

# Tips from CSA Masters:

## How to go from Veggie Amateur to CSA Pro



### 1. Stock up on Pantry Staples

- Oils, broth, beans, dressings, nuts, lentils, whole grains (rice, farro, quinoa, oats), pasta, a crusty loaf of bread
- What are your favorite proteins? Chicken, beef, pork, fish, eggs, tofu, mushrooms- have them on hand to complement your veggies and make any fast and easy meal come together.

### 2. Use Recipes as a Guide, not Gospel

Read over recipes for inspiration; plan recipes around your share not the other way around.

- Read the Monday farm email to see the upcoming harvest; check out the recipe links in the email.
- Search the Blooming Glen Farm blog by vegetable ingredient for archived farm recipes.
- Grab a copy of the Cookbook "From Asparagus to Zucchini" which is focused on CSA farm fresh eating.
- Sub in veggies from the same crop family in recipes that aren't an exact fit. Flexibility is key.

### 3. Veggie Prep the day you get your share

Over and over again our CSA masters tell us they set aside time on the same day they pick up their veggies in order to prep and properly store their produce.

- Have your Blooming Glen Farm *A to Z Vegetable Storage Guide* (PDF) easily accessible.
- Unpack your share, separate roots and greens, wash and dice what you might want for easy snacks, make a big salad for the week ahead, roast a tray of root veggies or boil a pot of potatoes.
- Develop a simple fridge & freezer storage system: have different size containers and Debbie Meyer green bags on hand; create an organization chart for what's in your freezer.
- Throw any tops you don't think you'll use in a freezer bag for stock.

### 4. Prioritize & Plan

Prioritize the most perishable.

- What veggies have the shortest shelf life? What needs to be used first? (Salad greens, lettuce, cooking greens)
- What veggies can hold for weeks at a time? (Cabbage, root veggies)

Run through a "Meal Planning Rubric" and prep accordingly. Will I eat this:

- Raw (salad, snackable slices with a dip, pesto, dressing)
- Cooked (sauté, steam/boil, roast, grill)
- Or should I preserve because I just won't get to it in time (freeze, dehydrate, can)

### 5. Find your GO TO meals

Find *YOUR* go to recipes, what's quick and easy and enjoyed by your family.

- Have fall-back recipes that work with the addition of any seasonal veg: frittata, veggies sauteed with pasta, tacos, quinoa salad, grain bowls, stir-fry, soup, smoothies, simple grilled veggies, sheet pan meals.
- What works once, what your family likes, will keep working, with seasonal veggie substitutions.

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### 6. Experiment

- Try new cuisines, explore Indian food or Mexican dishes. Branch out. Have fun. Go out of your comfort zone.
- You're not going to love every single veggie, but don't give up on it. Commit to learning how to use something new each season. You may be one delicious dish away from a new favorite.

### 7. Exit Strategy

Have an exit strategy to use up veggies in your fridge before the next pickup.

- stir-fry
- crock-pot or slow cooker
- soup, chili

### 8. Preserve the bounty

- Freeze veggies- some can be frozen raw, like peppers; some need a quick blanch, like sweet corn or greens.
- Dehydrate/ oven dry- oven dried tomatoes are wonderful to enjoy all winter.
- Homemade Veggie Stock- throw all scraps in freezer bag until your ready to make.
- Green Cubes- blanch & blend your greens with a little water. Silicone cube trays are awesome for portioning.
- Herb Pesto; Sauces; or Soup. I LOVE having frozen soups for a quick meal anytime of the year, but especially in winter.
- Small batch canning- [FoodinJars.com](http://FoodinJars.com) is a wealth of information.
- Pickles/fermentation: Try quick fridge pickles or fermented veggies on your countertop- see [Phickle.com](http://Phickle.com)

### 9. Share

- Share the bounty with family, friends and neighbors (or even your compost pile- it's ok, really!).
- Share the farm experience, bring a friend to pickup with you, or send them when you're on vacation. Missed your pickup? Feel good that missed shares are donated to those in need.
- Take advantage of the *Sharing Table*. It's ok to leave something behind at pickup for someone else.

Let go of the fear of waste. Your farmers know they give you more than the dollar value of your share. Just like eating out, you might not finish everything. Go easy on yourself, and gradually master a few of these tips.

### 10. Spirit of CSA

- Lastly, remember why you joined the CSA in the first place: YES local fresh organic produce, but also Health (soil & farms & communities & you) and the simple JOY of cooking for yourself and your family.
- Consider the *value of the experience*: picking in the fields, fresh flowers on your counter, a child who ask for kale or knows how to pick a ripe ground cherry.

**The rewards are greater than the tangible harvest you see.**