

Boulder Knoll Community Farm CSA is a small-scale, environmentally sustainable farm that provides healthy, local vegetables to 66 shareholders.

What is CSA?

CSA stands for "Community Supported Agriculture". It's a simple arrangement where you purchase a 'share' of produce from a farm. In return, farm 'members' receive seasonal produce one a week. CSA brings together community members, farmers and agricultural land in a relationship of mutual support based on an annual commitment to one another. In short, the farmer and members become partners in the production, distribution and consumption of locally grown food. You will receive the freshest, most nutritious produce available, grown without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. And to some extent, you share the risk of losing a vegetable crop to bad weather conditions, insects or disease. By entering into this relationship you are preserving working farmland, supporting sustainable agriculture, reducing trucking and packing costs and carbon output, and keeping farmers on the land. CSA works for you, local agriculture, and the environment!

About Boulder Knoll Community Farm

Boulder Knoll Community Farm has a CSA distribution season that runs from June 9 until October 20, 2012. Members pick up produce at the farm every other week on Saturday between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m.

The farm offers a wide variety of useful, flavorful vegetables and herbs lovingly grown with attention to soil health and biodiversity. Ecologically grown fruit from High Hill Orchard in Meriden will be included as part of this year's share. Pick-your-own cutting flowers, strawberries, and autumn olive berries also available. Members are encouraged to harvest

their own veggies and berries that are still growing in the gardens at the end of the season.

Early season crops may include:

Lettuce, carrots, peas, radishes, Swiss chard, beets, kale, herbs, bok choy, mizuna, broccoli raab, garlic scapes, scallions, blueberries, pick-your-own strawberries.

Mid-season crops may include:

Peaches, blueberries, melon, lettuce, carrots, beets, scallions, Swiss chard, kale, bok choy, herbs, cucumbers, summer squash, potatoes, garlic, parsley, onions, green beans, leeks, purslane, tomatillos, Asian eggplant, early tomatoes.

Late season crops may include:

Apples, pears, cider, lettuce, carrots, beets, radishes, peppers (sweet and hot), chard, kale, potatoes, arugula, spinach, pumpkins, parsley, eggplant, tomatoes, basil, leeks, winter squash, broccoli, broccoli rabe, tomatoes, tomatillos, tatsoi, edamame, parsnips, cabbage, pick-your-own raspberries and autumn olive berries.

We try our best to run the farm in a sustainable manner. We have no outside electricity and do most of the bed preparation, planting, cultivating and some mowing with hand tools. The farm is not certified organic, but we adhere to organic growing standards and have signed the Farmer's Pledge. Several of our members are interested in permaculture practices; our farmer has a permaculture design certificate.

Share prices

A regular 12 hour work share costs \$375. Five non-working shares are available for \$500. A small number of work-intensive shares are available by application and approval by the farmer. These sharers must be able to do physical work. Relevant experience is great, but willing learners are

wonderful too. There are five sixty-hour work-intensive shares at a cost of \$100. Four thirty-hour work-intensive shares are available at a cost \$225. Previous work intensive people will have priority.

One half of a member's payment must be made when the registration form is submitted. The remaining half is due by May 1st.

Sign up dates for 2012:

Members of the Friends of Boulder Knoll can sign up beginning Feb 1st. People who were CSA members last year and people on the waiting list can sign up after Feb 15th. Membership will be open to the general public after March 1st. Hurry! We expect to fill up fast.

Work requirements

Regular working members are asked to put in 12 hours of work per share for the season. A member might work on administrative tasks, harvest, distribution or garden work depending on ability and inclination. Children accompanying adults are welcome, as we believe all kids should engage in meaningful work and have a first hand understanding of where food comes from. Saturday morning or Friday afternoon harvesters and April and May workers are critical. A very limited number of work-intensive shares are offered (60 or 30 hours per season) for people who have an interest in being more deeply involved in growing practices. Brenda must interview and approve all work-intensive members. Work-intensive shares typically put in a majority of their hours during the early part of the season.

Part of our mission is to educate folks about sustainable agricultural practices, the natural environment and responsible uses of open space. We believe that asking members for a modest amount of work on the farm is one manifestation of this goal. We have had positive feedback

from members and volunteers about their work experiences at Boulder Knoll Community Farm.

Community involvement

We are committed to making healthy, real food available to folks in need. As such, we have over the past three years donated a significant amount of produce to food pantries in Meriden and Waterbury. This year we hope to work with the Cheshire food pantry, as they now have the ability to refrigerate fresh produce.

Boulder Knoll Community Farm seeks to foster community among its members and friends. We hold community work days and potlucks, and plan to offer workshops on related topics such as cooking, foraging and gardening.

We will continue to provide educational opportunities for children, youth and adults to work and learn about small scale organic farming and the natural world. We are in the process of hiring an environmental educator who will work with children, youth and adults from the surrounding communities. Volunteers for field trips and other group educational events are always welcome.

Finally - The way of a CSA - A few words of caution

1. Members of a CSA sometimes find that they need to develop a different mindset about food and food preparation. In this country we are used to planning the meal that we want to prepare and then going to the market to buy the ingredients, whatever the season. Obviously a CSA farm is not like the grocery store. When you get your veggies and fruit from the farm, you plan your meals around what you pick up at the share-out. Food is harvested when it's ready. You'll often get the same vegetable several weeks in a row. We will try to give you some advance

notice about what's going to be in your share, but that's not always entirely possible.

2. Sometimes you'll get more of a vegetable than you're used to dealing with and sometimes you won't get as much. For example at the height of tomato season (in a good tomato year), you could get 15 tomatoes. You'll want to freeze them. Or maybe we're having a long spell of rainy or very dry weather, and you'll get one squash instead of three. You'll have to pop that into another veggie dish. We try to combine items onto a choice table if there isn't enough for everybody, but sometimes the math just works best to give each share one squash. Sometimes a week will be relatively light and sometimes very heavy. That's the way of a CSA.

3. You will get vegetables that you think you don't like or don't understand. This will happen. You can put them in our donation box, give them to a friend or try something new! Members can share recipes and preparation hints on our blog. We have to plant a diversity of crops so that if something doesn't do well, there's something else to share out. We plant lots of braising greens - they grow fast and wonderfully in our climate. So learn to prepare them and learn to eat them. We'll have a class in one of the first weeks of our season. You'll see how delicious they are, and then you'll be thankful that they are so abundant.

4. You might feel foolish about not knowing how to do something when you're working at the farm. It's fine - Brenda's a patient teacher and welcomes all questions. Ask the question more than once if you need to. We're dealing with living creatures here - plants, insects, mammals, worms, birds, fungus, arthropods, soil microbes, humans, amphibians. All need care and our full attention.

About our farmer

Brenda Caldwell started her farming career later in life, but doing the work she loves gives her the energy of a 30 year old! Brenda has been working in small-scale agriculture for over 8 years. She has a masters degree in elementary education and taught school in Woodbridge and Bridgeport before farming. She has a master gardener certificate, a permaculture design certificate and has attended numerous classes, conferences and workshops on sustainable agriculture and living. She reads about farming for fun - what else needs to be said about that?

Brenda is actively involved in the effort to create a co-housing community in the greater New Haven area. She participates in New Haven/Quinnipiac Bioregional Group and has started a shiitake mushroom growing operation. She trains in the Japanese martial arts of Aikido and Iaido. Her greatest pleasure is eating delicious food, so you can be assured that many varieties of vegetables will be selected for taste and beauty. She lives in Bethany with her partner Marie and many happy animals.