

BLOOMING GLEN FARM

CSA

Rough Guide

Welcome to Community Supported Agriculture at Blooming Glen Farm.

*We hope you find this handbook useful in explaining
the day-to-day operations of the CSA.*

Thank you for your membership and participation. Enjoy!

Our Vision:

We strive to be good stewards of the land by maintaining and enhancing soil, water and air quality through sustainable farming practices. We encourage and support a small farm ecosystem of diverse plants, birds and pollinators. Our crops are grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or genetically modified organisms. We use compost, cover crops, mulching and crop rotation to encourage healthy soil and plants and to build long term fertility. We believe a healthy body is inseparable from a healthy soil. In order to be a healthy economically viable farm, it is important to have both a diversity of crops, and a diversity of markets. We sell our vegetables through our CSA, at farmers markets, and to local restaurants and retail stores. In a suburban county where competition is high for land use between developers and farmers, we face unique challenges to maintaining profitability, and strive to provide a model of a successful small sustainable farm under these conditions. What is sustainability? A sustainable society is one that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” United Nations, 1987, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*.

Blooming Glen Farm:

Tom Murtha and Tricia Borneman, farmers and owners.
98 Moyer Rd, Perkasio, PA 18944, #215-257-2566, E-mail: info@bloomingglenfarm.com

Website:

Please utilize our website www.bloomingglenfarm.com. It is full of information, and we are continually working to make it more relevant to your experience: “The Blooming Glen Beet” farm blog (containing weekly ID’ed share photos and featured recipes, as well as news from the farm– lots of photos!), archived recipes, veggie storage tips, online calendar of work opportunities and events, FAQ’s, relevant links.

Pick-up Days:

*Please pick up on your

*Tuesday 1pm-8pm **OR** Thursday 1pm-8pm

designated day only. Please do not come earlier than 1pm, as it takes us until then to harvest and wash the shares, and prepare the signage for pick-your-owns. We are unable to bag up or hold your share if you forget to pick up. See page 5, “What if I go on Vacation?”



First Pick-up:

We aim for the first week of pick-up to be the last week in May or the first week of June. We will let you know the exact date via email, and post it on our website, in mid-May. We will have 24 weeks of distribution, which takes us to the beginning of November.

Parking:

Parking is available in front of the red garages along Moyer Rd, and across the street by the silo and barn. Please *do not park in front of the gates* or block access to any farm equipment or implements. Drive slowly near the farm, and be careful crossing the street.

Amenities:

There is a restroom located in the packing area, next to the distribution room, and hoses outside in our wash area to fill your vessels for PYO flowers. You are welcome to use the picnic tables or go for a walk around the fields. You can observe our pastured egg-laying chickens, as well as neighboring Tussock Sedge Farm’s pastured Red Angus cattle, but be aware that the fences are electrified. You are encouraged to explore the Discovery Garden, where many of the PYO herbs are located. Spend a moment relaxing on one of the benches throughout the garden, read the tile markers, smell and touch the herbs and see what you can identify. For our younger explorers, there are bamboo teepees to play in, and logs and stumps for balancing. We ask that all caterpillars, butterflies, worms, toads, tadpoles, etc, remain here as a valued part of our farm ecosystem.

“What do I do when I get there?”:

1. First thing's first– remember to **bring your own bags, boxes or baskets**.
2. Next, as you head into the distribution room, **read the chalkboard door for any announcements**.
3. **Sign In!!** The first thing you should do when you come into the distribution room- after you have inhaled the beauty and aroma of the harvest, that is- is locate your name on the pick-up list on the counter and check your name off. Updating this list helps the farmers to be sure there is enough of everything throughout the day.



4. Then, **take a look at the large hanging chalk board**. This board lists the share for the day. It will note each vegetable, the amount to take, plus any relevant comments. Some things will be bunched, others will require you to count things out or weigh them on the hanging scales. Keep in mind when weighing or counting that a fair share is not only the correct amount, but a fair share distribution of size and beauty. Please do not strip stalks or other parts off the veggies before weighing them. How it is presented to you in the crate is how you should weigh it out to determine your share. We still suggest you rewash everything

you get from the farm, since we are not a certified ready-to-eat washing facility.

5. **Mysterious vegetables** (Or “What the heck is a kohlrabi?”): Part of the CSA experience, and many would say it’s one of the bonuses, is trying new vegetables- some of which may go on to become your favorites. We post on our website a weekly blog that will often highlight unfamiliar vegetables and contain a variety of recipes. We also offer for sale a great resource, the cookbook “From Asparagus to Zucchini” which is geared toward CSA’s and gives information, storage tips, and recipes for most veggies we grow. The distribution center camaraderie of your fellow farm members is also a great opportunity to swap cooking tips and recipes. The internet or our website recipe page is another great resource. Please send us your favorite recipes and we will post them on the website for others to enjoy.
6. **Sharing Table:** The Sharing Table is a place in the distribution center to put things from the share that you may not want that week. Then another member can enjoy it. Sometimes we have a crop that we may not have enough of to include in the share, or that we are trialing, or we may put a crate of seconds or extras there. The sharing table works on the honor system. When deciding how much to take, it may help to consider the sign in sheet, and how many more people have yet to pick up their share.
7. **Local Food Source:** We have partnered with a few local farms practicing sustainable agriculture in order to make their products available to you when you pick-up your vegetable share. These farms offer prepaid shares (chicken and pork: Ledamete Grass Farm; beef: Tussock Sedge Farm; sustainable seafood: Otolith Seafood) to be picked up at Blooming Glen– details are emailed out in the spring and posted on our blog and facebook page. Check the bulletin board above the chest freezer or their individual websites for more information on these farms growing practices. Communication and payment for these products is handled directly with those farms.



U-Pick Crops:

Throughout the season there will be various “Pick-Your-Own” crops. These are items that are easy to pick, but too time-consuming for the farmers to harvest cost-efficiently. PYO can be fun, relaxing, and a good opportunity for you to enjoy the outdoors. Who doesn’t like a fresh picked strawberry eaten right from the plant?! These will be listed on the PYO chalkboard in the distribution room with a quantity. Arrows and signs will guide you around the fields— there will also be sign posts marking the beds to be picked. Pay attention to the crops growing behind you as you pick. DO NOT walk in the raised beds in the fields, even if they appear empty— walk in the paths between the beds. Feel free to use the quart and pint baskets provided to measure out your share and to pick into, but leave them at the farm. Some members get into the habit of bringing containers like Tupperware’s to transport their fragile cherry tomatoes, strawberries, or green beans.

In the height of the summer, if all is coming together on the farm, lots of PYO’s means we are doing something right. It also means it may take you a while to pick it all, especially if you are going at a leisurely pace. So plan ahead— wear a sun hat, bring a baby stroller, water to drink, a basket to carry your things in. We have a small supply of clip-pers hanging in a bucket as you walk through the gate into the fields, but we suggest you bring your own so you won’t have to wait for a pair. You can do your PYO when you come to collect your share, but if it’s raining, or you’re in your office clothes and in a hurry, or you prefer to pick in the mornings, you can come back another time within the week before your next pick-up— preferably within a few days. As always, please follow the amounts listed on the board when harvesting your pick-your-own. If you are unsure of how to harvest a crop, please ask another CSA member or a farmer.



Pick-your-own Flowers:

In the summer months into the fall there will be a large patch of pick-your-own flowers. *(Please do not cut flowers from the children’s garden or walkway. These flowers are for everyone to enjoy in bloom.)* We will have a diagram posted showing the best way to cut your flowers in the field. Here are some helpful tips to extend the life of your bouquet:



1. Bring a vessel you can fill up with water at the farm. Cut your flowers right into it. TIP: For a portable vase, take a plastic gallon milk or juice container with a handle and cut a larger opening.
2. Re-cut your stems under water at home.
3. Strip the stems. No leaves under water!!
4. Make a home made preservative: Mix 1 tsp vinegar, 1 T sugar, and 1 aspirin tablet to 24 ounces of water.
5. Cut stems again every other day, and change the vase water.
6. Do not use public water— it may contain chlorine.
7. Don’t put your vase in direct sunlight or near a bowl of fruit.

“OOPS, I forgot to pick-up my share!”:

Please note that once the pick-up is over, pick-up is OVER. If you forget to pick up on Tuesday, that does not mean you can just show up on Thursday, or vice versa. We harvested for you, it is your responsibility to be there to pick it up. At our discretion, some or all of any extra food will then be donated to a local Food Pantry. We are not able to hold food for you to pick-up at a later time or day.

“What if I go on vacation?”:

One option is to “*Share your Share*” with a friend. You can have someone else pick up your share while you are gone. However, it is important that you plan ahead and if possible bring that person with you at least once for a pickup at the farm. This way you can show them the ropes- where to sign in, how to weigh things out, where the u-pick crops are, etc. In addition, consider forwarding them the link to our blog for up-to-date information and recipes. It is your responsibility to make sure anyone you send to pick-up for you understands how the CSA works—definitely remind them to bring their own bags!

*Another option is to **change your pick up day** (within the same week only) from a Tuesday to a Thursday or vice versa. Just let us know by email or phone **by 7pm Sunday** the week before you wish to switch. Unfortunately, because we harvest a precise number of shares each harvest day, we can not accommodate last minute switches.



Social Events:



We strive to create a space where the farm community can come together over a shared desire for a healthy sustainable local food system. We host potlucks (Note: when attending potlucks bring a dish to share, your own beverage and place setting), a harvest festival, as well as cooking demonstrations and various classes and workshops. See the website for days and times. We can't do it alone— we encourage your input, participation and leadership. We see lots of potential in the “community” of CSA and we hope you will bring your talents and energy to share, and contribute to growing a community.

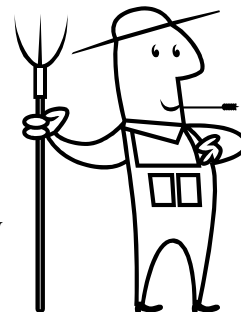
Newsletter/Blog:

We do our best to communicate news, photos and information through our blog, *The Blooming Glen Beet*, so please take time to read it. There is a link to the blog on the website— at registration you will be prompted to “subscribe” to the blog in order to receive an email whenever a new posting goes up. Every Tuesday we will post a photo of the share, with crops identified. Mid-week we will post a recipe featuring one of those vegetables. The farm also has a Facebook page if this is your preferred method of communication.

“What are the “work opportunities” all about?”:

As of the 2012 season, work opportunities will be voluntary and are not required of our members. We believe the work opportunities can provide the chance to see “behind the scenes” what goes into growing organic vegetables on a diverse working farm. Through the CSA experience we hope to encourage a sense of place by reconnecting people with the land that sustains them. The work opportunities are a great time to meet other farm members, and the best time to pick the brains of your farmers. It is also an awesome way to be a part of the whole process, from field to plate.

We have an **online calendar where you can view scheduled work opportunities**. Because of the unpredictability of nature, there may be times when scheduled opportunities will be canceled. If for example it was pouring rain recently and the ground is soaked and muddy, sometimes it’s best to stay out of the fields. We ask for your understanding and flexibility regarding cancelled work opportunities. Keep an eye on the online calendar, as last minute changes will be reflected there. We will also send out “emergency emails” with pleas for help from the farm.



Work activities will include, but are not limited to: weeding, mulching, and harvesting garlic, onions and potatoes. There will also be opportunities over the course of the season for people who are unable to do hard physical work, for example: trimming onion, shallot and garlic tops. We would also welcome assistance with our annual fall harvest festival, or organizing other social events and activities, or sharing your specific talents through a workshop at the farm.

Many people ask about bringing kids to work opportunities. For children that are 8 years or older, parents use your own discretion, and definitely come prepared with snacks, water and sun hats. For very young children, this is usually not feasible. Farm work is hard work, especially when it’s hot out. One parent is welcome to come and watch the younger children on the farm while another works- or you might consider organizing with other families. The pick-your-own crops on pick-up days are a great way to introduce young children to the farm, rather than through a work day. We are also looking for someone to help organize activities around the **discovery garden**. You are always welcome to come with your little ones and do some weeding, or playing, in the discovery garden.

Other:

Periodically throughout the season we will offer bulk vegetables for sale at wholesale prices for those in our community interested in canning and preserving. These case quantities will not be included as part of your regular share. Crops like plum tomatoes and extra slicing and pickling cucumbers are grown specifically for this reason. If you are interested in purchasing smaller quantities of “extra” vegetables on top of your CSA share, we recommend that you visit us at one of the weekly farmer’s markets we attend. (See our website). As a valued CSA member you will receive 10% off your total at our farmstand.

Thank you, and we look forward to a bountiful season!