



# Easy Pickin's Orchard

"Farm Fun for the Whole Family"

---

## 2017 CSA Season Review

**2017: Season 8.** Our 20-week season began in the second full week of June, with the usual early mix of salad & cooking greens, beets & turnips & radishes, and strawberries; this full season went through the end of October, with a late run of string beans & tomatoes, plus the usual carrots, winter squash, apples & Asian pears. Overall CSA membership decreased slightly this year, but we're glad to see the significant number of multiple-season members returning. Half shares continue to be a popular option: families down-sizing, folks trying CSA for the first time, and folks who meet their produce needs with a mix of CSA, pick-your-own or a la carte orders, and their own gardens ! Full-share memberships are often multi-generational families or groups of friends; we see enough of this working well to recommend it to others considering joining CSA.

This year we had 3 "satellite" CSA drop-offs. The University of Hartford, where we deliver several weekly shares for faculty & staff, completed its fourth full season. LEGO Systems of Enfield, returning for a third year, opted for a 15-week season concluding in late September. Our other "corporate" satellite site in Enfield was Brooks Brothers, trying out CSA for the first time; they chose to split the season into 2 10-week segments, so that their employees could either opt-in for just the first or second half, or start in June and re-up at mid-term to go the full 20 weeks. "Satellite" CSA makes it convenient for more busy people to have access to our CSA program; it also broadens our reach into the community. The on-site coordinator at a satellite location has to bring enthusiasm & good organization to the task; our partners at UofH, LEGO & Brooks Brothers have been outstanding in that regard. We'll be offering "satellite" CSA again in 2018, and we're always open to pursuing other "collective" partnerships with workplaces, organizations, faith communities, etc.. Ask us about this if you have a group that's interested, and a shared pick-up location to offer !

Each week's share included several varieties of seasonal vegetables, fruit, & occasionally herbs. We try always to offer a "menu-convenient" mix of items that go well together in recipes or complement each other in a meal. A weekly e-mail describes the share contents, to allow for menu planning & grocery shopping; we add hints on cooking & storage, & sometimes recipes -- which often come from our CSA members !

For many of our members, the CSA experience opens up a whole new world of veggies they've seldom had, and perhaps never cooked with, before. We stress the importance of being "open-minded" on this, and we think we're opening some folks' culinary horizons; we also solicit & share suggestions for new ways to prepare old standbys (101 ways to enjoy string beans !)

When possible, we offer "*a la carte*" add-ons to augment the weekly share. When any of our veggies or fruit are plentiful, \*and\* folks might want more than is included a given week (e.g., berries, plums, broccoli, squashes), they can purchase extra amounts and pay for / pick them up with their weekly share.



# Easy Pickin's Orchard

"Farm Fun for the Whole Family"

---

Fortunately 2017 had none of the crop-damaging weather (pre-season frosts, summer drought) that made 2016 a challenging year. However, on a number of occasions the rain came at just the right time to make harvesting (especially berries) difficult, and some plantings of crops seemed to mature & ripen either sooner or slower than we'd planned for. Overall, we had a good vegetable harvest - & plums, peaches, & plenty of apples ! - but in farming, even things that turn out well seldom turn out exactly as expected.

So, we often had to be flexible in working out the contents of weekly shares. Several weeks, one or more components of the share would vary over the course of the week according to the amounts of these items ready to be harvested for a given pick-up day, but we tried to even out the distribution of vegetable varieties for all CSA members over a few weeks, so that nobody missed anything. And each week's share always included an assortment of several veggies, plus 1 or more fruit or berry items. We appreciate our members' willingness to be flexible in their menu planning, too -- whenever their weekly e-mail announced "either / or" possibilities. The **2017 CSA Weekly Share Contents** listing shows these "either / or" adaptations. See the **Notes** at the top of that write-up for more explanation.

For a full list of each week's share offerings, and photos from our 2017 season, click the links on our **CSA Program** page:

**[2017 CSA Weekly Share Contents](#)**

**[2017 CSA Photos](#)**