

Discover Community Supported Agriculture

Okay, the hint of spring is in the air. Toying with us, maybe, but it's there. It's actually past time to start thinking about fresh produce...and if you aren't a gardener, don't despair. Farmer's Markets and the grocery store are not the only way to experience the abundance of the growing season. Consider joining a CSA, Community Supported Agriculture. A CSA is a farming model that allows you to place your food dollars directly into the hands of the family farm.

According to the website Local Harvest, a CSA reflects an innovative and resourceful strategy to connect local farmers with local consumers; develop a regional food supply and strong local economy; maintain a sense of community; encourage local land stewardship; and honor the knowledge and experience of growers and producers working small to medium farms. Whew! That's a mouthful. What it means is joining a CSA is a way to support local farmers and put fresh local produce on your table. Sounds like a win-win to me.

Here's how it works: by giving your financial support up front, you and other "shareholders" cover the farm's yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. You make a commitment to support the farm through the season, rain or shine. In return, the farm provides, to the best of its ability, a healthy supply of seasonal fresh produce. What a way to build community and invest in your local harvest. It's a great deal—they do the work, you eat the bounty.

Delaware County is fortunate to be serviced by several area farms that provide CSA opportunities. I checked Local Harvest and found these CSAs listed. To find out more about each program's details, like product offerings, cost for a season's share, farming practices (organic, conventional, naturally grown) and weekly pick-up and drop-off times and locations (for collecting your portion of the harvest), call the numbers listed.

- Sippel Family Farm, Mt. Gilead, Ben & Lisa Sippel, 419-946-1394, this farm offers pick-up locations in Worthington, Delaware and Clintonville.
- Princeton Valley Farm, Warsaw, George McCurdy, 740-824-4279, offers pick-up locations in Powell and Mt. Vernon
- The Wayward Seed Farm, Marysville, Adam Welly & Jaime Moore, 614-226-8548, offers pick-up locations in Clintonville and the North Market (downtown Columbus)
- Paiges' Produce, Stoutsville, Brian Helser, 740-477-7291, offers pick-up locations in Clintonville, Columbus and Upper Arlington
- New Century CSA, Circleville, Tom & Christy Cook, 7140-420-7788, offers many pick-up points including Dublin, Columbus, Galena and Upper Arlington. Can deliver to your area if enough interest.

For more interesting information on CSAs and eating locally, check out www.localharvest.org, www.eatwellguide.org and www.foodroutes.org. My sister, who lives in Brooklyn, just helped her church start a local CSA for the community near the church—there is a process you can go through to select a farm and organize pick-up and drop-off. So starting a CSA is also an option worth investigating. If you would like more information, please let me know via the *Gazette*.

My mouth is watering at the thought of fresh local produce available soon—all grown within the borders of our own state.

Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three with a special interest in green living.