, and allow to cool for 10 to 15 minutes before serving. Serve hot, warm or room temperature.

*\*\*Take a look at the [NYT Cooking page for this recipe](#) for lots of tips and suggestions for variations!*

### **A FRIENDLY REMINDER ABOUT THIS YEAR'S WINTER SQUASH**

Due to increased environmental and pest pressures, our squash is not holding as well as it usually does. The winter squash this season will be better when used more quickly and not stored for many months. We have done our best to sort out any bad ones, but if you happen to get a bad squash, please let us know! We will replace it with another squash or different item, depending on availability.

**THANK YOU!**