

Community Supported Agriculture

Vashon's own Bob and Bonnie Gregson wrote the book that inspired many to try their hand at small-scale farming. In "Rebirth of the Small Family Farm", the Gregsons chart their growth from farmer wannabe's to serious innovators leading the Vashon community to a new understanding of local food production and distribution. Jeff and I read the book right after our first experience raising a batch of twenty-five chicks. Those amazingly industrious creatures convinced us that producing our own food was not only possible but also inspiring and joyful and fulfilling. However, farming during the evenings and weekends between full-time jobs can be less joyful and fulfilling and more exhausting and injury prone. The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model appeared to be an excellent method to begin full-time farming immediately.

Community Supported Agriculture began its modern incarnation in Japan. A group of women dismayed by the increasing anonymity of the food system organized producer/consumer cooperative associations called Teikei – "seeing the farmer's face on the food". This model, called Community Supported Agriculture in the US, has been sweeping across the country since the late 1980's. Although the CSA model now has many variations, the basic agreement of support between a farmer and those who will eat the fresh produce is key. Before the growing season, a farmer sells a limited number of member shares in the upcoming production. Each member is then given a portion of what is ready for harvest every week of that season.

True to the original motivation, CSA's emphasize accountability. Members know exactly how their food is grown, how the farm land is stewarded, and what can be produced locally because they see it first-hand every week. For growers, our economic welfare depends not on an arbitrary commodity valuation but on the strength and awareness of our community.

Four Island farms offer CSA subscriptions this year. Excited to be entering their eighth CSA season, Amy Bogaard of Hogsback Farm states, "We love providing this service to the community and have been grateful each and every year for the support the community has shown. It is wonderful that our subscribers appreciate seasonally fresh local produce." Hogsback Farm CSA is usually a 20-week season that begins the end of May and goes to the second week in October. They provide a wide variety of vegetables throughout the season and a u-cut bouquet of flowers from July to October. Cost is \$450 for vegetables and you can add eggs for \$80. Contact Amy at 206-463-1896 or hogsback@centurytel.net

New to the CSA model but certainly not to farming on Vashon, Timken Farms offers beans, broccoli, cabbages, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, chard, corn, kale, leeks, lettuce, mustards, collards, onions, dill, cilantro, parsley, chives, basil, pumpkins, peas, radishes, spinach, tomatoes, peppers, and squash from mid-May through September. Their twenty shares have already been purchased for this year and members will enjoy

weekly boxes that start out around 5 pounds per week and grow to more than 20 pounds at the peak. Looking forward to future CSA seasons, Mark states, “We welcome you to join our CSA and be guaranteed to receive the finest quality produce weekly with easy pick up times at an affordable price. We would love to be your personal farmers!” Check out their website for more information www.timkenfarm.com

Nourishing the soul with flowers grown lovingly on her Island farm, Zilla Copper offers a fresh bouquet CSA for twenty-six weeks, early April to early October. The full subscription is \$468 and a half subscription of thirteen weeks for \$234 with deliveries on Monday mornings. If your day has ever been brightened by the lovely flowers at Harumi Hairstyling or the Vashon Athletic Club, you can attest to the value of this service! Both are subscribers for the third year. Contact Zilla at 463-4790 or Zillacop@yahoo.com.

Jeff and I are growing on two Island farms this year and have changed the name of our CSA to reflect our core goals. Journey School Food Community acknowledges that food is the foundation of health – for our own families, for our community, and for the earth itself. We are inviting thirty families to join us this Summer for a twenty week CSA, June 13th to October 24th. Every week, you’ll receive a selection from each of these categories: greens for eating raw, greens for cooking, root vegetables, berries, herbs, and classic summer vegetables as well as a loaf of organic Essential Baking Bread. Shares cost \$500 and egg shares are also available. Register now at our website www.luckyfarm.us or call 206-498-0986.