



A LA CARTER
**SYLVIA
CARTER**

Buy a share in the farm, and eat fresh

Community Supported Agriculture grows each year on Long Island. Every spring, when I put together a list of farms that offer shares, guaranteeing shareholders weekly boxes of produce, I find afterward that I have missed a few.

Simply put, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) means that you pay for a share in a farm and in return you get vegetables and, sometimes, fruit all during the growing season. Unlike a farm stand, which has an uncertain income, this practice guarantees a certain amount of money to

the farmers, so that they can buy seeds, build deer fences, repair tractors and the like.

"I know I'm where I belong now," said farmer Phil Barbuto of Biophilia in Jamesport. His family had the now-closed Yellowtop Farm and stand in Smithtown, and for years, Barbuto worked as an engineer. He came back to farming full time because, he said, "I was an environmentalist all those years. It's my value system, my belief system."

Most community-supported farms are organic or follow organic practices, and the farmers, such as Barbuto, say that this kind of lower-impact farming is the best way to preserve the environment. I agree.

Besides, there is some persuasive evidence that the vegetables are better for us. According to The Organic

Center, a Colorado-based research group, 40 studies over the past six years have shown that organic plant-based foods are more nutritious than conventional ones, containing higher levels of eight of 11 nutrients studied. On average, such foods are 25 percent more nutrient dense. (To learn more, go to organic.insightd.net/science/latest.php?action=view&report_id=126.)

Let's leave that aside for the moment. Another good reason to support community agriculture is the pure pleasure of it, having a small piece of "your own" farm. For several years now, I have belonged to Hamlet Organic Garden in Brookhaven, and gathering herbs there may be as close as I can get, for now, to a farm of my own. Standing in a row of fragrant basil in the gloaming of a summer night, I

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Farms with sharing in mind

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feel lucky. Farm kittens, mousers named Comfrey and Mugwort, bound over to greet me. Life is sweet. At community farms, full shares generally range from \$400 to more than \$700, but some have a sliding scale. Half shares, beginning at about \$300, are often available as well. Also, some farms will let you exchange work on the farm to defray part of the cost of a share. Most shares extend over 22 to 27 weeks. Some farms have no remaining shares but you may be able to get on a waiting list. Application forms are on most Web sites.

On the Island, this year's newest project is Restoration Farmers at Old Bethpage Restoration. Dan Holmes, 32, who farms at Old Bethpage with Caroline Fanning (also his partner in life), said the farm will offer 100 half shares at \$350 in its first year. (Half-share holders receive small amounts every week at some farms, or every other week at others.)

Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi had sought proposals for farming on some of the land at Old Bethpage, Holmes said, and he and Fan-



NEWSDAY PHOTO / KEN SPENCER

Dan Holmes and Caroline Fanning of Restoration Farmers

ning, 26, won. Under a six-year lease, they will pay 5 percent of gross sales to the county from the shares and a farm stand at Old Bethpage. Holmes said they will make heirloom vegetables a priority, in keeping with the site. Later, they may even try to use draft horses to work the farm, he added.

Visit nofany.org to learn about the Northeast Organic Farming Association's "farm-

er's pledge." Most of the farms listed below are certified organic, but a few that follow organic practice are not certified but do sign this pledge. At local harvest.org you can find a list of Community Supported Agriculture farms nationwide. For more information on the CSAs listed here, go to newsday.com/food.

E-mail sylviacarter@optonline.net

Long Island Community Supported Agriculture farms

Biophilia, Manor Lane north of Route 25, Jamesport. Contact Phil Barbato at 631-722-2299 or barbatop@aol.com Very few places remain.

The Farm at St. Peter's, 500 South Country Rd., Bay Shore. Contact Jen Campbell at 631-968-0886 or jen.camp@optonline.net or visit stpetersfarm.com.

Garden of Eve, Sound Avenue and Northville Turnpike, Riverhead, 631-523-6608, gardenofevefarm.com. Pickups at the farm and in Bayport, Roslyn and Manhasset.

Golden Earthworm Farm, 652 Peconic Bay Blvd., South Jamesport, 631-722-3302, goldenearthworm.com. Pickup at the farm and other sites.

Green Thumb, Route 27, Water Mill. Contact farmers Bill and Larry Halsey at 631-726-1900. Pickups at the farm and at Brookhaven Lab and in East Quogue.

Hamlet Organic Garden, Brookhaven, 631-286-7068, hamletorganicgarden.org. Pickup at the farm or at locations in Setauket and Bay Shore.

Just Food, 212-645-9880, ext. 233, or go to justfood.org. A New York City non-profit that runs 50 CSA pickup sites in the five boroughs.

Quail Hill Community Farm, Deep Lane, Amagansett, 631-267-8492, peconiclandtrust.org/quailhillfarm.

Restoration Farmers, Old Bethpage Village Restoration, Round Swamp Road, Old Bethpage. Contact Dan Holmes and Caroline Fanning at 631-383-1050 or muckchoy@hotmail.com or restorationfarm.com.

Sang Lee Farms, 25180 County Rd. 48, Peconic, 631-734-7001, sangleefarms.com.

Sophia Garden, 555 Albany Ave., Amityville. Contact Regina Dlugokencky or Julie Cohen at 631-842-6000, ext. 333, or visit homecomingearth.org.

Waldorf School, 225 Cambridge Ave., Garden City. Contact Rachel Schneider, 518-672-4465, ext. 105, or go to hawthornevalleyfarm.com. This CSA is supplied by Hawthorne Valley Farm in the Hudson Valley.