



Welcome to the farm!

SHARE THE HARVEST

A smaller photograph within the graphic shows a man in a white t-shirt and blue jeans standing in a field, holding a basket. Two children are sitting on the ground nearby, one of whom is holding a basket. The background is a wooded area with trees and a path.

Madison Creek Farms

CSA Handbook

Welcome to Madison Creek Farms CSA Program

This handbook is designed to help guide you through our CSA program as well as to give you some insight as to how our CSA program works and why we believe you would benefit from becoming a shareholder in our farm CSA.

First let's step back and look at some of the advantages of becoming a CSA shareholder in our farm.

1. Access to high quality, locally grown, fresh organic produce.

Madison Creek Farms has over a decade worth of experience in growing organically. The farm consists of 46 acres 6 of which are in use for growing vegetables, herbs and fresh flowers.

2. Experience matters when it comes to understanding the demands and needs of a successful organic farm operation.

Madison Creek Farms has been on the forefront of the local organic movement here in Tennessee since 2000. Peggy L. Marchetti was the first to organize and host TOGA in 2001 which brought together over 85 organic growers, processors, members of the national organic community as well as local and state agricultural officials for the first time to set into motion the combined effort to bring a organized local network for the purpose of furthering advocacy, education and support for Tennessee's present and future organic agricultural interests. Madison Creek Farms was one of the few first full time vendors that actively participated in the Franklin Farmers Market Middle Tennessee's first "Farm Certified Producer Only " farmers markets. Peggy served on the market's board for 5 years and as the market's board President until stepping down in 2008. In the early summer of 2008 Madison Creek Farms along with our good friends and fellow farmers Delvin Farms and John Dyke of the Turnip Truck Natural Market organized and launched a second farmers market in the state that was a "Farm Certified Producers only market " in Historic East Nashville's 5 point district. The East Nashville Farmers Market. Providing yet another venue for local farmers to direct market their wares to consumer that want access to fresh locally grown produce and goods. Vision, leadership and a proven track record as an experienced farming operation that consistently produces results.

3. Knowing where your food comes from, how it was grown and who grew it.

This is the most important reason I can think of for anyone who's interested in joining a CSA to do so. Yes, the contents of your share is truly wonderful, but the fundamental answer to the question I believe as to "Why should you join a CSA program" is food safety, food security, a healthy fresh food source and a strong local economy. Let us step away for a moment back 50 years ago, when in the country fresh local food grown by local family farmers was a way of life. Most every family in America knew a family farmer, was a family farmer or had their own small backyard garden they grew themselves. The birth of the major super markets did more than just change the face of every small downtown court square shopping districts, they in fact changed our ideas on what food really is in general in this country. And thanks to that ideological of what food is we are now and I quote "the fattest people to have ever lived" Our diet has changed more in the past 50 years than the previous ten thousand. The America culture has been so far removed from basic concept of "What food is" we and I include myself believe food is anything that taste good and is filling as opposed to "food is to nourishes our body". You may ask "I see several farms all over Tennessee and for that matter all throughout the whole of North America we must be rich in bountiful, wonderful fresh food in this country? I would say to you, you have miss intruded what you *think* you see. Our state produces less than 1% of our local fresh produce. Tennessee is ranked in the top 15 states that in the event of widespread transit disruption Tennessee would be without access to fresh food in 7 days. Tennessee can not feed itself....we do not grow enough fresh food in this state to feed 99% of our residents. We grow several thousands of acres of corn, soybeans, cotton and hay. All of which goes to fuel as in ethanol, high fructose corn syrup, clothing and feed for livestock. Tennessee is Real Food Farm Poor. The next question may be why? It's very simple there isn't a feasible market for fresh locally grown produce on a large scale in our state. There aren't the government subsidies for produce farmers like those that grow mono crops like corn or soybeans. We can eat fresh corn...right? Well kinda wrong... the variety of corn that is being grown is not for eating fresh but for eating once processed in a million different kinds of raw material used in everything from breakfast cereal to batteries to fatten up our beef cattle, our swine and our chickens. None of which were meant to eat only corn if not any corn at all. We ourselves are a national that not unlike the Irish years ago in which their diet was based on single crop potatoes, we here in America are very much the same only our crop is King Corn.

The difference in just a few good vegetables added to your diet that are free of all the pesticides, herbicides and are truly fresh right from the vine fresh is like water to a wilted plant, it is the key to a long, beautiful, healthier existence. Not to mention locally grown fresh food taste a thousand miles literary better.

My son and I were in the garden one afternoon as I was harvesting carrots from one of the growing beds. I sunk my garden fork deep into the soil and reached down and gently tugged on the feathery leafed green stem and promptly removed the most beautiful fat, orange sweet carrot you've ever laid your eyes on. "Lucca" my son was only around three years of age then gasped at the miracle we had just seen. Mommy..he said...how did that carrot get in the dirt? I told him that carrots grow underground and that the part we eat is really the plant's root. He shook his head in such disbelief and said..That's the craziest thing he ever heard...how Bugs Bunny would find them under the dirt! Even my own child whom was born and raised on a small organic farm had never seen a carrot being pulled from the ground. He didn't have a clue where carrots came from only they were sweet to eat and he was made to eat a lot of them. Only 1 in 5 children when asked where a potato came from could tell you they also grow underground. Only 1 in 3 adults have eaten a real fresh from the nest farm egg not brought from the super market from right from the chicken coop. Just 3 out 7 families this week will have only 1 sit down at the dinner table home cooked meal.

Having a connection with where your food comes from and who is growing your food I believe is profoundly more important a reason to join a CSA program than a CSA share looks to be a good food dollar spent, which I believe it is. It is the invitation to experience the change in how you will forever look at food and how food will forever look to you.

What exactly is a Family Farm Share?

Our Family Farm Share consists of ½ bushel of the farm's produce, flowers and herbs. You will also find in your basket from time to time added-value items from the farm like fresh farm eggs, artisan breads, muffins or baked goods, real sweet cream butter, or items like our pesto or pasta salads. It depends on the harvest really to be honest. In the beginning of the season when crops are just coming in you'll find that your baskets aren't as bountiful as they will become toward the middle of the growing season. So we do our best to ensure you still have a good solid pickup for your share. Once the season comes in your baskets will be full and colorful and most delicious. So when we say a Family Farm Share you can think of it like this...a share is designed with a family of 4 in mind or 2 adults eating a vegetarian diet. The shares aren't meant to meet your complete dietary needs but whether subsidize your family's fresh food consumption. As an example your early spring basket could look like this:

Late April

- 1 Bag of baby Spargo spinach
- 1 Bag of mixed baby lettuces
- 1 Bag of Winterbor kale
- 1 Bunch of onions
- 1 Bunch of radishes
- 1 Bunch of fresh Asparagus
- 1 Head of Romaine lettuce
- 1 Head of red chief butter lettuce

We may have some herbs and a few early flowers that time of year as well and if so they can also be a part of your basket. It just depends on the weather. This time of year you may find items like the Honey/oatmeal wheat bread and or rhubarb muffins to complete your basket. Also farm eggs and other such items when available.

This is an example of what your early to mid July basket may contain:

- 1 bunch of Neon Bright swiss chard
- 1 bunch of carrots
- 3 squash
- 3 zucchini

- 4 large cucumbers
- 3 Green bell peppers
- 6 Sweet peppers
- 4 hot type peppers
- 1 Bunch red or golden beets
- 1 bulb fennel
- 1 bag kale
- 1 bunch green snap beans
- 3 patty pan squash
- 3lb fresh potatoes
- 3 large slicing heirloom or early to ripen varieties
- ½ pint of cherry, pear, current tomatoes
- 3 Italian Roma tomatoes

Depending on availability you may also find black berries, peaches and or melons in your basket this time of the season. Along with rows and rows of beautiful fresh flowers for the cutting and wonderful fresh basil, chives and thyme

Now telling you all this I will say, anyone of these crops listed could suffer from all sorts of things from weather to pest problem and we could lose one of these crop for a short time or altogether. That is just part of the risk involved in a CSA program. I will say I have never heard too much complaint when the squash bugs decide its time to destroy the squash bed for a couple of weeks. There is always so much squash...as Lucca says:)

As for the fall baskets they may look like this:

Mid-October basket (before 1st frost)

- 1 Bag of mixed baby lettuces
- 1 Bag of Winterbor kale
- 1 Bunch of Carrots
- 1 Bunch of radishes
- 1 Bunch of collard green
- 1 bunch of Turnip Green
- 1 Bag of green loose-leaf lettuce w/ edible flowers
- 2 Acorn squash

1 Butternut Squash
2 yellow squash
2 zucchini
1 sweet bear pie pumpkin
3 Heirloom tomatoes
1-pint roma, cherry and pear tomatoes
4lb sweet potatoes

Fresh Flowers and Herbs for the cutting as well as an assortment of decorative fall gourds. Baked goods and Farm egg may be in your (after the 1st frost season)

The fall CSA is great season to be a CSA shareholder, not only is the farm's market slowing down but also the reemergence of those incredible sweet, tender greens come back into the farm's field. The fall CSA is a really good food dollar spent in that the produce that you receive in your shares can be preserved if you would like. This short but wonderful harvest season can take a shareholder though much of the cold winter months with good wholesome organic greens right from your freezer. You will be receiving plenty of them in your share so why not put them back and stretch your share's abundance. We have free workshops here on the to share tips, tricks and knowledge to help you do just that.

CSA Share On-Farm Pickups: The Where, when and how to retrieving your wonderful CSA Baskets of goodies.

The Where- You will be picking up your scheduled CSA share baskets here on the farm. We don't facilitate any off farm drop locations for our CSA program. This is a topic that comes up a lot when folks are investigating their options when it comes to the best CSA program for them. Mark and I once did in fact offer a couple of pickup locations for our CSA program in Nashville and Franklin, but at that time our farm was involved both in organizing and vendor wise in two "certified producers only farmers markets" So it made since given that at that time (or so it seemed) to offer these two additional drop location for our shareholders. This was also the first year we had opened the farm and the farm market pavilion to the public. What we found was this: Our shareholders that picked up their shares off farm were not getting the same CSA share the on-farm shareholders were, neither in contents of their share baskets nor in quality of their share baskets and most importantly in the over all experience of connecting to the place, and people that are so intimately involved in growing their fresh food. Mark and I have several farming peers of ours that operate very large CSA programs that can and have effectively been able to sustain a good consistent level of quality of their product traveling hours from the farm to drop locations in more urban areas. Many of these CSA farms have several hundred shareholders servicing several drop locations. Madison Creek Farms just isn't that mechanized sophisticated of a operation in which to warrant the high overhead costs of equipment, huge energy usage both in fossil fuel as well as labor and administrative hours it takes to operate that type of farm. In saying that I will also include that these large CSA farms are a thousand time better then no CSA farms at all and in most cases are beyond excellent at what they provide and leap and heaps kinder to both the environment and economics of our state. I would describe our CSA operation as a bit more bouquet.

We have limited space available in our CSA we try and keep it under 40 shareholders at present less during the fall CSA program. Our farm runs on manpower not so much diesel power. We do farm intensively here (meaning we grow a lot in our acreage we have in production) and we with our limited shares have just as excellent of a program in what we provide in your share as the bigger guys. The fact or I should say the blessing for us is that we are a Suburban farmstead. We are 12 minutes from Nashville, 12 minutes from Gallatin, 10 minutes from Hendersonville and so on. Our farm is not located hours from town, we are just down the road but miles apart from some parking lot drop off location that may be convenient for some but doesn't allow you "the shareholders" to feel what its like to pick your own right of the vine sweet, ripe cherry tomatoes that are still warm from the sun and bursting with flavor. You cannot box up, refrigerate, transport and distribute the physical, emotional and sensory connection that is made when shareholders become a real part of the everyday life cycle of the farm in which their food lives.

The When- The farm is open Saturday and Sunday 9-2pm April-November. You can pickup your share basket on either day you chose. All that we do asked is that you pickup your share baskets before we close at 2pm. Madison Creek Farms donates all remaining fresh produced unsold at the market or not retrieved by our shareholders to the Sumner Country Food Bank for distribution after 2pm. After 2pm we allow no pickups...important to note.

The CSA pickups take place at the market pavilion (where the on-farm market weekend market is held) A lot of times we will still be harvesting for the CSA and the market in the mornings as well as we only harvest tender crops like lettuce and greens most of the time straight from the field while you are there. These tender green tend to go limp if left out in the heat too long. They are best just cut for you to take home. This is a great time for you to grab your flower snip and start putting yourself together a fresh bouquet of flowers to take home. Maybe do a little shopping at the market (remember your as a CSA Member get a 10% discount on all farm goods)

The How-Once you get the farm you will need to sign in with the market attendant for your basket. Remember to return your baskets each pickup....this is important for us to keep cost down we need to have a supply of baskets to harvest in and to fill CSA's in. If you forget a time or two we won't beat you with a yard-long bean...we will just remind you. Once you are signed in we will either finish packing your baskets or start packing your share basket.

Just a couple of things about picking up: Saturday mornings are very busy at the farm's market pavilion, but it is a great time to get first dibs on in demand items that fly off the farm like our free range organic farm eggs and our famous FarmHouse Kitchen fresh baked pies, and breads. In that be prepared to hang around a few minutes we are working as fast as we can get everybody taken care of. Just keep thinking....CSA's are about Slow Food...not Fast Food...ha ha...

Sundays are far more laid back with Church and family time, a great lazy afternoon to pickup here on the farm.

Unable to pickup or missed a pickup for one reason or another.

It happens; summer time is vacation time after all. We understand that. In our CSA program we have allowed for weeks through our growing season where we have no CSA pickup. I am sure we can arrange to get you a make-up pickup before the season is over. We may also be able to harvest you a mid-week basket. I will tell though because we give all of our unsold or left over CSA contents to the local food bank here in Goodlettsville. You won't be getting the same basket you would have gotten during normal pickup days. Many the crops we will clear-cut for a weekend market and CSA and they will no longer be available. But never the less it is a great basket of some farm fresh produce.

In closing of the handbook there are just a few more details to outline.

When you become a Shareholder make sure to sign up for the farm's newsletter from our website. Our farms Newsletter are the only way in which we are capable of communication with the whole of our CSA shareholders. This newsletter is where you will find all the information you will need for the following weeks pickup, announcements and cancellations due to weather or whatever it may be that may cause changes on our part of that weekends CSA. It is VERY INPORTANT that you read the newsletters to make sure you know if something changes. The farms newsletters are also a great source for current happenings here on the farm as well and recipes, tips and organic gardening ideas.

Peggy's blog www.thefemaleblog.wordpress.com is another fun way to keep up with the farm.

It is always a good idea to check our website's front page in the Face Book window for this is where we'll post the latest information about happenings on the farm. If you don't have a face book account that's fine you can still view our posts from our website's face book window. If you are already a face book member please become a "Fan of the Farm" and be sure to send an invitation to your Face book friends as well inviting them to take a look at our farm. We rely on word of mouth to spread the word about the farm and the CSA program, so we certainly appreciate all your help in promoting the farm.

Share in the activities here on the farm. Volunteer to help out with special farm events, spend a couple of hours one morning pulling weeds, helping plant or harvesting...the important thing is to just be a part of the farm and it does give us an opportunity to get to know each other better. Mark and I have made wonderful friends through the farm over the years.

Our Farm Workshops: Most of our Workshops are free so please come and join in the fun. This is a wonderful way in which to connect with fellow CSA shareholders with who are like-minded as yourself. The workshops cover every topic from cooking with herbs to making pickles to how to compost at home. Our Workshops are every Saturday morning starting at 10:30am and they run about 30-45 minutes in length. For our CSA shareholders the workshops will help you to navigate your way through so many of your fresh vegetables you receive in your shares by share recipes and ideas.

Final note: Never be shy about talking to us about your CSA experience positive or negative. This is how we learn and grow to serve you better. Mark and I are always ready to listen. Our goal is to serve you as best we can.

Thank you very much from our family and farm crew. We look forward in working with you this season!

Peggy L. Marchett

Madison Creek Farms

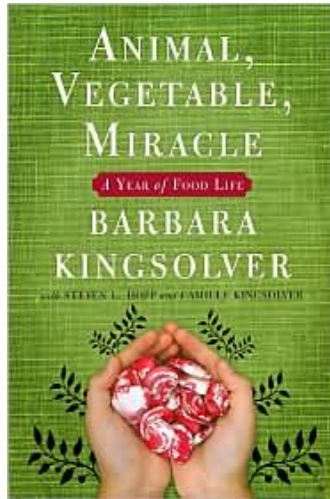
www.Madisoncreekfarms.com

Email madisoncreekfarms@gmail.com

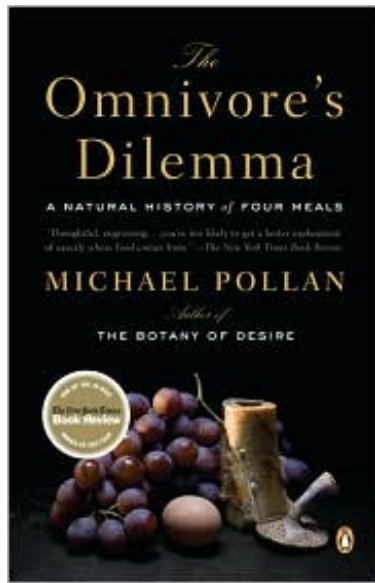
Farm phone (615) 855-0066

Address: 1228 Willis Branch Rd. Goodlettsville, TN. 37072

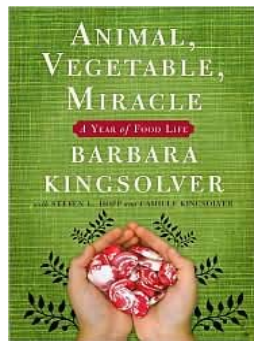
Recommended Reads for our CSA Shareholders:



One of the best books I have read throughout my own healthy food journey. Barbara's skill as a wonderful writer takes you into her families personal dedication to only eat local food for a year. I loved every page of the book and learned so much more about the turn nature of why and what we do as organic farmers. A must read...



I am going to give credit where credit is due...Michael Pollan has done more for advocating locally grown food and the importance of the small family farm in America than most anyone else. His book Omnivore's Dilemma is on the top of every foodie's booklist including mine.



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