

Thistle Whistle Farm in Hotchkiss will again offer our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in the North Fork Valley.

What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs directly link local residents and nearby farmers, eliminating the middleman and increasing the benefits to both the farmer and the consumer. In a CSA program, a farmer grows food for a group of local residents who commit at the beginning of each year to purchase part of that farm's crop. The shareholders thus directly support a local farm and receive a lower-cost weekly supply of fresh, high-quality produce. The farmers receive an initial cash investment to finance their operation and a higher percentage of each crop dollar because of direct delivery. The parties jointly share the benefits and risks.

Benefits of CSA Programs

CSA helps support and protect a regional food supply and the local economy by:

- Improving consumer access to fresh, healthy agricultural products.
- Eliminating the middleman, creating opportunity for dialogue, increasing and stabilizing profits to farmers, and often reducing the costs to consumers.
- Emphasizing biodiversity and good stewardship practices by sustaining farms that produce a wide range of crops.

How Will It Work?

Attached is a list of vegetables we intend to grow and distribute through the CSA. We will have on-farm pickup in Hotchkiss, and are open to consolidating drop offs at other locations for groups of shareholders.

We plan a mid-week, weekly distribution, running from when we have enough produce available, likely mid-June through October, with a year-end distribution of winter storage vegetables. Boxes will contain the produce of the season: early boxes will have more spring greens and early crops, summer boxes will have more tomatoes, peppers and heat-loving crops.

We are including Cobblestone Farm, run by Gary Matlock and Jan Thompson, in this year's CSA. Cobblestone Farm is a Certified Naturally Grown farm just around the corner from Thistle Whistle, specializing in garlic and greens. Gary and Jan have agreed to grow these two crops for distribution with the CSA, allowing us to give you a more consistent and diverse mix of foods. We may make available other products, including flowers, eggs, fruit and meat, available at additional cost, with all money going directly to the producers of the additional products. These items will be from local producers who grow their food with similar organic growing practices.

Before and during the season, you will be given the opportunity to modify the mix of produce you receive, within reason. An aversion to parsnips will allow you to substitute turnips, for example.

At the time you sign up, we will ask for a pre-season financial commitment from you to join the CSA. We ask for a fifteen-week initial commitment, after which you can pay for the remainder of the expected season, or week-to-week, as you see fit. The cost of the initial fifteen weeks is \$360, with each additional week an additional \$24. Half-share initial cost is \$180 for 15 weeks. You need not pay for weeks you choose to not receive produce – just let us know one week ahead, and we will

credit you with an additional week. Each week's box of vegetables will contain enough produce to feed a typical family of four.

We are expanding our subsidized CSA program this year, and will provide up to 12 shares for individuals or families in financial need. The Kampe Foundation is assisting in the coordination of this program, and we are working with Ela Family Farms, Hearts Nest Farm and Cobblestone Farm to provide a fuller mix of fresh farm food for these families. The Western Colorado Food and Agriculture Council has agreed to accept financial contributions for subsidized shares, and distribute the funds to farms willing to add subsidized shares to their CSA mix. CSA members and others can contribute to WCFAC (donations are tax-deductable), at PO Box 571, Hotchkiss, CO 81419, to support this work. Please write subsidized CSA in the memo. In addition, if you cannot pick up any week's box, you may choose to have us donate it, via WCFAC, to a family in need.

Sign Up

If you are interested in participating in the Thistle Whistle farm CSA, please let us know by May 1. Include your name, address, email address and phone number. If you're ready to sign up, send a check made out to Thistle Whistle Farm.

Thistle Whistle Farm

Mark Waltermire and Katie Dean

Thank You again for your support!

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Produce we hope to make available for 2011 growing season:

Garlic scallions

Beets

Carrots

Peas - sugar snaps, snow peas, shelling peas

Broccoli Raab and several similar greens, mostly Asian cooking greens

Salad Mix

Specialty greens, including Kale, Lacinato Kale, Collards, and Senposai

Spinach

Artichokes

Basil - Thai, Genovese, Mammoth, other specialty varieties

Hot peppers - 25 or so varieties

Sweet peppers - 25 or so varieties

Tomatoes - Over 125 varieties of heirlooms, all colors and sizes

Garlic - Five varieties

Onions - Cippolini and storage varieties

Scallions - red and white

Turnips - Storage and salad

Okra

Edamame
Summer Squash - Yugoslavian finger fruit, other patty-pan type varieties, specialty zucchini
Winter Squash and Pumpkins - 30 specialty varieties
Potatoes - Nine varieties including fingerlings
Broccoli - Specialty varieties
Cabbage - Standard red and green, Chinese, Savoy
Brussels Sprouts
Rutabega
Green Beans - including Dragon's Tongue
Yard-long Beans
Cucumbers - Many varieties, including lemon
Melons - Watermelons and Muskmelons, specialty varieties
Herbs - Cilantro, parsley, thyme, oregano, mint, rosemary, sage, spilanthes
Ground Cherries
Scorzonera
Celery
Celeriac
Daikon
Radishes
Fava Beans
Eggplant
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Broom corn, gourds
Bittermelon

Vegetable and herb seedlings are also available at wholesale prices for CSA members.