



Welcome to the farm!

# CSA Handbook

# 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's 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 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 consumers 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 positive 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. 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 then the previous 500 hundred.

The America culture has been so far removed from basic idea 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 90% 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 organic produce farmers like those that grow 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 of these animals 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 national crop of choice **King Corn**.

The difference in just a few good vegetables added to your diet that are free of all the pesticides, herbicides and GMO's that are truly fresh right from the vine, this 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. You can't get any fresh than harvested minutes before you take it home.



Our son “Lucca” and I were in the field 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 gently tugging on the feathery leafed green stem and promptly removed the most beautiful fat, orange sweet carrot you’ve ever laid your eyes on. “Lucca” was only around three years of age at the time and he gasped at what came out of the ground. “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 I’ve ever heard...how then would Bugs Bunny find those carrot under the dirt? Even my own child whom was born and raised on a small organic farm never knew a carrot grow underground. 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 grown some of their own food. Just 3 out 7 families this week will have 1 sit down family meal at the table.

*The CSA idea is simple  
you the shareholder now own  
a share of the crops we grow  
here on the farm. This is a  
direct exchange between you  
and your farmer.*

*No Middle man, no corporate office,  
Just neighbor to neighbor.*



**Growing organically what does that mean?** I can tell you what it means to us here at Madison Creek Farms. It means we farm using **no** herbicides, pesticides, no synthetic fertilizers. We use no chemical compounds what so ever on our crops. We don't grow GMO (genetically modified organisms) crops and we don't use plastic weed covering (plasticulture) which can't be recycled. We farm using very little fossil fuel or grid energy. We use drip irrigation which uses 70% less water then conventional sprinkler irrigation. We use human power to plant, weed, maintain and harvest our crops. We joking call this "a hands in the dirt farm." We make and use our own compost and compost tea. We are good bug lovers and bad bug hunters. We employ our home made insecticidal soap, pepper and garlic/herb sprays to help combat some pest problem and if it gets too bad with the pests on our crop we hand pick the pest off..not one of my favorite tasks..but Lucca seems to like it..for now, he is still young. I didn't start farming organically 13 years ago because I thought it was profitable or hip to do so. I have always farmed organically. My grandmother and my mother grew their gardens this way. It was how I learned to grow. And that was long before the government decided it would make a law that allowed conventional farmers to use known toxic poisons on their crops and subsidize them financially millions to do so while forcing organic farmers to register their farm, be inspected at their own cost and then allow them no crop insurance or all the other conventional farming perks.



*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 1/2 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 and the season 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 a few weeks into 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, 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 an adult eating a vegetarian diet. The shares aren't meant to meet your complete dietary needs but whether subsidize your family's fresh food consumption.

## What kinds of vegetables are in your share basket?

Of course this is not a complete list...but an example to get you in the groove as to what is coming your way.

Spring crops could consist of: Spargo spinach, mixes baby lettuces, Winterbor Kale, Red Russian Kale, spring onion, radishes, asparagus, Red & romaine lettuces, Broccoli, sugar snap peas, strawberries

Summer crops could consist of: Jewel swiss chard, Red garnet mustards, carrots, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, sweet peppers, hot peppers, beets, green beans, fennel, potatoes, heirloom tomatoes, melons, black berries,

Fall crops could consist of: Okra, eggplant, yard-long beans, acorn squash, butternut squash, turnip greens, collard greens, onions, last season peppers, late season tomatoes, pumpkins, apples, baby red kale

*As the seasons change so does the contents of your baskets. In the spring and late fall those cool season greens are numerous in your CSA basket. Why? Because that what is in season and that is the way God designed it. We need those greens after a long winter. They are power foods. Kale is loaded with Iron something after a long winter storing carbs our bodies need to get us back in motion. Same for late fall going into winter. When you eat in season you will be amazed at how your body responds.*



**Our CSA operates 2 different seasonal 8 week programs. Both seasons are bi-weekly pickups.**

The spring and summer program beginning in April running through July. Our fall CSA starts in August and runs through October. Every farm that has a CSA program operates theirs slightly different. Some programs don't divide the seasons into 2 programs, summer and fall being one long season. Some CSA farms have different sizes in shares or pickups that are weekly or bi-weekly all this varies depending on how best to meet their shareholder demand. For us keeping the CSA calendar short and broken into 2 seasons do a couple of things. 1. It keeps the cost of the program down so it's not so expensive upfront to buy a share for the season. 2. It offers some flexibility in the season if crops are late coming in or we have a hard weather season and need that extra few weeks to ensure our shareholders get what they payed for and more. It also breaks up the program in case a shareholder decides they don't want to continue or needs a break from program for whatever reason. Those long season CSA's can be hard to continue on. If you miss a week it is a basket that you won't get. By adding in some flexibility to our schedule if your family goes on vacation for a week during a pickup you can always pickup when you back. You won't loose a basket.

Our 8-week programs are based on a bi-weekly pickup schedule. Meaning you will pick up your share every other week here at the farm. With that said I will tell you there will be a point in both seasons that we will need our shareholder to pickup at least once weekly. This mostly happens late spring when the weather starts to warm and the days get long. This causes those cool season crops to bolt and try and set seed. We'll send out the call for our shareholders that we need them to pickup even if they were just here the week before. Same goes for late fall when a hard frost is coming. We'll need to get those tender crops harvested and sent home before the weather turns.

**Limited Shares:** This is a fairly small farm that just happens to grow very intensively (we grow like crazy). You are going to be amazed at the amount of food, flowers and herbs this farm can produce just judging by the size of the growing area. Farmers from all over the state and other places come here to learn and see for themselves how we do it and do all organically and we do it very well. We keep our CSA under 40 shareholders and less in the fall program. We are strict about this because we know that is the magic number that this farm is able to provide a great program as oppose to an okay program. Some years it is hard to keep that number limit without add a couple more shareholders here and there, our CSA program has a wonderful following of loyal shareholders that have been with us a long time. We do grow more and more acreage every year expanding our production trying to meet more demand. But, I don't adhere to the thinking "we have to feed everybody." That is what has gotten our current food system in the trouble that it's in. I only wish to help to feed a few of my neighbors. This is not about money or get big or get out agriculture. Our farm is about a lifestyle. Believe me when I tell you Mark and I are never going to get rich selling another bunch of kale or tomatoes. So we keep our farm workable, manageable and joyful. Not to mention...It's Rockin'!

We consider our CSA program a bouquet rather than a mall in the farming world. We are sad to say we have to turn a lot of folks down when our program fills up and does so very quickly. But on the bright side the shareholders that do get signed up become a part of this farm. Much more so and deeper than the contents in their baskets, but in the relationships that are forged over personally getting know the people that have invested in the farm and trusting in the farmers that are growing their food.

## The When, Where and How to pickup your CSA share.

**The When** - The farm is open Saturday's 9-2pm April-November. You can pickup your share basket anytime between those hours. 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. If you can't pickup your basket just send us an email to let us know and we can arrange another time or day for you to get your basket. Please, don't call. We are out in the field or at the market and away from the phone. It is much easier on us to be notified via email. The main thing to remember is to let us know. If we harvest your basket and you don't let us know your not coming then your basket goes to the food bank.

We understand Saturdays can be a busy time with kids playing sports and all sorts of summer activities. If you email us we can arrange a Sunday pickup or later in the week. Not a big deal at all.

*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 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..



The CSA pickups take place at the market pavilion (where the on-farm 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 & herbs to take home. Maybe do a little shopping at the market or exploring the farm (remember shareholders get a 10% discount on all farm goods)

While the cool season crops are coming in keep in mind that these vegetables are very tender. They don't do well in the heat after being harvested. We encourage our shareholder to try and pickup their shares in the morning while it is still nice and cool. Your baby lettuces will be much happier and won't be a bag of a wilted mess before you get it home washed and stored away.

**The Where-** We are an on-farm only CSA which means we don't facilitate any other drop off locations or deliveries. The reason for us is simple we are blessed with such a wonderful location. We are 15 minutes from Nashville, 12 minutes from Gallatin, 10 minutes from Hendersonville and so on. We try and stress to potential new shareholders this it is important to live close to their CSA farm. We asked that our CSA shareholders live within a 12 mile radius of our location. 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 How-**Once you arrive at the farm you will need to sign in on the CSA shareholder's pickup list 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. Again this is the time to grab those flower cutters and start cutting yourself a beautiful bouquet and some fresh herbs to add to your basket. Flowers and herbs are a part of your CSA share. But, it is up to you to harvest them.

### **Our Shareholder are VIP's on this farm:**

We realize that the farm's C.S.A. shareholders are the backbone of our farm. It is their investment, belief and trust that allows us to do what we do here on this farm growing every year. So, we like to show our shareholders some extra love here on the farm.

- \* Our Shareholders get a 10% discount at the market when buying extra produce, eggs, honey, jams anything the farm produces.
  - \* Our Shareholders get 2 free flower bouquet cards to give to their friends. This way our shareholders are sharing the farm with others allowing them to come and cut flowers anytime during our season.
  - \* Pick from the market tables. There are times when we will have crops at the market that aren't in your basket. These are usually crops we growing as trials or experimental crops here on the farm. Also these could be crops that are coming in but not enough as of yet to fill the entire C.S.A. program. We allow out shareholder to select and try any one of these crops displayed at the market table.
  - \* Eggs, In the early part and later in the fall season before the farm opens to the public we will include some of our free range farm eggs in our C.S.A. baskets.
- \*Workshops, recipes and farm events. We hold several workshop throughout the seasons most of which are free. We also play host to several farm events like The Fall Festival and Dinner In The Flower Field. Our shareholders always get a discount to any of our farm events if there is a charge.

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 IMPORTANT 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.*

Our CSA Gatherings: We always kick off each season by asking our shareholder to visit the farm for lunch and tour. This is a great way to get to know your fellow shareholders and your farm crew. We tour the farm, have a fantastic lunch and give you some tips and ideas for making the most of your CSA investment.

Peggy's blog [TheFemaleFarmer](#) 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 LIKE 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's market, events 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 happen on scheduled 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.

**Contacting Us:** I will tell you straight up...the farm and phones don't mix. We get very little cell reception out here and we are out in the field farming so even the home phone goes unanswered most of the time. If you need to contact us for any reason. Emailing us is the very best way.

**Final note:** Never be shy about talking to us about your CSA experience positive or negative. This is how we learn and grow on how to serve our shareholders better. Mark and I are always ready to listen. Our goal is to have the best CSA program we offer.

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

Peggy L. Marchetti  
Madison Creek Farms

[www.Madisoncreekfarms.com](http://www.Madisoncreekfarms.com)

Email [madisoncreekfarms@gmail.com](mailto:madisoncreekfarms@gmail.com)

Farm phone (615) 448-6207

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



## 1/2 Bushel Basket - 8 Week Share \$280

**Description:** This is an 8-week program of a 1/2 bushel share of a mix assortment of fresh, organic vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers. The spring and summer season starts in mid to late April and ends in late July or early August.

We have a \$20.00 basket fee for each new shareholder. At the end of the season Your basket is yours to keep if you like. *Returning shareholder that have their baskets are not required to pay a basket fee again.*

You can pay online the full \$280.00 plus your basket fee.  
Option (2) Pay \$150.00 now and \$150.00 plus your basket fee due at your first pickup.

*Sign Up Now!*