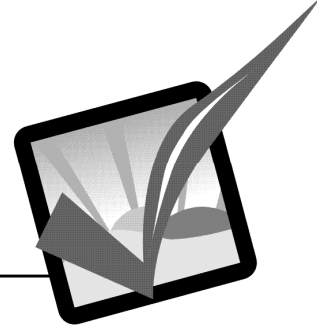


# cascade farm and farm school

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May 2009

## ***Greetings from Cascade Farm***

Welcome to all our new members and welcome back to our returning members. This mailing is our welcome pack we send out to all shareholders at the start of each season. It contains some information about your farm, answers to frequently asked questions, a listing of what's new for this year, and information about our first harvest

Cascade Farm is always seeking to make changes that will move the farm closer to sustainability. We know that we are at the forefront of a movement just starting to gain momentum; a movement that is centered on accepting responsibility for our food sources, our communities, and ultimately for our way of life. Be assured that by supporting Cascade Farm you are participating in solutions to some of the deepening problems currently plaguing our nation's food supply.

## ***Celebrate the First Harvest***

Our first harvest will be **Thursday May 28<sup>th</sup> at both pickup sites** (farm in Patterson and Tilly Foster Farm). See the enclosed membership details for more information. Come on by and stay awhile to learn about the farm and have an opportunity to meet the farmers, the workers, and other members.

## ***Upcoming Farm Events***

Be sure to read our monthly newsletter, check our website, and notices posted in the barn for upcoming events such as farm breakfasts, square dances, and concerts.

## ***Member Events***

**Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>:** 'Farmer Meet & Greet' at Cascade Farm from 1-3pm. Come and meet the farmers and fellow members.

**Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>:** 'Annual Shareholder Harvest Festival' from 3-7pm. Bring a covered dish or dessert to share. Dinner is usually around 6pm. Come and enjoy the fall season on the farm!

## ***Tell us about it***

Contact us if you have any questions or feedback. Call, write, or send an email to [info@cascadefarmschool.org](mailto:info@cascadefarmschool.org). We encourage communication with our members as it will help us to serve you better in the future.

Sincerely,

The staff at Cascade Farm



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## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### *About Cascade Farm:*

Cascade Farm is a local farm that has undertaken the goal of reaching sustainability through an association of our **CSA Program** and **Cascade Farm School**.

**CSA (community supported agriculture)** farms provide an opportunity for farm members to collectively support local farming, build community, and provide education. The resulting farm harvest is divided among the member families each week during the growing season.

**Cascade Farm School** seeks to introduce students to critical issues related to responsible, sustainable care for the environment. Through a process of immersion into the life and rhythm of a working farm, students learn vital lessons touching on numerous academic disciplines including science, math, history, political science, literature, and health. The farm school does this in part through our CSA program as well as specific farm-related projects. Cascade Farm School offers a forum and model for education, engaging students of all ages as well as adults, to understand and take responsibility for the source of their food.

Costs for running the CSA and farm school are further offset by public events (such as pumpkin picking, corn mazes, Christmas trees and wreaths) and the sale of non-CSA specialty products (such as honey, fruit, maple syrup, garlic, and flowers). The farm also hosts a number of community events including farm breakfasts, square dances, and harvest festivals. For more information visit our website at [www.cascadefarmschool.org](http://www.cascadefarmschool.org)

### *What is a share?*

A share at our CSA is more than just **produce**. A share is participation in **an opportunity to preserve local farms, promote sustainability, and provide unique educational opportunities**. “Sharing the Harvest” at Cascade Farm means sharing that which is in season, that particular week. It also means sharing the quantity available, both in times of plenty and in times of want. Farming in this fashion, however, requires a willingness to learn or relearn certain underlying principles regarding our food supply. We have all gotten used to “farming at the supermarket” – buying whatever type of food we want, whenever we want to have it. Sustainable community farming requires us to retool our understanding and our appetites in line with the natural rhythms of crop cycles in the Northeastern United States.

Your share is also about participating in community. Each year we schedule special member events such as our spring gathering, fall harvest festival, and winter wreath making party. These events are a perfect opportunity to come together and build farm community. We also provide member discounts to scheduled public events (such as farm breakfasts, square dances, and concerts). These events are a fun-filled way to share your farm with your friends and the larger community.

### *How much produce?*

We plan to grow enough vegetables per **share for the average family of four for the week** (vegetarians or families that eat a lot of vegetables may want more and some families may want less). The early harvest weeks sometimes yield smaller amounts with peak harvest weeks during mid-season sometimes yielding enough to freeze for future use.



## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### *How does it work?*

Members are entitled to a weekly portion of the farm's bounty throughout the growing season. We currently have a twenty week season which runs from May 28 to October 15. During the season our members **receive a portion of the weekly harvest**. For instance, if we harvest 150 pounds of string beans for 75 member shares, each share will receive 2 pounds of beans for the week. Crop conditions may vary and so will the variety and amount of produce. For example, when tomatoes ripen you may receive a large share during the prime weeks but the weeks preceding and following may include smaller amounts or none at all.

### *How do I get my share?*

Each **Thursday from 2 pm to 7 pm, go to your selected pickup site to get your share** (either Cascade Farm in Patterson or at Tilly Foster in Brewster). If you have not selected a pickup site or cannot remember please get back to us as soon as possible. We will assume you are picking up at the farm in Patterson if you did not select. You cannot switch between sites from week to week but if for some reason you want to change your pickup site contact us and we will let you know when the change can take place.

The produce will be available on tables at each site. Bring bags or baskets and reuse them each week when possible. Each item will have the share amount marked and you will weigh and pack each item for your share. Please do not substitute vegetables you do not like for those you do. It is important to note that we carefully harvest each week just what is ready to harvest and can be used, to reduce waste. Keep in mind that since we don't harvest excess that you should only take each share portion allocated. We know there are members that just don't like some vegetables and would rather have more of something they like but we have not designed our harvests that way. If members take more than what is assigned, those members who arrive later won't be able to get their portions.

If you receive vegetables you don't want please consider giving them to a neighbor (or feed them to your family or kids – you never know!).

### *Do I have to work as part of my share? No*

No, but farm work-days will be scheduled throughout the season. We strongly urge our members to join with us as we gather to apply our collective energy to specific projects on the farm. Unlike some other CSA farms, Cascade Farm does not require mandatory participation for work days but we recommend that each farm family join in whenever possible. The work can be fun and rewarding as you take a part in your farm. In addition, we will be asking our members to fill out a brief survey/info form listing each one's particular strengths or areas of work interest. Some may want to help out with our public events or our fall harvest days while others may want to spend some serious time in the tomato patch. Our work-day coordinator will contact you regarding participation in a work-day or to volunteer at other times.

### *Is the produce organic?*

We have come to learn that *certified organic* can mean lax standards in some areas while requiring costly overhead to achieve and document. **We include sustainable and local as well as organic methods in our farming approach.** "Beyond Organic" to us means that all our crops are grown right here in Patterson using sustainable farming methods. Our produce is grown naturally without the use of chemicals and pesticides and follows the natural cycles of growth and maturity. Occasionally, due to crop failure or other circumstances we may find it necessary to buy some locally grown produce from other farmers. We try to buy sustainably grown crops but sometimes, as with sweet corn we are unable to do so. If we do distribute conventionally grown crops we will be sure to inform you.



## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### *What happens to food left over from a harvest?*

We harvest only what is required for our CSA member families, however any food left over is distributed to local food pantries to help families in need.

### *What if I only want a half share?*

We don't "sell" half shares as it is difficult to distribute some crops among multiple families especially those that produce a single item (like a head of cabbage). However, we do allow our members to **find partners and work out between them how to divide a share**. If you participate in this type of arrangement please work carefully with your partner to divide the share and not take more than is allocated for the share especially for items where only one may be available for the share that week. Some sharing ideas that have worked in the past include:

- **A and B week pickups**- every other week arrangements (where the first partner takes a full share one week and the second partner takes a full share the week following continuing through the season so family A has 10 harvests and family B has 10 harvests)
- **Having one person pick up the entire share** and dividing it at home together
- **Arrange a pre-set time to arrive together** to pick up the harvest

### *What are the farm hours?*

Cascade Farm is open **Monday through Friday from 9 am through 4 pm** with extended hours (until 7 pm) on Thursday's for harvest. Dates and times for special events will be posted. However, if the gates at the entrance are closed, the farm is not open.

### *What are the harvest hours?*

Harvest is **each Thursday from 2 pm to 7 pm**. If you can not make it to pick up your share on Thursday, please have a friend, neighbor or family member come and pick it up for you. If you wish, you may donate that weeks harvest to a local food pantry family. Please call if you have questions.

### *Do you sell produce outside of shares to the public? Yes*

In addition to our CSA gardens we participate in a program funded by our members and local businesses to provide shares to local food pantries. In addition, we grow market gardens to be able to sell some of our seasonal and specialty crops to local businesses and farmer markets. These gardens are planted and tended to separately from our CSA gardens. We also make specialty items available for sale to members and the public (such as honey, syrup, eggs – see other products listed below).

### *What other products are available?*

We offer for sale additional farm-produced products (such as honey, maple syrup, eggs, flowers, garlic, fruit, beeswax candles) and other items (information will be posted in the barn and on our website when these are available).



## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### *How does purchasing a share compare to other food options?*

We do our best to keep our prices as low as possible but need to ensure our farming expenses are covered to continue to provide this opportunity. Our price per share is carefully decided considering many factors. Our current price is still competitive to local area CSA's and falls within the average price range of CSA farms in North America (currently from \$450 to \$600 per share).

We have also performed some comparative analysis of the food value at each harvest (costs of purchasing the same or similar food items from local area stores). We are pleased to report that our CSA membership is still a good value even though we did not factor the indirect costs of food availability. (Costs such as the environmental, economic, and social impacts of food that travels long distances, requires increased use of oil, or increases pollution in its production.) Most importantly your CSA membership affirms your commitment to support local community agriculture ensuring the availability of local food for years to come.

### *What do I do with "this"?*

We hear that question often from both new and old members. Each week we try to include descriptions of the vegetables harvested. When possible we include a recipe but often the best source of information can sometimes be other members. We encourage members to swap recipes and ideas. The internet and cookbooks are also good sources.

### *Where do I park when I visit the farm?*

**At Cascade Farm:** We always prefer that you use the parking lot on the left as you pull into the farm. However, during harvest days you may park temporarily on the roads near the barn provided you **do not block road access or park on garden or grassy areas**. If this area is full or being used by farm equipment, please park down in the parking lot. During special events or extended visits always use the parking lot or other areas as directed by farm staff.

**At Tilly Foster Farm:** Please park in designated parking spots around the barn and buildings. If you are not sure where to park, ask the attendant (be sure not to block the road in front of the barn for fire safety reasons).

### *Will I get all the same vegetables from last year or all the vegetables on the spring crop schedule?*

Cascade Farm plants a diverse assortment of crops to ensure variety as well as sufficient quantity. Since growing conditions vary from season to season some crops thrive in hot or dry weather whereas others thrive in wet or cooler weather. Because of this there may be a seasonal abundance of certain crops and a scarcity of others. Planting a variety ensures there is almost always a good quantity of vegetables although you may not see everything you have received before.

### *Is the cost of my share tax deductible? No*

No, although Cascade Farm is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, the price of a share is not tax deductible. However, additional financial donations made to Cascade Farm and Farm School are fully tax deductible. Donations are encouraged to our Farm School Educational programs, our Share Donations programs to help local food pantries, and our Farm to School Initiatives. If you or someone you know may be interested we can provide additional information.



## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### *What about other types of donations? No*

Thank you but we do not accept donations of tools, clothing, furniture, food, or other personal items.

### *Can I buy plants?*

We do not typically sell the plants we grow, but in times of abundance we will let you know what plants can be made available for sale.

### *Can I buy dirt? No*

No, we do not sell our soil. We use special care to ensure healthy soil such as composting, cover cropping and crop rotation and only use it for our crops.

### *What about herbs?*

In the past we had a pick-your-own herb garden. This year we will be providing harvested herbs as part of your share.

### *Do you grow sweet corn? No*

Due to the fact that growing sweet corn organically is very difficult and takes a great toll on the soil nutrients, in the past we have purchased local corn as part of the summer share offering. Although we can not guarantee that this corn is organically grown it is grown locally and also supports our efforts at buying and eating local.

### *What can I do to help?*

**Volunteer on work days** or to help out with our special events (there is always much to learn by volunteering). Also, we acquire many new members through word-of-mouth so please discuss the farm and public events with your friends and neighbors or just pass on our newsletter to someone else when you have finished reading it. If you have a special interest, and would like to help please let us know. Obviously we need help with gardening tasks but can also use help with breakfasts, special events, or administrative tasks. Let us know how you may be able to help. Another way to help is to let others who may want to make a charitable donation know about Cascade Farm School.

One of the most important ways to help is to **give us feedback**. We need to hear from you so we can improve together. Building community is about openness and communication. Call, write, send email, or just talk to the staff on harvest day.

### *Can I give a membership as a gift? Yes*

Yes, farm shares make a wonderful and meaningful gift.

### *How do I get there?*

**Cascade Farm** is located in Patterson, NY (north of Brewster, south of Pawling). From Rt. 22 take Rt. 311 into town to next traffic light (Rt. 292). Take Rt. 292 for approximately ½ mile to the first right, Harmony Road. Take Harmony Road almost ½ mile to the first right onto dirt driveway (marked with sign).

**Tilly Foster Farm** is located at 100 Route 312 in Brewster NY (just south of Interstate 84 exit 19). From exit 19 turn right onto 312 and travel south for approximately ¼ mile. The main entrance is on the right.



## About Cascade Farm CSA Membership

### ***Member Roles and Responsibilities:***

#### **RESPECT THE LAND**

- Do help with gardening chores during work days (a great way to learn)
- Cascade Farm is a **non-smoking** property. Please do not smoke on farm property or in farm buildings
- Do not litter
- Do not walk in the gardens except designated u-pick areas
- No hunting (hunting is a tightly controlled activity conducted for maintenance of the farm)
- No fishing (we need to encourage more trout by preserving what we have)

#### **RESPECT THE ANIMALS**

- Do visit our animals – ask staff if you need help
- Please do not feed the animals
- Don't allow children to yell at or poke the animals
- Do not open or go into the animal pens
- Do not bring pets to the farm
- Be aware that some animal fencing is electric
- As always, if a fence is open, leave it open, if a fence is closed, close it behind you.

#### **RESPECT EACH OTHER**

- Help new members feel welcome
- Share recipes and exchange ideas with each other
- Obey posted speed limits (10 mph) especially around barn area and during dry dusty weather
- Do not drive onto grass areas or beyond greenhouse area unless instructed to by farm staff during special events
- Do not park on the grass
- Do not leave children unsupervised
- Do not allow children to enter any farm buildings unsupervised or to play on farm equipment or tractors
- Leave facilities as you found them (turn off lights, close gates, etc.)

We hope you enjoy being a part of Cascade Farm. If you have additional questions please contact us.

