

Week Eight Newsletter

Reflecting on the Journey

Over the past eight weeks, participants have explored the many ways West Virginia specialty crops connect agriculture, health, and community. From learning about local crops and sustainable farming practices to cooking, preserving, and pairing foods, each session built a deeper understanding of the food system.

This final week is an opportunity to reflect on that journey, recognizing how small changes, like shopping at farmers' markets or trying new fruits and vegetables, can make a meaningful difference. By gaining knowledge and hands-on experience, participants are better prepared to make informed choices that support both personal health and local agriculture.

\$17.3 Million

sales at West Virginia farmers' markets grew to \$17.3 million in 2024, a 12% increase from 2023



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Growing Forward with Seeds & Skills

This week's workshop, led by a local Master Gardener, introduced participants to the basics of seed saving and gardening. Saving seeds helps preserve local plant varieties, supports biodiversity, and allows gardeners to continue growing crops that thrive in West Virginia's climate.

Participants were encouraged to bring and share seeds, exchange gardening experiences, and learn practical tips for growing and maintaining healthy plants. In addition to seed saving, the workshop reinforced key skills from previous weeks, including gardening, sustainability, and using specialty crops in everyday life. These skills empower individuals to take a more active role in their food system.



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Continuing the Farm-to-Table Lifestyle

Moving forward, participants can continue building on what they've learned by incorporating specialty crops into their daily routines. Visiting farmers markets, growing a home garden, preserving seasonal produce, and trying new recipes are all simple ways to stay connected to local agriculture.

Supporting local farmers not only provides access to fresh, nutritious foods but also strengthens the community and local economy. Sharing knowledge, recipes, and experiences with others helps spread agriculture literacy even further. By taking small, consistent steps, individuals can contribute to a more sustainable, healthy, and connected food system for West Virginia.

