

Do you like to eat?

Do you like to eat vegetables and fruit?

Would you like to include more vegetables and fruit in your weekly diet...especially if they were locally grown?

Would you like to have the benefits of having fresh produce from your very own backyard garden...but can't seem to find the time or the space or the perseverance to do so?

Would you like to have these delicious delicacies without all the stuff that might have been sprayed on them in order to get them to you in picture-perfect condition?

Read on about the **BRACKETT-CSA**

So What is a CSA?

The acronym stands for Community Supported Agriculture. The phenomenon began in Japan in the 1970's when a group of housewives became fed up with what was available in grocery stores from large-scale commercial farmers. They also noticed that

their local, small-scale, farmers were going out of business because they couldn't compete with the large-scale, high-efficiency, whatever's-convenient-and-cost-effective approach of commercial agriculture. These women decided to approach a local farmer directly and say: "We will pay you to grow our food."

What is the Goal of a CSA?

The goal of a CSA is to help support the local farmer by taking a risk with the farmer so that the members can benefit not only from the food itself but also from knowing where the food comes from and how it is grown. A CSA attempts to bring the farmer and the "consumer" together for mutual benefit.

Sharing the risk with the Farmer----

So What is the downside?

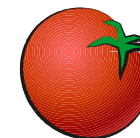
CSA members help support the farmer by paying for their produce upfront before the harvest season begins. This helps to offset the costs that the farmer incurs while preparing for the upcoming season such as purchasing seeds and supplies as well as the labor involved in getting the crops in the ground long before any cash will be coming in from the harvesting. The produce farmer typically works from the first of March to the middle of May without any income from his/her efforts.

There are 3 "adjustments" which people must make when joining a CSA, all of which could be called "lack of choice."

First is the difficult concept of seasonality. This is the "real world" of the local grower, where things happen at certain times of the season, if they happen at all. This is not the supermarket, to which we are all accustomed, where one can get anything one wants whenever one wants it.

Second, in a CSA people can have input into what crops are grown or not grown, but since there are many people involved in this process, one's less favorite crops might still appear. To some extent establishing "trade agreements" with other members who have opposite tastes can offset this. In organic food production it is extremely important to diversify and grow as many different crops as is feasible to provide microclimates and havens for beneficial insect populations and to keep to a minimum, if possible, the build up of undesirable insects and diseases which could be even more devastating in a "mono-cropping" system. As someone once explained it: "If you grow nothing but one crop, it's like putting up a giant sign for the bugs that reads: 'Eat here!'"

Third, some crops grow better some years than others. Some crops grow better organically than others. Some crops grow better for me than others. I try to grow a wide enough variety of fruits and vegetables so that something is always available. This simply means that your favorite crop might not do as well as one you're less excited about.



So “What’s in it for me?” you ask

Here’s an overview of the crops I try to grow (in somewhat chronological order):

rhubarb	carrots	basil
strawberries	gooseberries	raspberries
spinach	collards	tomatoes
garlic chives	summer squash	peppers
radishes	zucchini	purslane
salad mix	lettuce	kale
snap peas	apples	dill
sour cherries	garlic	plum tomatoes
green onions	cabbage	broccoli
black currants	green beans	cucumbers
baby pak choi	potatoes	turnips
sweet onions	pears	napa cabbage
beets	cherry tomatoes	cauliflower

Not all of these are available each week of course. On average you will receive 5-12 of these each week depending on availability, the time of season, and what is needed to give you what you pay for. Sometimes things just don’t get planted. Sometimes I try something new.

I have been growing by the organic method since 1980 and will continue to do so despite the greater labor costs in an organic, labor-intensive operation and the greater likelihood of failure and imperfection. My main concern is with nutritional value and flavor. Organically grown, healthy, tasty food is my goal.

I do not grow commercial varieties that were not bred for flavor. Since I eat my own produce, what would be the point? I enjoy eating; the fact that it is also good for me is an added bonus. I continue to search for “new”

and exciting varieties with their own unique flavors. For example, though most people might associate the term “cherry tomato” with salad bars, something to add a bit of color, perhaps.... I grow almost a dozen different varieties of cherry and/or salad tomatoes, each with its own character and unique flavor. Even the lowly beet I grow is sweeter than most other varieties. Then there are the 6 different types of sweet peppers... the raspberries, strawberries & juicy sweet pears that melt in your mouth...the salad mix that is an eating adventure all by itself...and did I mention? ..but you’ll have to experience it for yourself.



So, how many people will a share feed?

That depends on how much you like vegetables and fruits, how many more of these you would eat if they were readily available, and how many people will be eating from one share. Remember, at this price, a share will not be a complete diet for anyone. If there are one or two of you, one basic share could suffice for your weekly needs. This could be supplemented by buying produce at the Farmer’s Market or by purchasing extra produce beyond the basic share. This continues to be an option available to members of the Brackett-CSA. If there are three or more of you, and you eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, you might consider buying two basic shares.

What? When? Where? And How?

Pickups will be on Tuesdays from 4-7 p.m. at my house at 611 W. Union St. in Champaign, Ill.

The season will run from Tuesday, May 29 through Tuesday, November 6, 2012.

The cost of a share will be \$17/week, which will be \$408/24 week season, plus a \$17 administrative fee for a total of \$425.

The payment schedule for those who prefer to pay in installments will be as follows:

December 1, 2011--\$75

January 15, 2012--\$75

February 15, 2012--\$75

March 15, 2012--\$75

April 15, 2012--\$75

May 15, 2012--\$50

The total \$425 should be paid before the first pick-up so that I can be done with paper work and devote my attention to growing.

To sign up: If you agree to these terms, please sign this form, make a copy, and send the copy to me with your check made out to: **Brackett-CSA/Bob Brackett**. Keep the original for your records.

Please include your address, phone number, and email address (if you use it) so that I can communicate with you throughout the season.

For additional information contact me at:
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