

Full Circle Farm's approach to agriculture is as wholesome as its produce

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By HSIAO-CHING CHOU

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER FOOD WRITER

Full Circle Farm gets around.

Its organic produce is not hard to find, because you can buy it at all Larry's and PCC stores, Madison Market, and at area farmers markets. During peak season, about 50 restaurants buy from the farm, so it's likely you've seen the name on a menu somewhere. If you're a member of the CSA (community supported agriculture) program, you get a box of produce delivered weekly to one of nearly 20 neighborhood drop points.

Full Circle Farm, which began in North Bend 10 years ago and moved to Carnation in 2001, offers one of the most flexible CSAs available. Typically, when you sign up for a farm subscription, you have to pay in advance, sign up for a certain period of time and whatever is in the box is what you get. Full Circle allows for up to three substitutions. So, if you really don't like beets, you can get lettuce, herbs or something else that's in season instead.

You also can choose the number of weeks you want to participate. And, with so many drop points, you're bound to find a convenient location to pick up your box.

The accommodating spirit of Full Circle Farm is the manifestation of farmer Andrew Stout's ethic, which is to grow good food and bring as many people into the circle as he can.

To that effect, parties and farm lunches are a common occurrence at Full Circle (www.fullcirclefarm.com). Just recently, Stout prepared a hearty lunch of oysters on the half shell, grilled salmon and spring onions, and mixed greens salad for visiting PCC deli employees, who had taken the grand tour of the farm and even dug their fingers into the soil to plant some lettuce.

Stout often invites his commercial clients to experience the farm so they get a better understanding of the origin of the foods they use and sell.

The solstice party in summer and the harvest pig roast in the fall allow other customers to visit the source and connect with Stout and his devoted staff. "They call it community-supported agriculture, but it's not much of a community if all they do is pick up a box of food," Stout explains. "So, we started having parties to bring people out to see the farm."

Growing good food, for Full Circle Farm, starts with a specially blended soil and quality seeds. Great care is given to raising the plants from seed to harvest.

Choice, accessibility and building relationships are important to Stout. Just as he's cultivating organic produce and practicing sustainable farming techniques to protect the future of the land, he's reaching out to the public to cultivate future customers. There are generations of people who are too far removed from the land and don't understand where food comes from. Stout is changing that by extending an invitation for people to visit, a gesture he believes is his responsibility. There is nothing like seeing the delight on the face of a child who has just pulled a carrot out of the ground.

The farm is a model of Old World ways and New World sensibilities. Stout has some 50-year-old tractors, but the seeder is circa 2003. He believes in building community, but depends on the Web site to spread the word. He farms 140 acres in the country, but lives in the Capitol Hill neighborhood: Stout commutes to his farm.

There's even a touch of New Age. Stout's wife, Wendy Munroe, is a licensed acupuncturist. She has planted an experimental five-element garden to see what Eastern herbs can grow at the farm. The garden consists of five beds, each representing an element: fire, metal, water, earth and wood. Each bed contains medicinal herbs that correspond to its respective element.

"Safe use of herbs (in acupuncture) is No. 1," Munroe says. "I want to provide chemical-free, organic herbs."



zoom Paul Joseph Brown / P-I

A sampling of the produce Full Circle Farm provides to its community-supported agriculture, or CSA, customers, who get a box of organic goodies weekly.

Eventually, the farm will be able to sell unprocessed medicinal herbs.

While Stout knows that Full Circle isn't the be-all, he considers it a model for what a farm can be. In addition to everything already mentioned, Stout is adding greenhouses so he can "close the seasonality gap" and offer local, organic produce throughout the winter. He has created a fun work atmosphere by providing a pool table and pingpong, which his employees rave about.

"I'm passionate about my work, so it's easy to do. Everybody picks up on that energy."

It has taken 10 years to grow Full Circle Farm to where it is today and it finally is making a little money. The land in Carnation has "good juju." It was where Stout and Munroe were married in 2001.

The land has given Stout so much to work with and to make an impact in his little part of the world.

"You start to have a permanent effect on the community, so it's not just cash for a carrot. We're ambassadors not just for organic produce, but for the land. I always say yes to people. I have nothing to lose by spending a half-hour of my time with (a visitor)."

AREA FARMERS MARKETS

A look at some of the region's farmers markets. For a complete list, visit www.wafarmersmarkets.com or www.pugetsoundfresh.org.

ANACORTES

Seventh Street and R Avenue

Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 15-Oct. 16

www.anacortesfarmersmarket.org

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

Market Square at Madison and Winslow

Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

April 10-Oct. 16

www.bainbridgefarmersmarket.com

BELLINGHAM

Fairhaven Village Green

Wednesday, 3-7 p.m.

June 2-Sept. 29

www.bellinghamfarmers.org

BOTHELL

238th Street Southeast and Bothell-Everett Highway (state Route 527)

Friday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.



 Paul Joseph Brown / P-I
Esquiel Marungo harvests radishes at Full Circle Farm in Carnation. The farm's organic produce finds its way to farmers markets, grocery stores, restaurants and CSA members.

May 21-Oct. 1

www.countryvillagebothell.com

BURIEN

Fourth Avenue Southwest, between 150th and 152nd streets

Thursday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

May 13-Oct. 7

BURLINGTON

Cherry and Victoria streets at

the Old Fire Station

Thursday, 3-7 p.m.

June 7-Sept. 30

CARNATION

Tolt Avenue and Bird Street

Tuesday, 3-7 p.m.

June 15-Oct. 12

COUPEVILLE

Eighth and Main streets

Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

April 3-Oct. 16

ORCAS ISLAND

Eastsound Village Square

Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

May 1-Oct. 2

EDMONDS

Bell Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues

Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

May 1-Sept. 25

www.historicedmonds.org/market/market.htm

EVERETT

Everett Marina at Port Gardner Landing

Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

June 6- Sept. 26

www.snohomishmarkets.com

GIG HARBOR

3500 Hunt St. N.W. at state Route 16

Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

April 17-Oct. 9

www.gigharborfarmersmarket.com

KIRKLAND

Park Lane East between Third and Main streets

Wednesday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

April 28-Oct. 13

LANGLEY

(Bayview Farmers Market) state Route 525 at Bayview Road

Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

March 6-Dec. 18

www.bayviewfarmersmarket.com

OLYMPIA

700 N. Capitol Way

Thursday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

April 1-Dec. 24

www.farmers-market.org

PORT ANGELES

Laurel Street between Front and First

Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Wednesday 3-6 p.m.

Saturday, all year; Wednesday, June-September

RENTON

South Third Street between Logan and Burnett

Tuesday, 3-7 p.m.

June 15-Sept. 14

REXVILLE

Rexville Grocery, 19271 Best Road between Conway and LaConner

Sunday 9 am-2:30 p.m.

June-November

SEATTLE

Ballard Farmers Market

5300 Ballard Ave. N.W.

Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

All year

www.ballardsundaymarket.com

Columbia City

4801 Rainier Ave. S. at Edmunds Street

Wednesday, 3-7 p.m.

May 19-Oct. 13

www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org

Because the Rainier Valley is so diverse, this market offers a great chance to people watch.

Lake City

Northeast 127th Street and 30th Avenue Northeast

Thursday, 3-7 p.m.

May 27-Oct. 14

www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org

Great for end-of-the-week shoppers.

Magnolia

Magnolia Community Center

2550 34th Ave. W.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. June 12-Oct. 16

www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org

Pike Place Market

Between Pike and Virginia streets

Wednesday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

June 13-Oct. 31

www.pikeplacemarket.org

Organic farmer days are the best days to shop for produce at Pike Place.

University District

Northeast 50th Street and University Way Northeast

Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 22-Nov. 20

www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org

The location is great, which allows for the largest selection of farmers.

West Seattle

California Avenue Southwest and Southwest Alaska Street

Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 16-Nov. 21

www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org

Look for the organic, pasture-raised beef from Skagit River Ranch.

SPOKANE

Second and Division

Saturday and Wednesday

8 a.m.-1 p.m.

May 17-Oct. 25

www.spokanefarmersmarket.homestead.com

TACOMA

Proctor

North 27th Street at Proctor

Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 1-Oct. 30

www.proctorfarmersmarket.com

Tacoma Downtown

Broadway between Ninth and 11th streets

Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 3-Oct. 21

www.tacomafarmersmarket.com

VASHON

Vashon Highway and Bank Road

Wednesday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

April 3-Oct. 2

WOODINVILLE

Woodinville Community Center

Old City Hall on Northeast 175th Street

Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

April 17-Oct. 16

CSAs

Community supported agriculture is produce by subscription and can cost from \$150 to \$500, depending on the farm and package. For a list of farms that offer CSAs, visit www.seattletilth.org/activities/2004CSADirectory.htm.

To learn more about Full Circle Farm's CSA, visit or call [425-333-4677](tel:425-333-4677).

P-I food writer Hsiao-Ching Chou can be reached at 206-448-8117 or hsiaochingchou@seattlepi.com.

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