

CSAs: Community Supported Agriculture

*Discover the easy way to get the recommended five servings per day of fruits and vegetables
Visit Vermont orchards or farmstands frequently!*

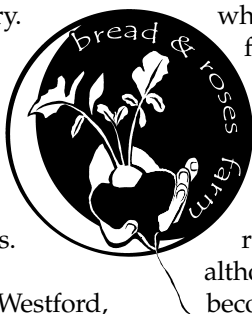
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Community Supported Agriculture, or CSA, represents an innovative marketing arrangement that suits both farmers and consumers. Community members pay up front for a season's worth of fresh, healthful and delicious produce and receive a weekly share of the harvest. Share contents range from bread to eggs to cheese to flowers, but most offer a diverse arrangement of vegetables. Shareholders, or members, get the opportunity to meet the farmers, learn where their food comes from, and connect with neighbors. Farmers get paid up front, relish in knowing where their food goes, and also make long-lasting connections. If it sounds like a win/win situation, it is.

The CSA model also benefits the local economy. In a season where money may feel tight, and people are aware of making sound financial decisions, keeping your food dollar circulating in Vermont supports everyone around you. When you pay for a CSA share, not only are you typically getting 10-20% additional value to retail prices, you are helping to cut down on the costs related to shipping food all

over the country.

Every CSA is different and tailored to meet the needs of both the members and the farmers. At Bread and Roses Farm in Westford, VT, a 5-acre diversified vegetable farm, the CSA is created around the desire to make good food accessible to people of all income levels, to weave a strong and vibrant community, and to support other local artisans and producers. Harvest festivals equipped with hayrides, farm fresh food, and great music bring joy to people as they gather around their food. Julia Andrews, a Bread and Roses CSA member, summed it by saying, "I love that my kids know



where their food comes from, and who grows it. I love that it's so delicious that they eat more veggies!"

Most CSA farms start in early June and run through October, although winter CSAs are becoming more common. Some CSAs operate through farms stands, some only offer pick-up at the farm, and others will deliver to designated locations. It is best practice to research many CSAs, go visit them, and see what best suits you. Do you welcome an idyllic drive or bike ride into the countryside? Are you an overtaxed working parent with little time to garden but love freshly grown veggies? Would you prefer choice over what you pick-up or would you be happy with a pre-bagged share?

Currently, in Chittenden County alone, there are approximately 1,700 CSA shares offered. This is a large jump from 2007, where 1,100 shares were distributed. There is a continued demand for locally grown food and each year more farms embrace the model of CSA. Community Supported Agriculture means just what it says: communities coming together to support their farms and farmers, while honoring themselves through the act of eating superb food. What could be better than that? To learn more about the CSAs around you, check out Vermont Agency of Agriculture's comprehensive listing, www.vermontagriculture.com/buylocal/buy/csa_map.html.



*Young
tomato
plants in
the Bread
& Roses
greenhouse.*