

Community Supported Agriculture
Handbook



114 Rachel Carson Way
Ithaca, NY 14850
607/279-9483
csa@westhavenfarm.net

Welcome to West Haven Farm's CSA!

We hope you enjoy being a member of our CSA. We take great pleasure in providing our members with fresh, high quality produce, love the connections we are able to make with our members, and feel good about providing an experience which lets you and your family participate in local agricultural cycles.

This handbook is intended to provide you with information about the logistics of how the CSA actually works. If you have other questions please don't hesitate to call or email us!

❖ How can we get in touch with the farmers?

Sabrina, the Farm Office Goddess, checks phone and email messages. She checks email (csa@westhavenfarm.net) regularly, at least once a day. The farm has a cell phone that mostly stays in the barn (279-9483). Messages are checked regularly, but in the peak of the season it may take us a day or two to get back to you. You can also reach John directly at 351-6670.

❖ What's with the newsletters?

We try to keep in touch with you with weekly newsletters that let you know what's going on at the farm, and offer tips about what to do with the goodies in your share that week. If you have recipes you'd like to share with others, we'd love to pass them along in the newsletter. We send newsletters out via email, usually on Monday night. If you don't have email, let us know and we will get you a paper copy when you get your veggies. Let us know if you are not getting the newsletter email, or if you want to change or add an email address.

❖ Where is the Pick-up?

There are two pick-up sites – the farm and downtown in the fall creek neighborhood. You chose a pick-up site when you signed up for the CSA.

To get to the farm, take Route 79 west out of Ithaca. About 2 miles past GreenStar, turn left on Rachel Carson Way (this is a big gravel road and the entrance to EcoVillage). Go about 500 feet, then turn left onto the small dirt road. Park on the grass near the farm fence and compost pile. Please drive slowly, particularly when it is dusty, and please watch for kids! Walk to the barn.

The pick-up site is in the big white tent behind Northstar House restaurant and the old Fall Creek Pictures at the corner of Tioga and Fall St. You can park in the lot on York St. or the main lot, but please don't park in the spots immediately in front of the restaurant. Walk

between the two buildings and you will see the big tent. There is a nice meadow – Arthur’s Meadow, named after SJ’s dad – for the kids who want to play while their folks are collecting the share.

❖ **When is pick-up?**

Tuesdays at the farm from 3:30 till 9PM. **Tuesdays downtown from 4:30 till 7:30PM.** If you're early or we're late we may ask you to lend a hand setting up. Sometimes we're stressed as the time gets down to the wire, so if we seem snappy please don't take it personally. The season for the CSA runs from late May through early-November.

❖ **How can I change pick-up sites?**

Folks choose one site to be their main pick-up, but it's fine to switch once in a while if your situation changes. We need to know by Sunday evening if you'd like to make a switch that week. Sending an email to csa@westhavenfarm.net is the best way to let us know you'd like to switch. Please be specific about how long you'd like to switch for, i.e. if it's just one week or for the rest of the season. Please don't ask us to switch you on a regular basis, as it is a lot of recordkeeping for us to do.

❖ **What if I know in advance that I'm going to miss a pick-up?**

If you know you'll be gone on your pick-up day, you can give directions to a friend or neighbor and have them get your share. If you don't want to do that and you let us know in advance that you'll be gone, we can arrange for you to pick up at our farmers' market stall the Saturday before or after. The key is to email or call us in well advance so we can adjust what we harvest. Also, we may occasionally be unable to switch people because of the crops and when they need to be harvested; we'll let you know if that's the case.

❖ **Oops! What if I forgot about pick-up?**

If you end up missing the Tuesday pick-up without notifying us in advance, you may try to get your veggies on Wednesday at the farm between 8am and 11am. (Note the downtown site will be cleaned up Tuesday night and you would need to try getting veggies at the farm on Wed.) Be warned, though, that the veggies will not be as fresh, and sometimes the clean-up person needs to come before 11AM. If you do end up missing your share, at least you'll know you've made a good contribution to our local food pantries - that's where all the leftover produce goes.

❖ **How does the Extras Bin work?**

At both sites there is an extras bin. In this bin we leave anything left over, or funky, or that's lower quality. You can take whatever you'd like from the extras bin, and be sure to

leave anything in your share that you don't want. For example, if you can't stand radishes, put yours in the extras bin, and maybe the next person will want them.

❖ **How does the you-pick work?**

There's a lot of stuff at the farm for shareholders to pick: flowers, herbs, and more of things like peas, beans, and berries which are too labor intensive for us to harvest a huge amount for everyone. There's a board in the barn that lists what's available for picking and where, and also tells you where to get any equipment you might need for picking. For those getting their produce at the farm, the you-pick option is very convenient, but it is available to everyone. You're welcome at the farm anytime--after all, you're the shareholders! We may not always be around, but you're welcome even if we're not there. If you pick-up downtown, we try to write on the boards which crops are currently available for you-pick at the farm.

❖ **What if I'm sharing a share?**

The pick-up sites get really crowded on Tuesday, so if you share your share please, don't come together to pick-up. You'll need to trade-off coming to pick-up weeks, have one of you pick it up and split it at home later, or come together to the Saturday pick-up, when it won't be as crowded. Please do not take half of your share and expect the other person to get the other half. We've had lots of experience with this and it gets confusing, because often there's just one of something and without communicating with your partner extra produce can get taken by mistake. We know this sounds picky but it has been a problem in the past.

❖ **What about bags?**

The pick-ups are mainly bring-your-own-bag, but we try to stock the sites with old plastic bags. If you have a bag of bags, please bring it to the pick-up for others to use.

❖ **How do I put in my workday?**

Unless you opted to pay the extra "No-Work" fee, we request that all shareholders try to come work on the farm for at least one three-hour work shift each season. The best time to come is during our harvest days, Tuesday 8-3, Friday 8-3, or Sat mornings 7-10. You do not need to signup in advance – just show up and we will put you to work. If you'd like to come another time or have questions, get in touch with Sabrina at csa@westhavenfarm.net. We also schedule official workdays events for when it is nice to have a really big crowd – Jen will let you know about these in the newsletter. Kids are always welcome at workdays, and are encouraged to visit the farm. Dogs can come too, as long as they're friendly and stay out of the garden beds. Please bring sunscreen or warm clothes (it's hotter and colder up on the hill than downtown), something to drink, and a snack.

❖ **How do I collect my share?**

Downtown Pick-up downtown starts at 4:30PM on Tuesdays. There are lots of kids in the neighborhood so thanks for driving cautiously. Find the name clipboard and check off your name. Then look at the board on the wall that tells you what's going on that week, what produce is available for you-pick on the farm, and how much produce to take. Reading down the board, take the produce it tells you take, using one of the measuring bowls or a scale if the produce needs to be weighed.

On the farm The on-farm pick-up starts at 3:30PM on Tuesdays. When you get to the farm, park near the compost pile and walk to the barn. Please do not to drive up to the barn, unless you have a sleeping baby in the car or handicapped passengers. There are lots of kids around and we want to keep the cars and the kids away from each other.

In the barn there's a clipboard with your name on it – please check your name off. There's a board that tells you about you-pick stuff, and another one that lets you know what veggies to take. Following down the board, gather your veggies according to what it says. Use the measuring bowls or a scale if it is an item that needs to be weighed. If you want to gather you-pick stuff, just follow the directions.

❖ **Is there a bathroom?**

Yes, at the farm. Thanks to Harry Littell, an amazing photographer and carpenter, our farm boasts what surely is the only composting toilet/camera obscura in probably the whole world. Follow the directions that are posted inside. The outhouse has a changing table, too!

❖ **Are there hazards on the farm?**

Yes!! A farm can be a dangerous place, and we have rules to make it safer for everyone.

Some hazards on our farm include:

The Barn: We store lots of nasty stuff in the barn, like gasoline, oil, and organic pesticides like sulfur. We try to keep these things out of reach and locked-up, but make sure your kids don't poke around too much. There are also sharp things to watch out for. In the upstairs of the barn there are two big sliding doors that we open for ventilation when it's hot, and while the view is beautiful from there, **keep unsupervised kids out of the upstairs.**

The Tractors: Even though there are times it can be safe to play on tractors, we are unable to monitor it closely enough, and the temptation can be so great that the rule is simply:

"No kids on tractors."

First Aid: We've got a first aid kit over the sink to the right as you walk in the barn door, and there is one in the tent downtown as well.

❖ **Do the farmers want feedback?**

Yes! We periodically have evaluations for shareholders to give feedback that we use for planning the following year. But don't wait for us! If there is something that you'd like us to know that would make the CSA work better for you, please let us know.