

Buying and Eating Locally Grown Food

Community Supported Agriculture ~ A Guide to Joining a CSA Farm in the Ann Arbor Area

Organic
Fresh!
Sustainable
Food Security
Local
The Future



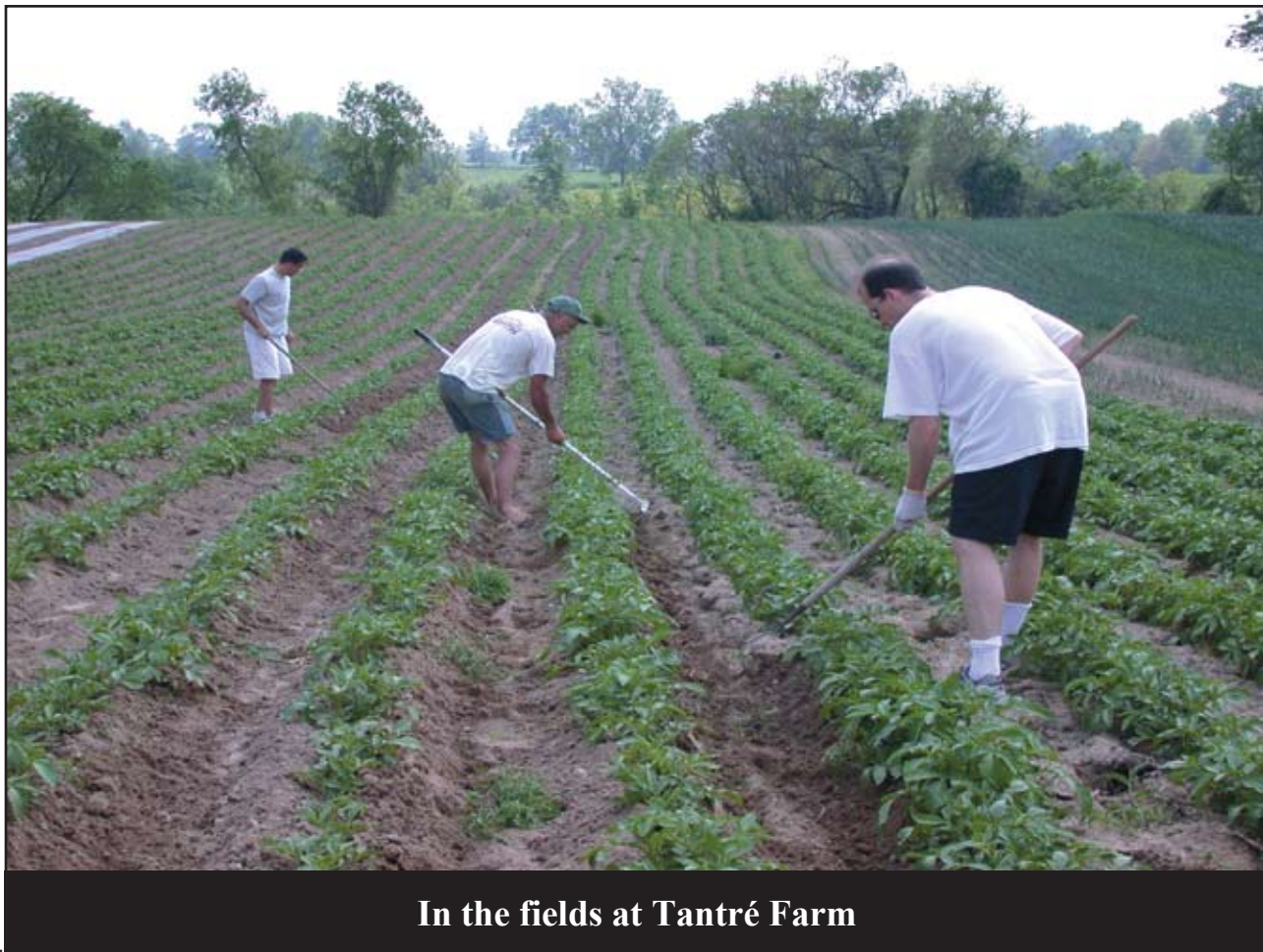
By Rachel Pastiva

Take a drive out to the country. Just pick a road that heads out of town and start driving. At first, you'll see subdivisions, and maybe a church or cemetery you didn't know existed. As the speed limit increases and the houses become less but larger, you'll notice traffic lights replaced by the commotion of birds as they dart in front of your car. Open fields dominate the countryside and abandoned barns stand almost invisibly among the overgrowth of brush and trees as relics of a forgotten time. Among these fields, you may find

a farm or two that still operate, and think to yourself that the farmers themselves are relics of the past. You'd be wrong of course, because these farmers have actually glimpsed our future.

I've confused you, haven't I? Here I was leading you on a relaxing drive through the country and now I'm suggesting that somehow *farmers* hold the key to our future? The only thing I can say to that is: they do if we'll let them.

There was a time in our country's history when 95% of the work force worked on farms. Now census reports no longer list farming as an occupation. Perhaps you consider this a sign of progress. I'm sure industrialized agriculture seemed like progress when it began spreading across the United States. However, when seeds



In the fields at Tantré Farm

are genetically modified to react a certain way to chemicals sprayed from computerized machines, and major agricultural states like Iowa import most of the fruits and vegetables the state consumes, I'd say progress has turned dangerous. Fortunately, in a time when it is easy to feel enslaved by the mandates of corporate agriculture, local farms are offering us a way to treat both our bodies and our planet the way we deserve, by taking part in a movement that may change the way America eats.

Community Supported Agriculture

The movement I'm referring to is Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, an agricultural model that builds a direct relationship between farmers and consumers. The consumers, or "members," share in the risks

and rewards of the farm by providing financial support for its operation in exchange for a weekly share of the farm's harvest. People who participate in CSA support local farms, receive fresh and generally organic produce, connect to the land and build community.

Although it is impossible to track, the internet lists over 2,300 CSA farms currently operating in North America. CSAs are established in

a dozen in the greater Ann Arbor area. Though CSAs began appearing in the United States in the mid-1980s, the majority of CSA farms are recently established, in what is considered the third wave of the CSA movement. I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Elizabeth Henderson, author of *Sharing the Harvest: a Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*, an indispensable guide on establishing a CSA farm. Henderson, who has been farming a CSA for over twenty years, believes the increase in CSA interest is due partially to literature reaching the general public about the importance of eating locally.

Best selling titles like *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* by Michael Pollan and *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver have brought to light the hazards of the average American diet and urge us to take more responsibility for the food choices we make. People begin to seek local alternatives when they understand the impact of their food choices on the environment and their own health; CSAs offer a solution for both. And, as Henderson says, CSAs are easy to join, which makes them accessible to the general public.

Part of what makes CSAs accessible is the variety of forms they take. In general, there are two approaches: the shareholder-based approach and the subscription-based approach. The shareholder-based approach is closely tied

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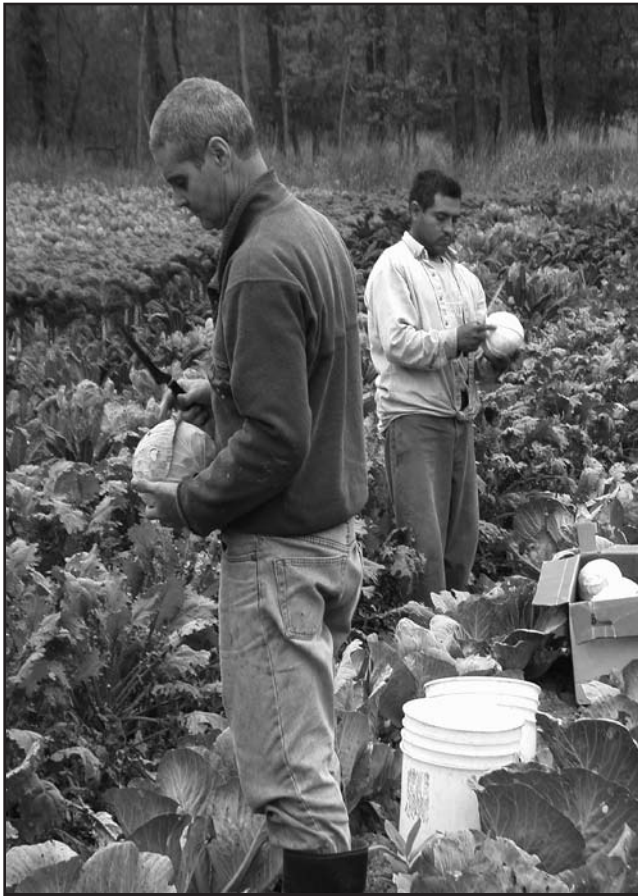
Vegetables at the market from Frog Holler Farm

"Growing food is the most basic use of the natural resources of the Earth, and through food production, we make our own working landscapes, ranging from patchworks of tiny gardens with diverse plantings to vast fields of single crops. How each society or nation produces and distributes food in large measure determines its identity."

— Elizabeth Henderson from *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*

A Guide to Joining a CSA Farm

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Cabbage Harvest at Tantré Farm

to the original U.S. CSAs, and actively involves its members in farm operations. Farms that operate this way are considered to be owned by the shareholders, and a core group of members make the important decisions regarding the farm, including who the farmer will be. These farms are more likely to require members to contribute a certain amount of time to farm work, as a core belief of the shareholder approach is developing a connection to the land. A local example of this approach is Community Farm of Ann Arbor, the oldest operating CSA in Ann Arbor.

The majority of CSAs in America, including all but one in the Ann Arbor area, are subscription-based. Subscription CSAs are often privately owned and operated by the farmers and if necessary, farm apprentices. For a fixed price, members can share in the farm's harvest over the course of a growing season, which, in Michigan, is 18-20 weeks. Subscription-based CSAs are quickly spreading across the country because they offer the most flexibility. These farms individually determine what extra services to offer their members, making them accessible to a broad range of people.

What to Look for in a CSA

It is important for anyone interested in participating in a CSA to research available options, and research early, as most CSAs are full by the end of March. The website www.localharvest.org is an excellent source of information. In part, Local Harvest offers a directory of CSAs by

“We need to develop an agricultural culture and economy, rather than a consumer culture and economy. I believe the reason we are in the problem today environmentally and economically, is because of unsustainable consumption. We need vision and perspective. We need to grow and cook our own food and quit buying into the corporate economy.”

---Richard Andres from Tantré Farm

state or zip code, including important highlights of each farm and easy links to farm websites.

For most people, cost is the biggest consideration. In fact, because a share can be up to several hundred dollars and the balance is generally due before the season starts, it's not uncommon for people to think CSAs are too expensive. But for the cost of a share, members receive weekly portions of locally grown, freshly picked produce with higher nutritional content than any purchased from a grocery store. Most CSAs also offer organic produce and all of them are guaranteed to have farmers who can answer any questions about the food they grow. According to “Farmer John” Hochstetler of Our Family Farm in Manchester, CSAs actually save money. “One of our members told us last year that every month she was a member she saved \$150 on grocery bills and that was half a share... It's well advertised that if you want to save money, join a CSA.” Like Our Family Farm, some farms offer half shares to members, while other farms, like Tantré Farm in Chelsea, encourage their members to split a full share. Many CSAs also offer discounts on shares if you register early, or if you are willing to pick up your share at the farm instead of an off-site location.

Another important consideration when looking for a CSA is the pickup time and location. In addition to farm pickup, most offer at least one additional location to make it easier for members to pick up their shares, and some farms offer several locations and times. Farmers markets are popular pickup locations and a lot of local CSAs have pickup times scheduled at one or more of the following: Ann Arbor Farmers Market, Westside Farmers Market, Chelsea Farmers Market or the Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market.

Other basic information to research includes the CSA's growing season, what type of produce and other items the farm offers, whether the farm offers informational newsletters with weekly shares, and if there are volunteer requirements to join. While the length of a farm's growing season may not necessarily impact your decision to join, the food might. In addition to providing various types of vegetables and herbs, farms may offer a variety of other items including honey, eggs, flowers, and poultry. These items may or may not be included in the price of a share. Old Pine Farm in Manchester is a meat CSA that offers grass fed beef and lamb, free range pork and chicken, emu and eggs. The season for a meat CSA is completely different than that of a vegetable CSA, but the animals are cared for compassionately and their offerings are just as fresh and nutritious. There are not many

meat CSAs established in the country, but Kris Hirth, owner of Old Pine Farm believes this will change. “I don't think the demand for meat is quite as high as for vegetables. However, as people become aware of the current industrialized meat system and what animals have to suffer through to end up in the grocery store, the desire for clean, humanely raised animals/meat has continued to grow. The national meat recalls are only a small glimpse of the total picture, and also affect the desire for local farm raised meats. I do see meat CSAs growing and becoming

People who join CSAs become food activists in doing so, and nurture a food system that has the power to replace corporate agriculture. Choosing local, organic farms as the source of our food supply is the first step in building sustainable communities.

more popular as time goes on.”

Newsletters may seem like a bonus, but many members find them indispensable. Tantré Farm's newsletter is full of information about each item in the weekly share, including flavor, nutritional value, how to prepare and how to store. Tantré Farm's newsletter also includes recipes, farm announcements and ruminations on the life of the farm. Newsletters educate members on new varieties of produce they may have never tasted before, let alone prepared in a meal. They also connect members to the farm by giving them a sense of how the farm operates and showing them when particular vegetables are harvested throughout the growing season. In addition to, or instead of newsletters, some farms offer valuable information on their websites including blogs and recipes. Cathy King of Frog Holler Organic Farm in Brooklyn maintains a monthly blog, “Frog Log,” year round. The Frog Log is a thoughtful, often humorous, glimpse of the trials and tribulations of farm life that shows readers what it really takes to run a farm and is a worthwhile read.

Another way people can connect to the farm is by volunteering to work on it. Some farms, like Community Farm of Ann Arbor, strongly encourage members to volunteer. In fact, at Community Farm, members who do not volunteer at least 15 hours during the growing season to help with farm tasks pay an additional \$125. Beautiful Earth Family Farm in Chelsea encourages members to



Pigs at Old Pine Farm



Grazing Sheep at Old Pine Farm

commit to 6 hours of volunteer work during the season, but it is not necessary, and the cost of the share is not affected either way. Tantré Farm doesn't need members to help with farm tasks, but offers three work days during the growing season for members who want to connect to the land. "We really encourage people to come out to the farm to see the land, the animals, and the farmers in order to really know where their food comes from," says Deb Lentz, owner of Tantré Farm with her husband, Richard Andres. "If they can help us out by putting their fingers into the soil even for short periods of time, it's an extra perk for them and for us, but working is not absolutely necessary for members to be support-

In a time when it is easy to feel enslaved by the mandates of corporate agriculture, local farms are offering us a way to treat both our bodies and our planet the way we deserve, by taking part in a movement that may change the way America eats.

ive and connected. It is an enrichment." Other farms, like Valley Family Farm in Milan, don't offer any form of volunteer work, but encourage members to visit the farm to meet the farmers and see the land their food is grown on.

Of course these characteristics are important to consider when researching CSAs, but after cost the most important consideration people have is whether or not the farm is organic. Now I caution you not to slip back into the standards of corporate agriculture and seek only farms that are USDA certified organic. While the "certified organic" label puts our minds at ease when we see it appear on containers we purchase at the grocery store, when it comes to small, privately owned farms, this designator becomes somewhat arbitrary. The amount of recordkeeping required, along with expensive membership and inspection fees make it difficult for small scale farms to become USDA certified organic, even though they use organic farming practices. Two Creeks Organics in Manchester has opted to become Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) instead, to assure prospective members of their organic farming practices. CNG is a certification program established by small scale farmers in response to the USDA National Organic Program's certification requirement to use the term "organic." Though CNG uses the same standards the government uses, the fees to join are minimal and inspections are done by other Certified Naturally Grown farmers. CNG is a legal, nationally recognized and endorsed certification program that gives small farms the right to advertise their practices as organic. Some farms choose not to become certified in any way because organic certification

actually restricts some sustainable practices. Because of the myriad of extenuating circumstances involved in organic certification, it is important not to judge a farm based on whether it is organically certified or not. Instead, take the time to ask farmers about their individual farming practices.

Once you have decided what farm you would like to join, the only decision left is determining how involved you would like to be in the CSA, as many farms offer community events in addition to weekly shares. From farm tours to harvest dinners and festivals, farms find ways to connect members to the land and each other. Some farms find it especially important to connect with children, and offer special programs geared specifically towards them. Chandra Mitchell, owner of Beautiful Earth Family Farm with her husband Adam, is offering a one week summer day camp this summer. "I believe that children are born with a natural love of the earth. I want to help bring that out in children who may have forgotten this natural love of nature and to nurture the ones who already carry that love." Two Creeks Organics also hosts week-long summer day camps for children. This year they will offer 8 weekly summer day camps for children ages 6-12 and will provide transportation to the farm for an additional fee. They also provide shares to three Gretchen's House Child Development Centers and host visits from the centers, as well as tours for schools, scout troops and other childcare groups. Community Farm of Ann Arbor also hosts field trips for students from kindergarten through college.

By now you can see that joining a CSA involves more than just picking up a box of produce from the local farmers market. In fact, it requires more than a financial and time commitment. For many people, participating in a CSA requires a complete lifestyle change, and is not one that should be taken lightly. "In this life, we want everything done for us," says Richard Andres of Tantré Farm. "But this is like self help: you have to make the effort and there has to be some kind of program. We're willing to come half way. We'll put this together and make a newsletter and grow this stuff but you're gonna have to put it together. You're gonna have to come pick it up and make a special effort if that's what you want."



The Key to a Sustainable Future

Amidst the backdrop of economic uncertainties and abusive agri-business, community supported agriculture empowers us to make choices for ourselves that positively impact our future. People who join CSAs become food activists in doing so, and nurture a food system that has the power to replace corporate agriculture. Choosing local, organic farms as the source of our food supply is the first step in building sustainable communities. Anne Elder of Community Farm of Ann Arbor thinks people are beginning to wake up to the importance of local agriculture. "I think as our culture becomes more awake, rather than asleep as I think in general it is, people will see the importance of local food, the importance of organic agriculture... They're gonna start seeing what really is sustainable to our country and then to the earth's future, and make their decisions based on that and not their desires." Richard Andres of Tantré Farm agrees that there needs to be a shift in our country's values. "We need to develop an agricultural culture and economy, rather than a consumer culture and economy. I believe the reason we are in the problem today environmentally and economically, is because of unsustainable consumption. We need vision and perspective. We need to grow and cook our own food and quit buying into the corporate economy."

As your drive past the farms of our future ends and you start to head home, the expanse of open fields is again replaced by sidewalks and subdivisions, traffic lights and car exhaust. You may begin to wonder as you wait at an intersection for the light to change, how you could possibly make all the changes necessary to build a sustainable future. Just remember that change starts with a single step. "There needs to be change in our country. And so many people are afraid of change. [But] change doesn't have to be bad. Change doesn't have to be tremendous. Or so daunting that you have to give everything up. That doesn't have to happen. Change can be graceful, and it can be fun and empowering and compassionate. And to me that's a big part of what the CSA movement is: a good change."— Anne Elder

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(Farm Photos continue on the next page, and then we spotlight 8 individual CSA's starting on page 32.)



View of Frog Holler Farm



Greg Hart washing Hakurei (white salad turnips) at Tantré Farm



Paul Bantle of Community Farm

Community Supported Agriculture

“For most of human history, people have been connected with the land that fed them. Growing (or hunting and gathering) food somewhere nearby is basic to human existence, as basic as breathing, drinking and sexual reproduction. If this basic connection breaks down, there is sure to be trouble.”

--- Elizabeth Henderson from *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*



Casey Hirth and chicks at Old Pine Farm



Joan with lettuce - Jupiter with ball at Frog Holler



Flourishing Vegetables at Frog Holler



“Chloe” is a Scottish Highlander (a heritage breed) at Old Pine Farm



Sheep at Old Pine Farm



Photo by Mary Runser

Kenny, Edwin and Billy King of Frog Holler Farm

“ I hope we will be able to spread the word about community supported agriculture in language that opens doors to people. We may have to drop some of our favorite jargon—even the word sustainable—and talk, instead, about keeping farms in business for the long term, making sure that everybody gets enough nourishing food to eat, and living in a way that respects the natural limits of the world around us.”

---Elizabeth Henderson from *Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture*



Christine Cox at Tantré Farm



Paul Bantle and Anne Elder of Community Farm



Anne Elder of Community Farm

Become a Food Activist: Join a CSA!

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Community Farm of Ann Arbor

Community Farm of Ann Arbor uses the classical, shareholder-based approach to CSA. It was established in 1988: only two years after the first two CSAs in America. While the original CSA farms were being established in New England, two women in Ann Arbor were unknowingly preparing themselves for their roles in the eventual move of CSA to Ann Arbor. Cindy Olivas and Marcia Barton were both interested in alternative movements and together attended a two-year course on biodynamic farming at Camphill Village in Kimberton Hills, PA. When they returned to Ann Arbor in 1988, Trauger Groh, a co-founding member of one of the original CSA farms, came to Ann Arbor to speak about the new agricultural movement spreading across the country. Over the course of a week, Groh spoke at different venues and attracted a small but loyal following of community members who became interested in the movement. A core group of about 125 people, including Olivas and Barton, agreed to help organize and financially support a farm. Cindy Olivas and Marcia Barton volunteered to farm the land, and Groh left the members to secure the land that would become the farm.

With the farmers determined and the members committed, the group found land to rent on Whitmore Lake Road. With all the components in place, Community Farm of Ann Arbor was founded, though it was a long time before the members felt secure. Within the first five years, both Olivas and Barton moved on to other projects and the farm moved twice. A founding member named Anne Elder took over farm operations with her partner Paul Bantle. Because farming on rented land offered no permanency, Anne and Paul did not feel comfortable planting crops that needed more than a year to flourish. The Potawatami Land Trust was formed by interested farm and community members to secure land for the farm.

Securing the land became a ten-year, \$75,000 project full of garage sales, bake sales and music festivals designed to help raise money so Community Farm of Ann Arbor could afford a lease. During this time, the Potawatami Land Trust moved on to other projects and eventually became the Washtenaw Land Trust. In 2004, Community Farm of Ann Arbor was able to secure an 89-year lease for the farm from their landlord. They also purchased the development rights which restricted use of the land to agriculture or open land forever.

Community Farm of Ann Arbor operates as a biodynamic farm, a method that only a handful of the thousands of CSA farms operating today have adopted. Developed by Rudolf Steiner in the 1920's, this method sees farming as a spiritual science. "We believe there is spirit in everything: spirit in the rocks, spirit in the river, spirit in the trees," says Anne. "And we work with those spirits, recognize them, call on them to work with us so that we can actually help heal the earth." But it's not just the earth that experiences healing. By listening to the earth and



Photo by Griffin Lindsay

"[CSA is] people being directly involved with the earth, the air, the sun and the rain. Bring children to touch the animals and play in the fields of the Lord."

---Paul Bantle

supplying it with what it needs, the earth in turn produces nutritious food that can help us heal as well. It is evident in the way Community Farm of Ann Arbor operates that the spirit inside each of us is important too. "We believe that each person has divinity in them and what we try to do is see that in them and help them see it in each other," Anne says.

Anne and Paul meditate on a daily basis, a practice that in part, allows them to remain open and responsive to the earth's needs. According to Paul, this is closely linked to Steiner's vision. "In his world renowned lectures on biodynamic farming in 1924, Rudolf Steiner stated that the farmer should be a meditator. That was a foretelling, at least for Community Farm of Ann Arbor, for we meditate every morning and every night... and this contributes immensely to the atmosphere and well being of the farm organism."

In order to make the farm accessible to more people, Community Farm uses a sliding scale, in which members pledge how much they are capable of paying for their share of the farm's harvest. In 2009, members can pledge between

\$700 and \$1700 for a share. Members therefore not only support the farm, but each other, as some members agree to pay a higher pledge to make shares available to people with lower incomes. The farm also offers a couple of scholarships each year.

You might think that expecting some members to pay \$1,000 more than other members is a bit unfair, but the members themselves have determined what the sliding scale is going to be. You see, members of Community Farm of Ann Arbor have a say in every aspect of farm operations, including the budget. Each year begins with an annual budget meeting in which members determine the budget for the upcoming year. As a fully disclosed farm, Community Farm's members see exactly what their money is paying for throughout the year and find out not only what is not going into the food they eat, but also what it takes to grow that food.

There are also member meetings throughout the growing season during which members vote on a variety of topics, from what kind of vegetables to plant to whether they should

build a website for the farm. Anne admits that change is slow to come to Community Farm, a side effect of the decision making process the farm employs, "consensus voting." This form of voting gives each member an equal voice, and requires that all participating members agree before any changes to the farm take place. Whether members have been a part of the farm one year or twenty, their voice is important. Anne believes this is a valuable part of farm operations. "It's a lovely thing that you, no matter who you are, you're really important. But it's also a very *different* thing because a lot of people have been disempowered in our society. They don't think their voice is important."

Members have a lot of say about the farm because the members are the ones who own it. Members are also expected to help maintain the farm. In fact, members who are unable to volunteer at least 15 hours during the season are required to pay \$125 more for their share. Of course, the members aren't solely responsible for running the farm. Every year the farm has several apprentices who work between 15 and 40 hours a week. A broad range of people become apprentices; some tend to be people who studied environmental programs in school and want to be engaged in the hands on experience of working with the earth. Eighteen former Community Farm apprentices have gone on to establish other farm related programs, including CSA farms in other countries.

Community Farm of Ann Arbor is a very educational place, not only for apprentices, but for local and regional students as well. The farm offers field trips to students from kindergarten through college. Because many schools have little funding for field trips, the farm does not charge schools to allow students to visit. Students from Ann Arbor Public Schools, Detroit Public Schools, Ann Arbor and Detroit Steiner Schools, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan routinely visit the farm to learn about a broad range of topics. The experience leaves such an impression on the students that families sometimes become members of the farm, or students become apprentices.

The farm continues to be a learning experience for Anne and Paul too, who are incorporating renewable energy into farm operations. Last year, members approved a project that involved turning a 1940's tractor into a solar powered tractor. Like everything else on the farm, members were involved in all stages of the operation, from writing the grant to actually installing the panels. Currently the tractor runs on low horsepower that allows it to plant, cultivate and give hayrides. The solar powered tractor is a building block for an irrigation system run on solar power. Anne and Paul would like the farm to eventually operate solely on renewable energy.

This year marks the third season for another new addition to Community Farm of Ann Arbor, the Community Farm Kitchen. Mary Wessel Walker, an apprentice on the farm, has developed a way to overcome the obstacle many members of CSA farms face: finding ways to use the raw vegetables they receive in their weekly share. For Community Farm members who are willing to pay extra for the service, the Community Farm Kitchen gathers members' weekly share to rinse, cook, can, or freeze it in a way that requires minimal preparation once it is brought home. The Community Farm Kitchen

has also expanded to include a bakery that offers breads, muffins, pies, cookies, including vegan options, though the bakery is not connected to the farm.

Community Farm of Ann Arbor is truly a shareholder-based farm, as the farm itself exists solely to provide for its members. While an important part of the farm is supplying members with nutritious and organically grown food, the value of the farm is far greater than the food it grows. The members involved in the farm also gain a connection to the earth and share a connection with like-minded people. But perhaps the greatest connection members make is with their own abilities to support a food system that is healthy for the earth, the community and themselves. "Let's face it. There's a thunderous revolution afoot in agriculture," says Paul. "It's what Gandhi called 'The New Village Movement.' It's what we call CSA."

Farm Name and Contact Information

Community Farm of Ann Arbor
1525 S. Fletcher Rd.
Chelsea, MI 48118
734-433-0261
www.communityfarmofaa.org

Farmers

Anne Elder and Paul Bantle

Farm Facts

CSA since 1988
Number of shares for 2009: 105
Shares available: Full
Price: Members pledge between \$700-\$1700
(Sliding Scale)

Pickup Location

Farm

Growing Season

June-November



Additional Information

Biodynamic
Field trips (K-Post Graduate)
Community Farm Kitchen
Consensus Voting

Solar Powered Tractor
Volunteer Requirement (costs more if you don't work)
Member meetings
Farm events

"By coming to the farm, [members] get to receive so many of the gifts of agriculture. The smells and feels and visions that are there, the hope for the future. The importance of saving farmland. If you don't see the farm and the beautiful soil that grows the vegetables, it's very hard to understand what we need to save and protect."

---Anne Elder

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Photo by Ruth Schekter

"I do know that in some situations it's not that practical for everybody to come out to the farm and it's a good way to get started that the food move off the farm. But I think we can be more creative. Instead of buying a truck to cart the vegetables, what if we bought a van and picked up the people and brought them out to the farm? I'm hoping that more CSAs, including ours, move in that direction, where we have a shuttle bus, even a solar powered shuttle bus, and we're bringing the people out to the farm."

---Anne Elder

A Guide to Joining a CSA Farm

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Frog Holler Organic Farm

Frog Holler Organic Farm has been a family owned and operated farm since 1975. Run by Ken and Cathy King with their three sons Billy, Kenny and Edwin, Frog Holler and the King family have been well-known in Ann Arbor long before becoming a CSA in 2008. Ken first introduced the community to healthy eating in the early 1970s as co-owner and head cook of Indian Summer Natural Foods Restaurant, while Cathy has been promoting a healthy lifestyle for almost 20 years as a yoga teacher at Inward Bound Yoga. The King family also has strong ties to music, and son Billy King is a popular singer/songwriter who performs regularly around Ann Arbor.

Though the majority of Frog Holler Organic Farm's customers are satisfied purchasing produce directly from their three farm stands at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market, the farm will be providing for 25 CSA members this summer. According to Cathy King, providing for members offers some flexibility. "CSA members tend to be more open to the variety of vegetables, so we are encouraged and stimulated to grow vegetable types that are delicious but might not be so well-known. It helps to know that we have an open-minded and supportive customer base so that we can be a bit more adventuresome in what we grow."

Community has always been important to Frog Holler Farm and the Kings' love of music is evident in farm events such as barn dances and open mics. The farm also hosts the popular Holler Fest, a weekend-long music festival that has become an annual event. "We have benefited greatly from our interaction with a supportive community through the years, and perhaps, the community has benefited from experiencing the possibility that food, culture and creativity can all be 'locally-grown.'"

Having farmed for over 35 years, Cathy sees how CSAs are changing peoples' attitudes about farming. "I think folks who join CSAs are already predisposed to appreciate the produce, but then they often discover that the relationship that develops with the farm and farmer are just as meaningful. Members also get more of a sense of the seasonal change in produce which I think also helps them to realize the unknowns involved in farming. Our customers at the market have always appreciated us, but perhaps the CSA model offers members an opportunity not just to appreciate the farmer, but also to participate with the farmer in the creation of an agri-culture."

Farm Name and Contact Information

Frog Holler Organic Farm
11811 Beech Rd.
Brooklyn, MI 49230
517-592-8017
www.froghollerorganic.com
kings@froghollerorganic.com

Owners/Farmers

Ken, Cathy, Billy, Kenny and Edwin King



Kathy and Ken King with Jupiter of Frog Holler Organic Farm

Farm Facts

CSA since 2008
Number of members for 2009: 25
Shares available: Full
Price: \$450/share (\$400 for farm pickup)
Certified organic

Growing Season

18 weeks: June 20-October 17 (strong seedling season keeps them from extending season)

Additional Information

Holler Fest (members receive 2 free tickets)
No work requirement
Weekly newsletter

Pickup Locations

Saturdays: Ann Arbor Farmers Market until 1pm
Saturdays & Sundays: Farm pickup

"I think folks who join CSAs are already predisposed to appreciate the produce, but then they often discover that the relationship that develops with the farm and farmer are just as meaningful. Members also get more of a sense of the seasonal change in produce which I think also helps them to realize the unknowns involved in farming. Our customers at the market have always appreciated us, but perhaps the CSA model offers members an opportunity not just to appreciate the farmer, but also to participate with the farmer in the creation of an agri-culture." --- Cathy King



Billy King, Ken King, Kenny King, Kathy King and Edwin King of Frog Holler Organic Farm

"We have benefited greatly from our interaction with a supportive community throughout the years, and, perhaps, the community has benefited from experiencing the possibility that food, culture and creativity can all be 'locally-grown.'" --- Cathy King

“I think being a part of a CSA is being connected to a farm. We help each other out. So many parts of our lives are filled with disconnection. I think people are starved for connections these days. We watch people connecting at the markets with the farmers, with the food, with each other. We watch people connecting at the farm with the land, the plants, and with each other. These interactions sparkle and sizzle with laughter, observation, discussion, search for knowledge, questions and wonder. I feel it is necessary for people to feel connected in some way, but that connection may be achieved differently for each individual”---Deb Lentz

Tantré Farm

Tantré Farm is the largest subscription CSA in the area. Located in Chelsea, it is privately owned by Richard Andres and his wife Deb Lentz. Tantré is a certified organic farm that has been operating as a CSA since 2001. Richard personally built the entire infrastructure, including a barn, distribution center, packing shed and living quarters for apprentices in the seven years prior to becoming a CSA. Going into its ninth season, the farm continues to grow annually by 5-10%. In 2009, Tantré will accommodate 300 shares, and 2/3 of them will be split among members.

Tantré Farm does not have member work requirements but offers three Farm Work Parties during the growing season for members who are interested in working with the land. Richard and Deb farm the land themselves with the help of farm apprentices. Each year the farm employs at least six apprentices. Apprentices live on the farm, are supplied with room and board, and receive a small stipend for their work. Apprentices also participate in household duties and are responsible for cooking one meal per week.

The farm offers a variety of events and services, including U-Pick, extended fall/winter shares, a Thanksgiving share, and various educational workshops. Visitors and volunteers are welcome most days of the week but are encouraged to call ahead. Edible farm tours and field trips are also offered to organizations of all ages.

Farm Name and Contact Information

Tantré Farm
2510 Hayes Rd.
Chelsea, MI 48118
734-475-4323
www.tantrefarm.com
tantrefarm@hotmail.com

Owners

Richard Andres & Deb Lentz

Farm Facts

CSA since 2001
Number of shares for 2009: 300
Shares available: Full
Price: \$575 per share or \$525 for farm pickup
Certified Organic

Pickup Locations

Saturdays: Community High in Ann Arbor
7am-12pm
Saturdays: Chelsea Farmers Market 8am-12pm
Tuesdays: Farm pick-up 2pm-7pm
Wednesdays: Farm pick-up 10am-7pm
Fridays: Farm pick-up 2pm-7pm



Richard Andres, Deb Lentz and Daughter Ari at Tantré Farm

Growing Season

20 weeks: Early June through Mid-October
Also offers extended fall/winter share & Thanksgiving share

Additional Information

2/3 of members split shares
Work days (May, July, and September)
Weekly newsletter
Apprentices live on sight

“As far as what we’re doing here, our modus is still sort of operating in that radical way... we’re still trying to discover what the root of our economy and our personal work is going to be here.”

--- Richard Andres

“If you are eating, you are connected to a farm. We can achieve a cultural and social connection this way too, because it brings life back into balance when we are connected to a farm. Our lives are so out of balance with technology and economy, so much so that land is not worth what it can produce through species diversification and ecosystem and habitat preservation.” ---Richard Andres



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“It’s a creative process here. It makes it so much more lively and interesting and fun.” ---Deb Lentz

A Guide to Joining a CSA Farm

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Beautiful Earth Family Farm

Beautiful Earth Family Farm is owned and operated by Adam and Chandra Mitchell. With 20 years of farm experience to inspire him, Adam and his wife Chandra purchased a farm during the summer of 2006 and began farming Beautiful Earth Family Farm the following year. After selling the farm's harvest exclusively at the Chelsea Farmers Market, in 2008 they started a CSA with 62 members. This year they will provide for 100 members and hope to eventually provide for 250 members. Beautiful Earth Family Farm is in the process of becoming certified organic through Midwest Organic Services Association in Wisconsin, a process that takes three years to complete. They are also looking to hire three workers this year who they hope will continue to work the farm on a yearly basis.

For its second season, Beautiful Earth Family Farm is encouraging members to volunteer 6 hours of work on the farm, although it is not required. The farm will also offer a week long summer day camp, give tours and host a member gathering. For Adam, part of the pleasure of farming is right intention, which is important for the good and health of the

“Right intention related to Right Livelihood is based on a belief in working to make things better. The conception that each person on the planet doing their honest best to be a positive contributing human being; and looking at their daily actions and how they impact the planet and the other living things; is what is needed and will help us overcome our current challenges as a civilization.”

--- Adam Mitchell



Photo by Mary Runser

Adam and Chandra Mitchell, and Children of Beautiful Earth Family Farm

community. “Right intention related to Right Livelihood is based on a belief in working to make things better. The conception that each person on the planet doing their best to be a positive contributing human being, and looking at their daily actions and how they impact the planet and other living things, is what is needed and will help us overcome our current challenges as a civilization.”

Farm Name and Contact Information

Beautiful Earth Family Farm
Chelsea, MI
734-649-5918
www.beautifulearthfarm.com
beautifulearthfarm@yahoo.com

Owners

Chandra and Adam Mitchell

Farm Facts

CSA since 2008
Number of shares for 2009: 100
Shares available: Full and half bushels

Price: \$400 plus \$15 refundable bin charge (Discounted shares for early registration)
Certified Organic (in process)

Pickup Locations

Wednesdays: Ann Arbor Farmers Market
Saturdays: Chelsea Farmers Market

Growing Season

20 weeks: June through October

Additional Information

Encourage a commitment of 6 hours with each share purchase
Week-long summer day camp (one week only)
Member gathering
Farm tours

“I believe that children are born with a natural love of the earth. I want to help bring that out in children who may have forgotten this natural love of nature and to nurture the ones who already carry that love.”

--- Chandra Mitchell

Our Family Farm

Our Family Farm is a family farm whose motto is, “health from the farm, not the pharmacy.” Run by “Farmer John” Hochstetler, who’s been farming as long as he can remember, Our Family Farm became a CSA in 2006, and will provide for 100 members in 2009. In addition to vegetables, the farm offers free range brown eggs, honey and flowers. Members pick up their weekly shares at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market and are free to pick the vegetables they want and are not required to take any they don’t.

“An ideal member is someone who likes to cook, who likes to save money on grocery bills, likes to talk to the person who grows your food and to learn how your food grows. People who want to have a relationship with the farmer.”

--- “Farmer John” Hochstetler



Photo by Mary Runser

John and Lois Hochstetler of Our Family Farm

Owners

John Hochstetler

Farm Facts

CSA since 2006
Number of members for 2009: 100
Shares available: Full and half
Price: \$475 for full and \$260 for half
Uses organic farming practices

Pickup Locations

Saturdays: Ann Arbor Farmers Market 7am-1pm

Growing Season

Mid-June-November 1st

Additional Information

No volunteer requirements
No newsletter
Free range, brown egg chickens

“We’re gonna find that it’s cheaper to have health from the farm and not the pharmacy.”

--- “Farmer John” Hochstetler

Farm Name and Contact Information

Our Family Farm
12800 Pfaus
Manchester, MI 48158
734-428-9100
www.ourfamilyfarmllc.com
ourfamilyfarm@sbcglobal.net

Valley Family Farm

Valley Family Farm has been a CSA since 2007. Its owners, Ken and Patricia Huling, recently returned to farming after 20 years to gain security during this time of economic uncertainty. The farm uses organic farming practices and offers honey in addition to vegetables to their 75 members. There are no volunteer requirements, but members are invited to the annual harvest dinner at the end of November, as well as Friday night gatherings throughout the growing season.

Farm Name and Contact Information

Valley Family Farm
11333 Stony Creek
Milan, MI 48160
734-904-1433
www.valleyfamilyfarm.com
GardenGoddess@valleyfamilyfarm.com
valleyfamilyfarm@yahoo.com

Owners/Farmers

Ken and Patricia Huling

Farm Facts

CSA since 2007
Number of shares for 2009: 75
Shares available: Small, Standard and Ex-large
Price: \$300/\$525/\$650
Naturally grown

Growing Season

20 weeks: June through October

Pickup Locations



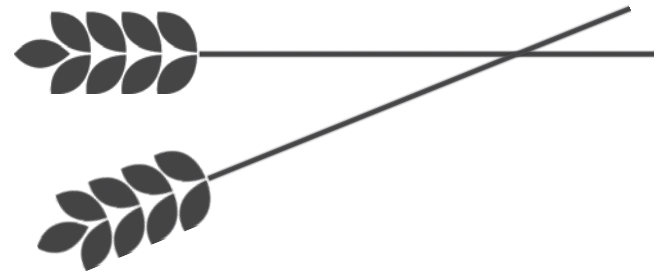
Photo by Carol Karr

Ken and Patricia Huling Valley Family Farm

Tuesdays: 11am-3pm: AID in Milan
2pm-6pm: Downtown Ypsilanti Farmers Market
Thursdays: Westside Farmers Market 4pm-7pm
Fridays: Farm pickup 6pm-8pm

Additional Information

Harvest dinner at end of season
Friday night gatherings during summer
No member volunteers
Visits always encouraged
Newsletter



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Body, Mind & Spirit Services at Crazy Wisdom

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Drop-In Tarot Readings with Rebecca Williams

Thursdays, 7-10 p.m. • \$1.00 per minute
No appointment needed
rebeccawilliams999@comcast.net

Drop-in Intuitive/Psychic Readings with Molly Ann Indura

Fridays, 7-10 p.m. • \$1 a minute
Call 734-417-8317 • http://www.bethelight.org

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10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. • \$1 per minute
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Body, Mind, Spirit

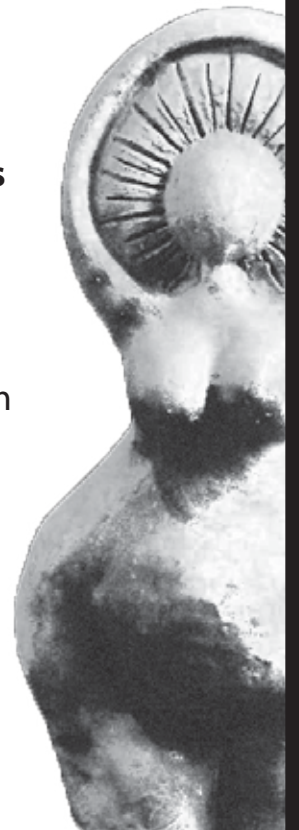
114 S. Main St., Ann Arbor
734.665.2757
www.crazywisdom.net

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Saturdays, 2-5 p.m.
\$1 per minute
No appointment necessary
Call 734-327-9568
in-genius@comcast.net



A Guide to Joining a CSA Farm

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Old Pine Farm

Old Pine Farm is the only meat CSA in the area, and is owned and operated by Kris Hirth with the help of her 16 and 19 year old sons, Casey and Josh. Although the farm did not become a CSA until 2005, Kris began selling meat at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market in 2001. Kris researched CSAs when she was approached by customers interested in purchasing her meat who did not have freezer space to store it.

In its fourth season, Old Pine Farm will provide for 40 members. It offers local, free-range, hormone-free meats and poultry including beef, pork, lamb, and chicken. Emu, a red meat that is 97% fat free and low in calories and cholesterol is also offered. The season runs from November to October and shares are distributed once a month.

Although members cannot participate in a meat CSA the same way they would a vegetable CSA, Old Pine Farm still offers volunteer work days for members and farm tours. Animal feeding days, field trips, and a chef demonstration are some other activities the farm hosts.

Having a local option for humanely raised meat allows members to support a food system based on compassion and perhaps makes people think about how animals are generally treated on commercial farms. "I think the average consumer doesn't really know what a 'grocery store' animal goes through to get to their plate," Kris says. "From the farm, to the truck, to the auction, to the slaughterhouse, animals in the industrialized system suffer large amounts of stress, which affects the meat quality. There are vegetarians who won't eat meat because they are concerned about animal treatment. One of my former-vegetarian clients told me,

"I think the average consumer doesn't really know what a "grocery store" animal goes through to get to their plate. From the farm, to the truck, to the auction, to the slaughterhouse, animals in the industrialized system suffer large amounts of stress (which affects the meat quality). There are vegetarians who won't eat meat because they are concerned about animal treatment. One of my former-vegetarian clients told me, "I haven't eaten meat for ten years because of the way animals are treated. Now I can get delicious meat and feel comfortable about how it ended up in my freezer". That's our goal. To do the right thing."

--- Kris Hirth

'I haven't eaten meat for ten years because of the way animals are treated. Now I can get delicious meat and feel comfortable about how it ended up in my freezer.' That's our goal. To do the right thing."

Farm Name and Contact Information

Old Pine Farm
19143 Grass Lake Rd.
Manchester, MI 48158
www.oldpinefarm.biz
Oldpinefarm123@yahoo.com

Owners

Kris Hirth



Kris Hirth of Old Pine Farm

"I don't think the demand for meat is quite as high as for vegetables. However, as people become aware of the current industrialized meat system and what animals have to suffer through to end up in the grocery store, the desire for clean, humanely raised animals/meat has continued to grow. The national meat recalls are only a small glimpse of the total picture and also affect the desire for local farm raised meats. I do see meat CSA's growing and becoming more popular as time goes on."

--- Kris Hirth

Farm Facts

Meat CSA since 2005
Number of shares for 2009: 40
Shares available: Full and half
Pricing: see website for pricing
Use organic practices when possible

Pickup Locations

Farm-once per month
Zingerman's Roadhouse once per month

Growing Season

November-October

Additional Information

Volunteer work days
Visits and tours (free)
Animal feeding days for kids
Field trips
Open House
Chef demo and/or recipe competition
Newsletter



Old Pine Farm

Two Creeks Organics

Two Creeks Organics, owned and operated by Amie and Mark Sanford, is going into its third growing season. After an injury that forced Mark to give up his job as a builder, he pursued certification in organic gardening from Washtenaw Community College. Amie and Mark received a lot of encouragement to become a CSA farm from other CSAs and with the help of Amie's brother, Martin Mongeau, Mark and Amie established their CSA in 2007. Amie's father, Bob Mongeau also maintains apple and pear orchards on the farm and Mark's father, Austin Sanford, helps with facility maintenance.

Amie, who has formerly been a lawyer, childcare center owner, and caterer, has incorporated a lot of activities on the farm geared towards children, because she wants to educate them on farm life. "I feel that if children can make the connection between where their food comes from and how it is grown it may change the way they eat and the way they see other areas of their life." Two Creeks Organics is offering a week-long summer camp for kids aged 6-12 from mid-June through late August. In addition to learning about farm practices and local wildlife and their habitats, children will prepare and eat farm fresh food everyday. Amie hopes the day camp will teach children to respect nature, help them build a connection to the environment, and foster a healthier attitude towards food. The farm also provides food and tours to three Gretchen's House Child Development Centers and offers farm tours to schools and other organizations.

Two Creeks Organics does not have volunteer requirements, but encourages member involvement through a variety of classes and hosts open houses in May and November. In addition to vegetables, the farm also offers eggs, chicken, and when available, turkey and duck. The poultry, which is not included in the cost of a share, is free range and fed organic feed when possible. The farm will provide for 100 full shares for the 2009 growing season and hope to continue to grow to provide for 150-200 member families.

Farm Name and Contact Information

Two Creeks Organics
13290 Tracey Rd.
Manchester, MI 48158
734-428-7057
www.twocreeksorganics.com
twocreeksorganic@aol.com

Owners/Farmers

Mark and Amie Sanford

Farm Facts

CSA since 2007
Number of shares for 2009: 100
Shares available: Full
Price: \$600/share or \$575 for farm pick up
Certified Naturally Grown

Pickup Locations

Thursdays: Westside Farmers Market
Fridays: Saline
Saturdays: on the farm

Growing Season

20 weeks: late May/early June through late September/early October



Photo by Mary Runser

Mark and Amie Sanford of Two Creeks Organics

Additional Information

Partnership with Gretchen's House
Week-long summer day camp for kids ages 6-12
(8 weeks, 25 kids per week)
Apple and Pear Orchard
No workdays or volunteer requirements

"[Members value] the fact that they not only have fresh seasonal food but that they know how and where it was grown and that the farm is responsive to any of their concerns or questions. Many of them are also happy with the fact that they help to support a local family farm."

--- Amie Sanford



Photo by Mary Runser

On the Porch at Two Creeks Organics



Photo by Mary Runser

Free Range at Two Creeks Organics



Photo by Mary Runser

Amie Sanford of Two Creeks Organics

Additional Resources

Localharvest.org

Visit Crazy Wisdom Bookstore & Tea Room for these books and more:

Sharing the Harvest: A Citizen's Guide to Community Supported Agriculture by Elizabeth Henderson and Robyn Van En (\$35)

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by Michael Pollan (\$16)

In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto by Michael Pollen (\$15)
Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver (\$14.95)

What is Biodynamics? A Way to Heal and Revitalize the Earth by Rudolf Steiner (\$20)

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future by Bill McKibben (\$14)

Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt on Vegetables by Farmer John Peterson (\$29.95)

Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook: Healthy Cooking and Good Living with Pasture Raised Foods by Shannon Hayes (\$16.50)

Community Farm of Ann Arbor Cookbook: 2nd Edition by Community Farm of Ann Arbor (\$21.75)