

# Red Barn Plants & Produce



## Community Sustained Agriculture The down to earth facts.

The concept of CSA is uncommon in Metro Vancouver. For this reason we have created this section to spell out some of the finer details for you. If, after reading this, you are left with any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us directly, either via phone (604-467-4218) or email [redbarnplants@telus.net](mailto:redbarnplants@telus.net) and we will get back to you as soon as possible!

**CSA stands for Community Sustained Agriculture** and is a model of small scale farming which aims to deliver fresh, organic food directly to the local community, cutting out middle-men and strengthening individual connections to both the food and the land. CSA's direct support from its members allows small scale agriculture to remain a viable endeavour in today's large-scale economy. Shareholders benefit from not only knowing exactly where their food came from and how it was grown, but also who grew it, who else supports it, and the community contained therein.

Members of Red Barn Plants & Produce CSA become shareholders in the farm for the season and receive a portion of the harvest weekly, throughout the growing season. They pick up at a designated location either at our farm or at one of the markets we participate in. The weekly box of fresh, organic, locally grown produce follows the seasons, with crisp Spring vegetables filling out the first boxes, and your favourite Summer and Autumn fruit and veggies rounding out the peak of the harvest.

Part of being a shareholder means sharing in the farm as well. We will open the farm up to tours and tasting later in the season. You will be updated by a weekly newsletter during the CSA season on what is happening at the farm and ideas and recipes for the produce you will be receiving.

### **The CSA Economy**

Purchasing a CSA share means buying a portion of the season's 20 week harvest. During winter, we set production goals, order seed, repair equipment, and make plans for crop placement and harvest schedules. In the early Spring, we sell a limited number of shares based on those production goals. The money we receive for these sales funds part of the farm operations for the season.

### **What is in the boxes?**

Once the harvests begin in mid June, all shareholders receive weekly boxes of freshly picked vegetables and fruit. Because each vegetable or fruit has its own harvest schedule, boxes change throughout the season. At the beginning of the CSA season the boxes will be light on produce while later there will be some bumper crops so please be prepared to freeze or can some of the produce. Other factors, like the amount of precipitation and sunshine each week, make it impossible for us to create a definitive schedule. When you join a CSA you are truly eating with the seasons!

What we can tell you is that mid June boxes focus on leafy greens, peas, and herbs, early summer boxes contain spring vegetables plus crunchy favourites like broccoli and cucumbers, carrots, spring onions and beets, late summer boxes contain much of the above plus the warm weather veggies like tomatoes, peppers, beans and squash plus the start of our tree fruits, and fall boxes contain these plus winter squash, pumpkins, onions, leeks, brussel sprouts and some of the colder crops seen in the early Spring.

### **The Role of Mother Nature**

If you have looked into CSAs before, you have probably come across various disclaimers of risk, and our CSA is no different; it is inherent in the world of farming. Weather and insects are temperamental beasts. Conventional farmers use so many chemicals, at the cost of health and true flavour, to guarantee the quality (size and colour, in their case) of their crops. So, while we will be working dawn to dusk and tending our crops to the best of our abilities, it is still possible for certain crops to fail or, with an early onset of cold weather, for seasons to end sooner than we wish. We actively counter these possibilities by constantly increasing our knowledge and over-planting all our crops, and we are very confident that you, our valued farm supporter, will be happy with the quantity and variety of food offered through our CSA- but it is important that non-farmer-folks understand the breadth of the role Mother Nature plays in growing their food, and the

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### Supplements

Under rare circumstances, we may opt to supplement the food we have grown with food from a different local family farm that we are familiar with their growing ethics in the area. We like to avoid this as much as possible, but we also want to ensure you receive full, varied baskets each week. Sometimes crops take their time maturing, and while we have anywhere from 20-30 crops growing at any given time, it sometimes makes sense to leave a variety for the following week.

### Share Sizes

Our share comes in a box and is generally suitable for a couple eating primarily vegetables throughout the week, or a family of four (two adults and two young children) who use vegetables regularly as a side dish. Our half shares are enough for light eaters of produce such as seniors, single vegetarians or people who would like some fresh produce but not a full weeks worth. Depending on your family's eating habits, please understand that, while we aim to provide you with a hearty variety of freshly harvested, local, organic produce, a CSA share may not completely replace your weekly vegetable purchases. Small, local agriculture is about growing naturally, in time with the seasons, and so while we strive to include a rounded variety of staple vegetables when they are in season (tomatoes, onions, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, etc), your favourite vegetable may not be in the basket every week, due to its appropriate time of harvest, unpredictable weather, insects, etc.

### Organic

We have struggled with the term and even the processes involved in certifying as an *organic* farm. At Red Barn Plants & Produce we only use products which are registered on the OMRI list. This list is the bible for what an organic farm, on what inputs can be used on a farm that is certified organic. We follow other organic processes plus we believe in diversity and work with nature with the varieties we plant and the mix in the fields. This is why we have two farms in completely different climactic areas, we can grow the various crops to their perfection based on their natural requirements not on chemical support. Please feel free to ask any questions you like.

