



TUV HA'ARETZ
CSA AT THE
FOREST HILLS
JEWISH CENTER

TUV HASHAVUA: BEST OF THE WEEK

Cortilia – an Italian Hybrid Experiment of CSA

Valeria Vavassori-Chen, Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA Member

While visiting my family in Italy this past June I talked about being a member of Tuv HaAretz CSA and how I am proud to support local farms. I found out my sister was part of one too! I became interested in finding out when Italian CSAs were born, how they work, etc. So here is what I discovered.

There are different versions of CAS (*cooperativa agricola sociale* – community based agricultural cooperative) but just like here in the US, it all starts with a group of people getting together and purchasing vegetables and fruit directly from a local farm.

When asking around, it seemed that these purchasing groups were made mainly of neighbors, friends or religious communities. By skipping the distributor and going straight to the farmer, the purchasing group is able to have access to fresher, local, seasonal and organic vegetables and fruit but also other products like meat, cheese, eggs and baked goods. What seemed to be different from our CSA is that it resembles more of a traditional purchase in that the farmer announces what it is going to be available for the season and the purchasing group can opt out of certain vegetables or fruit that are not up to their taste. Also, CAS farmers deliver directly to the single families.

In a study published by the University of Pisa¹, CASs seem to have emerged during the 70s and 80s inspired by the ideals of solidarity and mutuality as places where marginalized or differently-abled individuals could find work. By the year 2000, their focus started to widen to include agricultural sustainability and multi-functionality of the local rural areas. This is when CAS emerged as a way to support these initiatives and sustain the local economy and society while offering quality produce to customers.

My sister uses the services of a CAS hybrid called Cortilia (www.cortilia.it), available in the Milan area. Cortilia is something in between a Fresh Direct and a more traditional CSA. Cortilia describes itself as “the first online farmers' market that connects consumers with local producers.” So while traditional CAS groups go look for farms that will allow a group purchase, Cortilia sponsors several local farms and puts

¹ *Centro Interdipartimentale di Ricerche Agro-Ambientali Enrico Avanzi. “Storia e diffusione dell'agricoltura sociale”. Università di Pisa*

WEEK #11 8/12/2014

Many Thanks to Our
 Volunteers:

8/12 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

Melissa Katz

Jillian Coulton

Rae Kerzner

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

Adrian Hayes

8/19 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

Leah Klein

Karin Kalkstein

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

Larry Fuchs

LAST MINUTE CONTACT INFO:

**For urgent last-minute
 pick-up or volunteering
 changes on pick-up day,
 call/text**

Felicia 917-627-0669

or email Judy

trupinjet@gmail.com

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 718-264-7000, ext 250 | tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
www.foresthillstuvcsa.com
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- **Golden Earthworm:**
www.goldenearthworm.squarespace.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org


customers in contact with them. The farms specify what they produce and the area they serve; Cortilia gathers orders (thus working like a group purchase) and arranges deliveries.

Here is how it works – when a new customer signs up (for free) and indicates his address, Cortilia will list all farms that serve his area and the products available. The new customer can choose to select individual products or sign up for shares. Shares come in three sizes (small, medium or large) and are available as veggie/fruit, “mixed” (which includes meat, cured meat, cheese, bread, eggs and baked goods along with vegetables and fruit) or “special” (fruit only or vegetables only). Prices of shares vary from €19 (\$26) for a small box to €35 (\$47) for a large box.

Once the selection is made, the customer indicates a day and time he would like to receive the order, very much like Fresh Direct. Shipping is free in the time slots are 9am-5pm and 2.30pm-9.30pm. Shipping fees for premium time slots are €5 (\$6.70) for the purchase of a share or €7 (\$9.50) for the purchase of individual items (free over € 80 to \$ 108).

After learning about the service of Cortilia, I found myself thinking how convenient the service is for the consumer, while still retaining the original ideal of supporting local farms and agriculture. Researching the history of CSA in

Italy, and the wonderful initiatives fostering social integration, I realized how the two things combined could really be an amazing project, benefiting both the consumer and society. I think it would increase awareness of local issues/needs (such as integration of marginalized and differently-abled

individuals but other issues as well) and create a tighter bond with the local community by creating a mutually supportive cooperative. 

Valeria Vavassori-Chen is a trained bioethicist who is currently a stay-at-home mom. Originally from Italy, she lives in Forest Hills with husband Andy and daughter Isabella.

This very lovely article brought back memories to me of more than 20 years ago - when I was a frequent guest artist at a small theater school in Imperia. The school directors introduced me to a local farmer and I got a box of the vegetables, homemade bread and homemade tofu every week for the 4-5 weeks of my stays.

-- Judy Trupin

8/12 What's in the Box:


Green Bell Pepper, Cipollini Onions, Swiss Chard, Cherry Tomatoes, Red Tomatoes, Red Potatoes, Fennel FRUIT: Yellow, White, Orange Donut Peaches / Apricots

NOTES FROM GOLDEN EARTHWORM:

"What's with all the lettuces and greens???"

Most greens don't grow well in the heat of the summer. Swiss Chard is pretty much the only cooking green that we can grow in July and August. Plenty of other greens are planted for harvest when it cools down a bit in the fall.


Did you notice that there is no more lettuce in the shares this week? I'm sure we'll get some complaints about that too! Most people want to make salads during the week, so we do our best to include a salad green of some sort (lettuce, arugula, lettuce mix, etc.) in the shares each week. Batavian and Romaine lettuces happen to grow well in the summer heat, so that's why you've been getting them for the past few weeks.

Onions also grow well in the summer and we have planted several different varieties. If you love to cook, you know you can't possibly get enough onions. Too many? Be a good neighbor and give them away ... or make a tasty caramelized onion tart, now or for serving at Thanksgiving! 

SWISS CHARD SALAD

organicauthority.com | Serves 4

- 1 bunch rainbow chard
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 12 breakfast radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 shallot or small cipollini, minced
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup almonds, toasted
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 bunch parsley, chiffonade
- 1 avocado, cubed

Wash the chard very well and spin dry. Thinly slice, taking special care to slice the ribs particularly thinly. Add the olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper to the chard. Massage it well for about 15 seconds or so. Add the radishes, shallot/onion, cranberries, almonds, feta, parsley and avocado. Toss lightly to combine. Serve immediately. 

ROASTED MARKET MIX

Chocolatl, food.com | Serves 6

- 2 lbs baby red potatoes, halved
- 1 large fennel bulb, thick wedges
- 8 oz mushrooms, halved or sliced (button, cremini, Portobello, etc.)
- 1 bell pepper, cored, thick wedges
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- salt and pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 450F. Place all ingredients in shallow roasting pan, toss to combine well. Roast 30 minutes without stirring. Shake pan to loosen vegetables, and roast about 20 minutes more, till potatoes are crusty, browned. Stir occasionally for last 10 minutes. 