

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 10, November 16

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

Clear Street Farms

Clear Street Farms is a first year urban farm based in Reo Town, Lansing. In collaboration with Magnolia Avenue Farms, Clear Street Farms is dedicated to growing specialty vegetables, fruit, and herbs on reclaimed city lots; and to supporting and bolstering community resiliency efforts across the Greater Lansing Area.

Crop Profile

Parsnips

The parsnip is a root vegetable closely related to carrot and parsley, all belonging to the flowering plant family Apiaceae. The parsnip is native to Eurasia; it has been used as a vegetable since antiquity and was cultivated by the Romans, although some confusion exists between parsnips and carrots in the literature of the time. It was used as a sweetener before the arrival of cane sugar in Europe. This plant was introduced to North America simultaneously by the French colonists in Canada and the British in the Thirteen Colonies for use as a root vegetable, but in the mid-19th century, it was replaced as the main source of starch by the potato and consequently was less widely cultivated. Parsnips are usually cooked but can also be eaten raw. They have a lot going on nutritionally: They are filled with vitamins, high in the minerals potassium and manganese, and a good source of fiber. Parsnips can be used in the same ways as carrots, though their flavor is markedly sweeter, especially when cooked, more like a great sweet potato. They are a classic ingredient in some chicken broths and soups, and can also be baked, sauteed, steamed, mashed or pureed, roasted, used in stews and fried, like most root vegetables.



What's in the Box?

Organic Turnips, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
Organic Carrots, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Parsnips, *Clear Street Farms, Lansing*
Shizuka Apples, *Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids*
Organic Collard Greens, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*
Spaghetti Squash, *Tomac Pumpkin Patch, Chesaning*
Head Lettuce, *Ten Hens Farm, Bath*

Add-Ons

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

Recipes and Tips!

Roasted Medley of Veggie Box Roots

Veggie Box parsnips, peeled and cut into 2×1/2-inch sticks

Veggie Box carrots, cut into 2×1/2-inch sticks

Veggie Box turnips, peeled and cut into wedges

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.

Parsnips & Turnips au Gratin

Veggie Box parsnips, peeled and sliced

Veggie Box turnips, peeled and sliced

1 can (10-3/4 ounces) cream of celery soup

1 cup milk

1/2 teaspoon pepper

2 cloves of garlic

1/2 cup of onion

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1/2 cup panko bread crumbs

1 tablespoon butter, melted

Place parsnips and turnips in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 5-7 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, saute the onions and garlic. Then add the soup, milk and pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Stir in cheese until melted. Drain vegetables; transfer to an 11x7-in. baking dish coated with cooking spray. Pour sauce over vegetables. Combine bread crumbs and butter; sprinkle over top. Bake, uncovered, at 400° until vegetables are tender and crumbs are golden brown, 15-20 minutes.

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!