

Shundahai Farm 2012 CSA

Raluca Mocanu and Ed Wazer
253 Maple Road, Storrs, CT 06268
www.shundahaifarm.com, mail@shundahaifarm.com
860-429-0695

Greetings and thank you for your interest in our CSA. This document explains what our CSA is and how it will work in 2012. Please read it carefully in its entirety. Call us with any questions you may have. The **last page** is the **sign-up form** – please return it to us if you decide to join the CSA.

New Customers: Introduction

We are a small family farm of 5 acres established in 2009. We picked our name, Shundahai, from the Western Shoshone tribe, because we felt drawn to its meaning: “Peace and Harmony with all Creation.” It captures the spirit in which we try to farm and live. *We do not use herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, artificial fertilizers, or any other such chemicals to grow our food (whether they are approved by “Organic” Certification, or not).* Instead, we try to work with Nature, adopting gentle, sustainable practices that promote the health of the soil, plants, and all of us.

To affirm these beliefs and practices, we have taken the Connecticut NOFA (Northeast Organic Farmers Association) Pledge, which you can read at our farm stand, or at the CT NOFA website, www.ctnofa.org.

We grow over 30 vegetable crops for our CSA (see our [Harvest Chart](#) for varieties and timing of each crop). For those who have not been to the farm ([directions](#)), the winter and early spring are an excellent time to come and visit. Please give us a call to set up a time.

New Customers: What is Community Supported Agriculture?

We are very excited to begin our third year of CSA. What does it mean for you to participate in our CSA? In essence, as a CSA member, you agree to pay us at the beginning of the season for a share of this year’s harvest. This share will be distributed to you each week during the season, as explained later. The most obvious benefit for you, as a CSA member, is a guarantee that you will share in the fresh, chemical-free produce at our farm. You will receive a recipe book with information and cooking advice for all the crops we sell. You will see where and how your food is grown, and share in the joys and disappointments of crops as they come in season, along with us, the farmers. You will also be able to rest assured that your food is produced locally, with great attention given to quality, and in a way that is respectful of our environment. We hope that through the CSA, you may deepen your awareness and connection with the land, and all the forces involved in producing the food you eat. This intangible benefit is perhaps the most important part of the CSA. As a member, we will welcome your input into our farm’s operation. *Please realize that by participating in a CSA you assume a certain amount of risk, just as we, the farmers, do. Unpredictable weather and other forces of Nature may reduce or totally destroy crops. In 2009, for instance, we lost all of our tomatoes to late blight, as did many other farmers who did not spray fungicides. 2010 and 2011, on the other hand, were good growing years, and we were very successful in growing our crops. Thus, weather and other unpredictable factors may influence what crops you get and how much.*

What’s New in 2012

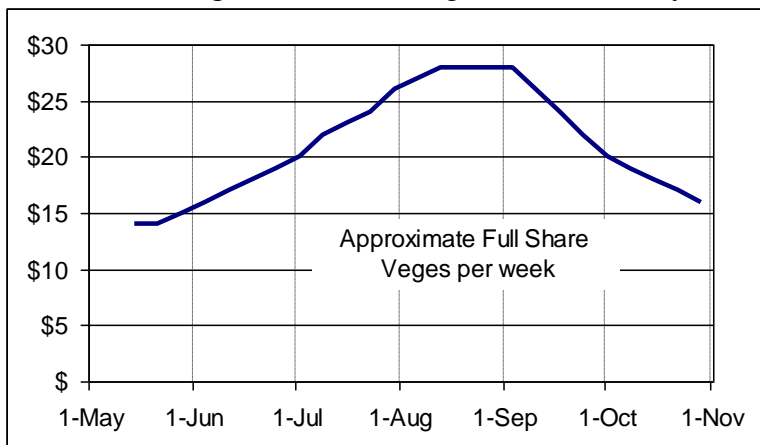
CSA duration slightly longer (25 instead of 24 weeks); Full and larger shares available; Moving away from half shares; Price changes; Extended CSA hours; Recipe book for the vegetables you’ll receive during the season included in the share.

How Our CSA Will Work

This year we will again offer our members two options: The Box and The Debit Option.

Box Option: With this method, we choose what vegetables you get each week and pack them in a bag, which is ready when you arrive. The advantages of this method for you are that it's easy (you just come and pickup the bag), and you'll get to try a variety of vegetables, some of which may be new to you. In addition, with this method, we make sure that you get more veggies than if you pick the Debit Option. The disadvantage is that you may get vegetables that turn out not to be your favorite. You will not get every vegetable available every week. However, over the course of the season, we will make sure you get a good selection of vegetables. If you want to purchase vegetables in addition to what's included in your weekly share, you can do so, as long as we have enough available, and you pay for them at the time of purchase.

Please look at the following chart which shows how last year's share was distributed to members during the season. They got the most variety and quantity of vegetables in August and September when crops are typically most abundant, and less at the beginning and end of the season. You can expect a similar distribution this year. Summed up over the whole season, you get the full value of your share (and more). Please also check our [Harvest Chart](#) to see what variety of vegetables you can expect to get at different times of the season.



Debit Option: With this method you select the vegetables you get. Each week when you pick up your share you make selections for what you want for the following week. We debit the total dollar value of your weekly purchases from what you paid us at the beginning of the season and inform you of the balance each week. This arrangement allows you to be more flexible than with the "box": if you love spinach but not beets, for ex., you can get spinach when you want it, but never get beets. It will be your choice. The disadvantage with this method is that you need to select your vegetables each week and be aware of your account. If you don't use all the money in your account by the end of the CSA, you'll lose whatever is left. Conversely, if you use your share all upfront, you will not be able to come for the full duration of the CSA unless you want to pay extra and we have enough vegetables. Over the past 2 years, we haven't had problems with people not using up their share. A few members chose to use up their share before the end of the season, and then paid us additionally for the remaining weeks.

CSA Membership Cost

This year we will offer full and larger shares. The prices will be as follows:

Option	\$ You pay us	Discount	How much value you get
Full Share	\$525	0%	\$525
1½ Shares	\$715	~5%	\$750
2 Shares	\$925	~8%	\$1000

Returning Customers: what happened to half shares?

Based on our experience over the past two years, we found that the time to manage the CSA is a significant part of our labor and expenses; this makes it difficult for us to continue half shares. In addition, for half share box, we found it a struggle to give people a good selection of veggies, and some

half share customers voiced that in the [2011 CSA Survey Results](#). Therefore we decided to stop offering half shares to new customers. For existing CSA members (2010, 2011) that had half shares, please call us to discuss what we can do if you feel you don't want a full share.

New Customers: How Large a Share is Right for Me?

This is highly variable based on your dietary choices. We have a few couples that consume two shares, while some families of four barely eat a full share. A very crude estimate of what you'll get is to take the value of a full share (\$525) and divide it by the duration of the CSA (25 weeks). That tells you you'll get \$21 worth of veggies per week, for the duration of the CSA. In reality, you'll probably get less at the beginning and end of the season, and more mid-season, when veggies are most plentiful (see chart above). To get an idea of our intended 2012 prices, please refer to the [Harvest Chart](#).

More on Pricing

Returning Customers: The share price has increased for the following reasons:

1. *Roughly \$15 of the increase* is due to the CSA being one week longer in 2012 (25 instead of 24 weeks)
2. *Roughly \$40 of the increase* is because we expect to have greater variety and/or duration of crops (including strawberries, raspberries, tomatoes, beets, carrots, peas, and eggs)
3. *Roughly \$25 of the increase* is due to a price increase on some crops.
 - a. In 2011 we did an analysis for the labor and expenses for each crop. Most crop prices will remain the same, a few will increase, while regular field tomatoes will decrease.
 - b. In 2011 we ended up making about \$6/hr in spite of having a great growing year, providing quality produce, and our CSA being successful in every other aspect. This is not reasonable or sustainable, and we are making changes, including choosing the most productive varieties, increasing prices, and eliminating some unprofitable crops/practices.
 - c. See the [Harvest Chart](#) on our website for 2011 and 2012 pricing and veggie selection.
 - d. The veggie price increase is also to cover the costs of the recipe book you will receive.

New Customers: Our prices are comparable to what you'll pay at a farmers' market for fresh, un-sprayed, vegetables.

When

CSA pickup will be every Monday or Thursday (depending on which day you sign up for), at the farm, starting the third week of May and ending the last week of October.

Monday 3-7pm from May 14th to October 29th (25 weeks) at the farm.

Thursday 3-7pm from May 17th to November 1st (25 weeks) at the farm.

CSA Policies

Missed Pickup: If you miss your pick-up during the designated time, you'll forfeit your veggies for that week and the associated dollar amount. Unfortunately, we cannot call for missed pick ups; by the time the CSA ends we have been working over 12 hours with very little time with our children, and it's not fair to them to take extra time after the CSA for phone calls. Also, arranging another pickup time can have a serious impact on our productivity if a number of people forget to pick up.

Vacations and other weeks when you cannot come: We understand that people may not be able to come some weeks for various reasons. If you choose the "**Box**" option, we ask that you find a friend / relative / neighbor to come in your place at those times (if no one is coming, please let us know so we don't harvest the veggies).

If you choose the “**Debit**” option, you can miss 3 weeks of the CSA, as long as you let us know at least 1 day in advance, and we will not debit your account. You will be able to make up for the missed vegetables at a different time. If, however, you need to miss more than 3 weeks, we ask that you find a friend / relative / neighbor to come in your place.

Sharing a Share: We cannot accommodate shared-shares except for the “Box” method. With the “Debit” option, sharing-a-share has been difficult to coordinate in the past.

Volunteering and Special Events

There is no work requirement for the CSA. However, if you’d like to volunteer, we will try to organize regular events where you can do so (for ex: garlic harvest, field preparation, onion storage, etc). In addition, we are planning to take a vacation and we will need help then, please see below. Lastly, we plan to organize potluck parties where CSA members can get to know each other, and learn skills such as food preservation through canning, fermentation, etc. If you have skills in these areas and want to share them with a group, please let us know!

Vacation

We are taking a one week vacation sometime in late July or August and will be seeking volunteers to help weed, pick, wash, run the CSA, move the chickens everyday, water seedlings, etcetera, while we are away. This will require some prior training. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

Signing Up

Returning Customers: We will reserve a spot for you until Feb 15. After that, sign-up will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

New Customers: We are expanding the CSA, therefore there will be new spots available. The earlier you sign up, the greater the likelihood that we will have shares available and that you’ll be able to get the pickup day you want.

All Customers: We kindly ask that people send a \$50 deposit by February 15, and pay the remaining balance by April 15. We accept cash (preferred) or check (please make checks payable to *Raluca Mocanu*).

Final Comments

Please call us with any questions, or to set up a time to come and visit our farm. We welcome any questions regarding our farming practices or any aspect of the CSA, and we are happy to show people around the farm.

We use email no more than twice a week, during the busy seasons much less than that, and thus it is our least preferred method of communication. Phone is much better – we check messages daily. If you wish to reach us by email, please expect a few days or weeks delay in our reply. Our email addresses and website are: mail@shundahaifarm.com, and www.shundahaifarm.com.

Further reading: A few items on Raluca’s blog and our website that may interest you:

- [Raluca’ Blog](#) – her take on farming family life, and lots of pictures
- [Is it Organic?](#) – Farming practices allowed under Organic Standards are compared with our practices.
- [2011 CSA Survey Results](#) – These are the results of a survey of our 2011 CSA Members.
- [Why \(or Why Not\) to Buy from Shundahai Farm](#) – Things you may wish to consider before joining

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2012 CSA Signup Form

Please fill and return this sheet to us along with your deposit by the deadline specified below.

Name _____
 Full Address _____
 Phone # _____
 Email _____

Day, Shares & Method Desired

(please circle one)		(please circle one)	(please circle one)
Option	Cost	Pickup Day	Method
Full Share	\$525	Monday	Box Method
1½ Shares	\$715	Thursday	Debit Method
2 Shares	\$925	no preference*	

*if you don't have a preference, please circle "no preference". We will pick a day for you, and try to even out the number of people on both days. This flexibility is very helpful to us.

Depending on the day you selected, share pickup will be:

Monday 3-7pm from May 14th to October 29th (25 weeks) at the farm.

Thursday 3-7pm from May 17th to November 1st (25 weeks) at the farm.

Payment Deadlines: Deposit: \$50 (check or cash) due by February 15th.

Balance: The remaining balance is due by April 15th.

We accept cash (preferred) or check (please make checks payable to Raluca Mocanu).

Questions:

Please help us plan our season by answering the following questions:

What time do you think you are most likely to pick up (we will not hold you to this in anyway)?

Season	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	No idea
During Grade School Spr/Fall					
During Fall Univ. Semester					
Summer					

How often should we schedule volunteer work events? Never Twice-a-Season Bi-Monthly Monthly

How often should we schedule special interest parties (food preservation, not political lobbying)?

Never Twice-a-Season Bi-Monthly Monthly

Do you think you will want Heirloom (\$4.00/lb) or Regular Field Tomatoes varieties (\$3.00/lb)? (Note: Heirloom tomatoes, for ex: Brandywine, are sought after for their exceptional flavor, but they are easily damaged, crack, and do not store well, and thus cost more to produce)

All Heirloom Mostly Heirloom Half/Half Mostly Regular All Regular

Do you think you will want Slicing or Pickling Cucumbers (no price difference)?

All Slicers Mostly Slicers Half/Half Mostly Picklers All Picklers