

## Market Garden CSA Harvest

The CSA harvest is each Monday and Thursday from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. CSA customers can pick up their baskets at 12:00pm.

### Packing shed orientation

#### Dry Erase Board

Check the dry erase board on the north wall of the packing shed. The board lists:

- Total number of baskets for Monday and Thursday CSA harvests (top right of the board)
- Specific crops to be harvested: An **open circle** drawn next to the crop name indicates that the crop is currently being harvested. A **filled in circle** next to the crop name indicates that harvesting for that crop has been completed, though it may still need to be washed and packed. **If you're picking a particular crop, remember to draw the circle and/or fill it in to let others know the progress on that crop.**
- Any special instructions for harvesting specific crops
- Notes on crops that have been harvested previously and kept in the cooler or drybox

#### Supplies

Many harvesting and packing supplies are found in the supply cabinet on the west shelf of the packing shed.

Supply or tool	Where to find
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clippers</li><li>• Lettuce/field knives</li><li>• Trowels</li></ul>	On the tool board, above the butcher paper. Please remember to return them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gloves, latex and garden (not required, only use if wanted for comfort)</li></ul>	Middle right shelves of supply cabinet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Twist ties</li><li>• Small and large plastic bags</li></ul>	Supply cabinet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boxes and harvesting baskets</li></ul>	Shelves on west wall of packing shed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper for lining baskets and boxes</li></ul>	Dispenser on north wall of packing shed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shovels</li><li>• Digging forks</li></ul>	Some in packing shed, more in storage shed east of packing shed (key is hung on the wall on the southeast corner of packing shed)

### General points to keep in mind

- Produce and boxes of produce should not be put on the floor at any time. Extra space is available on the tables just outside the packing shed on the north side.
- Try to keep tables and shelves in the shed clear for incoming produce. As boxes are emptied, fold them up and replace in the stack.
- Because the packing shed can get crowded, it's usually most efficient to have 2-4 people washing and packing in the shed while others are harvesting in the field.
- Wash your hands before washing and packing produce.
- If you are ill, do not participate in produce harvest or packing.
- Think Quality. Harvest the best looking produce you can find at the correct stage of maturity. Handle it carefully. Make the baskets beautiful.

### **Setting up the CSA baskets**

- If the CSA baskets are not in the packing shed, they will be stacked next to the Produce Prison (across the street from the Market Garden and next to the Eco-Garden). Also check for baskets that have been left in the Produce Prison.
- Line up the appropriate number of baskets for that day (check the dry erase board) on the shelves on the east wall of the packing shed.
- Remove any leftover produce from the baskets. Remove and discard the used pieces of paper.
- Tear off new paper and line each basket with a sheet.

### **Harvesting**

Check the dry erase board for crops that need to be harvested, or harvesting in progress with which someone might need a helping hand.

### Preparing for going out to the field

- If you are harvesting greens, herbs, root vegetables, long beans, or other crops that will need to be bunched, count out the number of twist ties you will need (usually the number of CSA baskets for that day). For thinner items, use twist ties cut in half. Some items will be easier to clean if you wash them first and then bunch them.
- Bring one or more boxes or baskets with you to hold what you harvest. Check boxes carefully when you assemble them to make sure the bottom is not going to fall out. For carrying smaller items that may fall through the cracks or with especially soiled boxes or baskets, line the bottom with paper. Baskets may be easier to use for delicate items of which you are gathering a large quantity to be packed in bags, such as fava beans or spinach leaves.
- For smaller items to be picked in large quantities (cherry tomatoes, berries, figs), use the green plastic pint baskets to keep track of quantities as you pick—for most crops, each CSA basket will get about one of these pint baskets, transferred to a plastic bag. Pint baskets can be carried to and from the field on the large black plastic trays.

- Bring any needed tools with you to the field: clippers, lettuce knives, digging forks, etc.

### Harvesting tips

- Ask Raoul or others for specific instructions for harvesting each crop, including amounts to be harvested for each basket and the crop maturity/size/color at harvest.
- A good general rule for greens and other bunched produce is to pick a family “meal-sized” portion for each basket.
- In general, look for attractive, healthy, sizable produce with minimal pest, weather, and disease damage.
  - For greens, harvest leaves that are not brown or wilted. Avoid plants that have bolted or gone to seed unless asked to do otherwise. On hot/sunny days, greens should be kept in the shade as they are being harvested and moved to a cool, shaded area quickly to avoid wilting.
  - You may want to trim up the ends of individual or bunched produce with clippers as you go, while leaving as much of the healthy, usable portion as possible. Remove any wilted, yellowed, or browned leaves from your bunches. Trim long leek roots and the tips of the leaves, remove the outer browned skin of green garlic, and remove wilted leaves at the base of lettuce heads.
  - For broccoli, kohlrabi, and cauliflower, check for firmness and avoid those that have flowered or have brownness or pest damage.
  - For root vegetables and squashes, check for firmness and avoid those with oozing dents or rodent/insect damage.
  - For tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, etc., check for firmness and avoid produce with soft spots, holes, oozing cracks, sunburn, or blossom end rot.

### **Washing**

- Most root vegetables and greens are washed before packing. Keeping the greens moist also prevents wilting once they are packed. Use the sprayers in the packing shed to gently but thoroughly spray soil and other residues off of produce.
- For some more delicate produce (such as lettuce and spinach leaves), it may work best to fill a basin with water and dunk larger quantities to gently remove soil.
- Allow washed produce to drain on the plastic trays before packing.

### **Packing in plastic bags**

- Pack greens and herbs in bags leaf ends first, then stand the greens upright on their stem ends in the CSA baskets. This helps avoid damage to the greens and pooling of moisture in the bags.

- The leafy green tops of root vegetables may be packed separately with other greens—check with Raoul or others to make sure.
- Remove stems and calyxes before packing tomatoes (they poke each other and cause holes).
- Tie off bags of small items.

### **Packing the CSA baskets**

- Pack baskets carefully to avoid squishing, crushing, or tearing produce.
- After you have packed a particular item, check to make sure that each basket has received the item. If a significant amount is still remaining, add more to each basket if possible.

### **Transporting the baskets to the Produce Prison for pickup**

- CSA baskets should be ready for pickup by 12:00pm at the Produce Prison (across the street from the Market Garden and next to the Eco-Garden).
- For transport it usually works best to stack 13 baskets in the bed of the mule (3 rows of 3 baskets each on the bottom, with 4 more baskets stacked on top where the baskets meet in the bottom row) and 3 baskets in the front of the mule.
- If enough people are present, a basket passing chain can be formed to pass the baskets from the shed to the mule.

### **Clean up**

After the baskets are packed and transported, clean up the packing shed.

- Remove all produce debris from the wash tank and put in the compost bin just west of the entrance to the packing shed.
- Spray out the wash tank thoroughly to remove soil. Make sure that the drain is not clogged and the water is draining freely.
- Put away all tools in the supply cabinet and the storage shed. Replace unused plastic bags and twist ties.
- Remove debris from and fold down empty boxes, then re-stack them. Straighten up the box stacks.
- Empty the refuse bin under the wash tank into the compost bin outside. Throw away any used paper into the waste bin outside.
- Sweep the floor thoroughly, then wet the floor and squeegee it.