



## Support Your Inner Farmer (or Local Farmer)

Signs of Spring are popping up and it is that time of year to start planning and planting your vegetable and fruit gardens. Or, if you lack the green thumb, now's the time to sign up for many community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs. Below are some useful resources to help get you going!

### Resources for Growing Your Own Food

Many people do not realize how convenient and satisfying it can be to grow your own fruits and vegetables. If you are interested in growing your own food, but do not know where to begin, there is a plethora of information available to get you started. Plan for next season with the [Planting and Harvesting Calendar](#) from Oregon Tilth. Or try the [Monthly Garden Calendars](#) from the OSU Master Gardener Program.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's [Urban Growth Bounty Classes](#) offer a variety of gardening and make-it-yourself classes. Topics range from growing fruit in your backyard and intensive vegetable production, to beekeeping and cheesemaking.

Are you a frustrated gardener living in an apartment or house without a speck of yard in which to garden? Don't despair! You can grow almost any fruit or vegetable, from apples to zucchini, in soil-filled containers on a balcony, doorstep or patio, or hung from an eave or a tree limb. Check out the [Container Gardening Fact Sheet](#) from WSU.

### Resources for Eating Local

Farmers markets are an international and very ancient method of food distribution that enables consumers to purchase fresh local produce in convenient urban areas. Oregon Farmers' Market Association is a non-profit organization that strives to sustain and promote Oregon farmers' markets while building community support and economic stability for Oregon's family farms, small food producers, processors and artisans. Check out the Oregon Farmers' Market [Directory](#) and find one of Portland's 40 metro area markets near you! Live in Washington? Stop by the [Vancouver Farmers Market](#).

Community Supported Agriculture or a [CSA](#) farming operations are a combined effort between a farm and a community of supporters that create a direct relationship between the production and consumption of food. Each season the harvest shareholders provide the money (and sometimes other resources) needed for farm operations by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. Invest in a farm and receive weekly shares of the farm's harvest. [Find a CSA near you!](#)

If CSA's are too much of an investment for you, then check out [Tri-County Farm Fresh Produce](#). It is a complete listing of u-pick farms and farm stands in Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah County.

### Did You Know?

From field to fork, an average dinner travels **1500 miles**. How fresh is your food? Which would you rather eat: 1) a vine-ripened tomato picked within the past 24 hours from your backyard or a farm 40 miles away; or 2) a tomato that was picked green, waxed, boxed, and then gassed with ethylene prior to shipping (they are gassed in order to look ripe). The tomato may have been picked two weeks ago and traveled thousands of miles!

### Where do your dollars go?

When you buy direct from local farmers, your dollars stay within your community, and strengthen the local economy. More than **90¢ of every dollar** you spend goes to the farmer. When you buy food via traditional markets, approximately 20¢ of every dollar you spend goes to the farmer, with the other 80¢ going to marketing, distribution, and other costs.