

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10, November 18

You may have heard of subscription boxes like "Imperfect Foods" and "Mischief Market" which claim to offer the average consumer a way to address food waste. When looking at the reality of these subscription services, their full impact is a bit more complicated. First of all, many "imperfect foods" already play a role in our food system. Misshapen foods generally go on to be processed, ground up, frozen, and prepped for purchase. Additionally, while there are some benefits to these subscription services, like access to cheap produce for consumers and another avenue for farmers to sell excess produce, there are also some unintended consequences. CSA's all over the country are citing these subscription services as impediments to their success; these imperfect food subscription services are often pulling the produce from Big Ag, not from local, small-scale farms in our own communities. As a result, people are forgoing supporting local farms, but instead support mass-production farms.

When you buy into the CSA program, you are essentially buying into a community based imperfect foods system. Plus, unlike imperfect food subscription services, CSAs like Veggie Box address the large amount of carbon emissions owed to the transportation of food. What are other pros and cons to the imperfect food subscription programs? Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *Tomac Pumpkin Patch*

Tomac Pumpkin Farm is a 4-generation family run operation located in Chesaning, Michigan. They started as a 4-H and FFA project selling a few pumpkins, but have grown to primarily raise corn, soybeans, and wheat over the last 30 years. They also now offer almost 100 different pumpkins, gourds and squashes as well as other traditional fall decorations like corn stalks, straw, and flint corn.

## Crop Profile

### *Spaghetti Squash*

Spaghetti squash (*Cucurbita pepo* subsp. *pepo*) is a type of winter squash with several cultivars that range from white to yellow-orange in color. Orange varieties of spaghetti squash contain a greater amount of beta carotene. When cooked, the squash's yellow flesh falls away from the skin in long strands similar to spaghetti noodles, earning the fruit a variety of nicknames, including vegetable spaghetti, noodle squash, vegetable marrow, and squaggetti. Spaghetti squash makes a great low-carb, gluten-free, low-calorie pasta substitute, with only 10 grams of carbohydrates and 42 calories in every 1-cup serving. Just like pasta or rice, its mild flavor goes well with many different sauces and toppings. The strands run around the squash's circumference, not its length. So to produce the longest spaghetti-like strands, cut the squash in halves horizontally or further into rings before cooking. Leaving the halves intact will also create convenient bowls for your spaghetti. Just cut a sliver off each end to give the bowls a stable base while roasting. In addition to beta carotene, each serving of spaghetti squash will also give you a boost of folic acid, potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C.



## What's in the Box?

**Organic Turnips**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*  
**Organic Carrots**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*  
**Shizuka Apples**, *Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids*  
**Organic Collard Greens**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*  
**Spaghetti Squash**, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning*  
**Salad Mix**, *Hunter Park Gardenhouse, Lansing*

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*  
**Meat**, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

# Recipes and Tips!

## Roasted Medley of Veggie Box Roots

Veggie Box carrots, cut into 2×1/2-inch sticks  
Veggie Box turnips, peeled and cut into wedges  
1 pound of potatoes (from last week!)  
3 cloves of garlic (from last week)  
1 cup of thick onion slices  
3 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme  
3 small bay leaves  
2-1/2 Tbs. melted unsalted butter  
1-1/2 Tbs. vegetable oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**Heat the oven to 400°F. Dump the vegetables into a large bowl. Toss in the herbs and drizzle on the butter and oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss to coat the vegetables evenly. Pour into a single layer on a baking pan, and put in the oven. Roast, tossing with a spatula a few times, until the vegetables are very tender and browned in spots, about 50 min. Discard the bay leaves. Serve warm.**

## Apple and Cinnamon Spaghetti Squash

Veggie Box Spaghetti Squash  
1 Veggie Box Apple, sliced  
sprinkle of brown sugar  
dash of maple syrup  
A pinch of nutmeg  
A dash of cinnamon  
1 tbs butter or butter substitute

**Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease a baking sheet lightly with cooking spray. Cut your spaghetti squash in half. If you're having some trouble try heating it up in the microwave for a minute before slicing it! After cutting in half, scoop out seeds and place cut-side down on the baking sheet. Bake squash in the preheated oven until softened, about 30 minutes. Flip over with tongs. Place 1/2 tablespoon butter into each carved squash half. Sprinkle brown sugar and maple syrup inside. Dust squash with nutmeg and cinnamon to taste and fill with sliced apples. Continue baking squash until apple slices are tender, 30 to 40 minutes more. Divide apple slices among serving plates. Scrape squash out of the skin with a fork and drop over apple slices or dig right in with your squash as your bowl!**

## Garlic, Feta, and Basil Spaghetti Squash

Veggie Box Spaghetti Squash  
2 tablespoons Vegetable Oil  
1/2 cup of onion, chopped,  
2 Clove Garlic (From last week's box), Minced  
1 1/2 cups Chopped Tomatoes  
3/4 cup Crumbed Feta Cheese  
3 tablespoons Sliced Black Olives  
2 tablespoons chopped Fresh Basil

**Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Place spaghetti squash with cut sides down on the prepared baking sheet, and bake 30 minutes in the preheated oven. Remove squash from oven and set aside to cool enough to be easily handled. Meanwhile, heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir onion until tender. Add garlic; cook and stir until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and cook until tomatoes are warmed through. Use a large spoon (or fork) to scoop the stringy pulp from the squash and place in a medium bowl. Toss with the vegetables, feta cheese, olives, and basil. Serve warm.**

## What to do with Greens?

**Pasta:** Sauté chopped greens in olive oil or butter, and add to any pasta dish.

**Soup:** Toss washed and chopped greens into any soup, homemade or store bought.

**Eggs:** Add greens into scrambled eggs or make a frittata.

**Freeze:** To freeze greens for later use, remove stems, clean and chop greens. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Blanch greens by cooking for one minute, then use tongs or a slotted spoon to transfer to a bowl of ice water. Freeze cooled greens in one and two cup containers to use later in the week. Thaw and use in soups, stews, and sautés.

Really, try them in just about anything - Quesadillas, Burritos, Curries, Stir-Fry, Pizza and Smoothies!