



CANADA
A ROCHA
Environmental Stewardship

CSA Member Handbook

2023



Welcome to the A Rocha CSA!

We are **delighted to have you** as part of our farm this year! Consider us your very own farmers again or for the first time! It's a gift for us to do the work of seeding, planting, weeding, and harvesting in order to offer you fresh, delicious produce through the whole summer and fall. Our hope is that you not only love eating our vegetables but that you can become **more connected to the seasons, our farm, and each other**.

If you are returning this year, you'll notice the changes - we think all for the better! We will use a free-choice, market-style system instead of the Harvie platform. It's the **same customization** with **none of the back-end training in Harvie** or rush to swap things in your shares mid-week. Picking what you want means **less waste and more fun for you** in the kitchen!

We have other new things for you this year in addition to your weekly share of our harvest:

- + Exclusive access to several **u-pick** crops
- + **Picnic** with other CSA members and our farm team
- + CSA member **farm tour**
- + Discounts & early access to sign up for **on-farm workshops**

If you have specific questions, comments, or delights along the way, you can **email us any time at csa@arocha.ca**.

Farmers Carly, Leah, & Abby





Table of Contents

BROOKSDALE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE	4
OUR FARM & GROWING PRACTICES	5
UNDERSTANDING THE CSA RISK	5
HOW OUR CSA WORKS	6
COMMUNICATION	6
PICK UP SITES	6
STARTING DATE	7
WEEKLY SHARES	7
CSA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS	7
ADD-ONS (FRUIT, MUSHROOMS, ETC.)	8
MISSING WEEKS OR PLANNING VACATIONS	8
SPLITTING MEMBERSHIP WITH SOMEONE ELSE	8
CAN SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP?	8
MEMBERSHIP PERKS & FARM EVENTS	9
U-PICK	9
ON-FARM WORKSHOPS	9
FARM TOUR	10
CSA PICNIC	10
ANNUAL SITE EVENTS	10
SEASONALITY CALENDAR	11
PAYMENT POLICY	13
HOW TO PAY	13
SHARE PRICE ASSISTANCE	14
CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY	14
SAFETY ON THE FARM	15

BROOKSDALE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE

A ROCHA CANADA

A Rocha is an international non-profit organization **focused on environmental conservation** springing from Christian faith. A Rocha (pronounced "Ah- Raw-sha") is Portuguese for "the rock." Beginning with a migratory bird research centre in Portugal, A Rocha is now established in over 20 countries. A Rocha's philosophy includes a long-term commitment to caring for specific places with all its communities – from humans to other mammals, birds, fish, and soil.

A Rocha Canada began in the early 2000s with several families purchasing land in Surrey, which became Kingfisher Farm. In 2010, A Rocha was invited to an 18-acre site down the road, now the current Brooksdale Environmental Centre, and given the property entirely in 2017.

BROOKSDALE

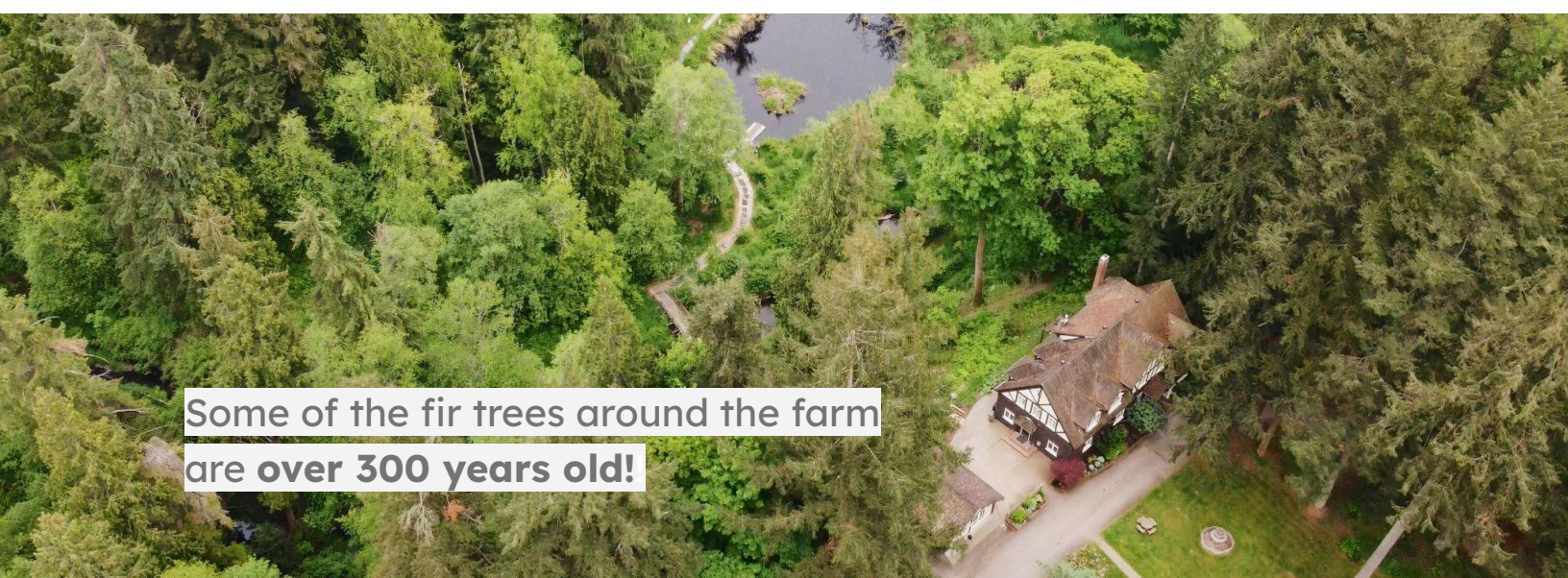
At the Brooksdale Environmental Centre here in south Surrey, our commitment is to the **care of the Tatalu River watershed** (Little Campbell River), which runs through the property. We do this through three core program areas: conservation science, environmental education, and **sustainable agriculture**. Within and around these programs, there are also conservation residents (formerly known as the internship program) along with retreats and hospitality through the Guest House.



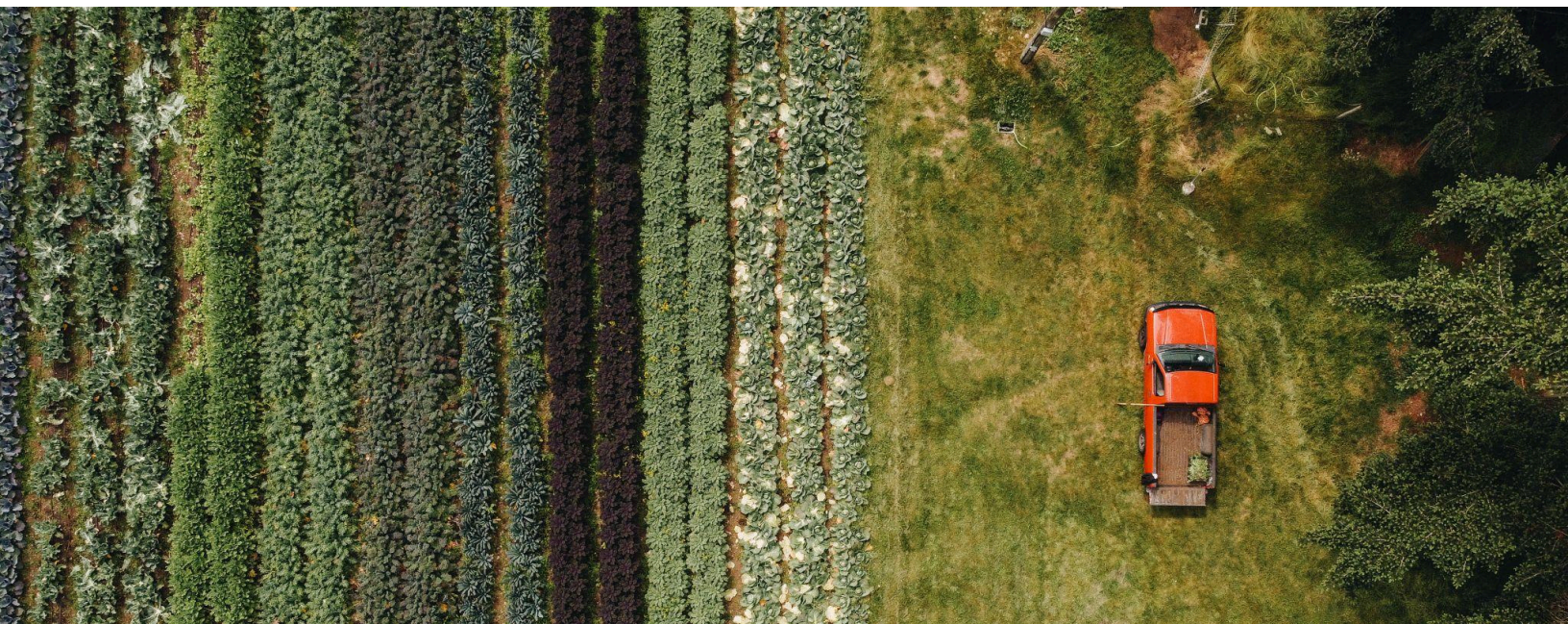
Main house, 1952.

For the history buffs!

The Brooksdale property is home to buildings from the early 1930s including three registered in Surrey's Community Heritage Register. Architect Ross Anthony Lort (1889-1968) designed the former estate for original owners, Sheldon Dwight "Sam" Brooks (1878 – 1946) and Greta Brooks (1890 – 1951). The Brooks family ran the Powell River Company responsible for manufacturing the first roll of newsprint in British Columbia. The Brooks family purchased this property in 1933.



Some of the fir trees around the farm
are **over 300 years old!**



OUR FARM & GROWING PRACTICES

Our farm is located at A Rocha Canada's Brooksdale Environmental Centre at 1620 192 Street in south Surrey. We manage 2.5 acres of vegetable production. In 2022, half of the fields were **transitioned to no-till production** – an exciting development for soil and water conservation!

We use **regenerative practices** including the use of cover crops, crop rotations, and planting habitat for beneficial insects. We're transitioning to no-till production to minimize the physical disturbance of our soil and increase soil organic matter content. This **sequesters carbon** into the ground to mitigate carbon emissions and **increase our resilience to climate change**.

While we are not certified organic, our practices are considered organic so you can rest assured **no synthetic chemicals are applied** to the land or your food. If you have questions, do ask – we love to talk about farming!

UNDERSTANDING THE CSA RISK

As a member, you will share in both the **abundance of our harvests as well as the risks of farming**. Although we can navigate around most problems, it is likely that every year there may be something unpredictable – drought, disease, insects, hail, or other things outside of our control. This may affect specific crops for the season. In 2022, the cool, wet spring meant that tomatoes did not ripen as early as we had hoped (it's never too early for the first tomatoes, of course!) and our warm-loving melon crop did not boom as it did in the heat wave of 2021.

We'll do our best to **make sure you have the values of your shares**, shift our next planting successions, or even buy in produce from a local organic partner if needed. You'll be in the loop via our farm newsletters and we ask for you to be patient with us. **We're all in this together** – our few sorrows and many joys will be collective!

HOW OUR CSA WORKS

COMMUNICATION

Anytime you need, feel free to **reach out to farmers Carly, Leah, or Abby** at csa@arocha.ca.

We send out weekly **CSA member newsletter via email** (and one before the first pick up). Weekly email newsletters are our primary way to let you know what's coming, give instructions for picking up your shares, share recipes, and show you the inside scoop from the farm. **Make sure emails from csa@arocha.ca don't get lost** in your spam or promotional folders.

PICK UP SITES

Pick up your shares on **Fridays** at the spot you chose at sign up:

- + **At our farm between 1-7pm**
- + **East Vancouver site 2-8pm.** *We'll email the exact address before your first pick-up.*

For those coming to our farm, below is a site map for your reference. **Harvests will be available in our big yellow barn.** You'll park and walk past the farm store to get to the barn. Detailed instructions will be in our CSA member newsletter!



STARTING DATE

The first pick up day is planned for **Friday, June 2** and will continue for a total of **22 joyous weeks** through the end of October. Note the start date could be flexible by a week depending on the spring weather. *We will not have a separate winter CSA so we extended to 22 weeks.*

WEEKLY SHARES

Each week, you'll have an option from 10-20 vegetables and herbs – see the [seasonality calendar](#) for what's likely available when. CSA membership is **your pick of the farm's harvest!**

This year, **you'll receive a large canvas tote at your first pick-up.** Bring this each week to fill with your choice of the harvest according to your purchased shared size (one-adult, two-adult, three+). **You decide what goes in your bag!** You can choose to experiment with vegetables for the week or choose for your kitchen's tried-and-true dishes. By the end of the season, you will have seen **over 200 varieties**. Note! *Some bulk crops, large items like melons, squash, and u-pick are the cherry on top and don't have to fit in your canvas bag.*

Whether you're coming to our farm to pick up in the barn or in East Vancouver, our harvest will be spread out in bins ready for the taking. We'll have someone present at each pick-up and enough harvested for everyone to get the **full value of your share** (barring extreme mishaps re: [CSA Risk](#)). When favorites arrive — like tomatoes, broccoli, etc. — there will be a cap on quantities for each person so there's some for everyone no matter what time you pick it up.

If you lose or misplace your tote bag, we will have extras available to purchase for \$20.

CSA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Your membership in our CSA gives you these benefits:

- + **Weekly pick or “share” of produce**
- + Access to **bulk crops** when we have a bumper harvest
- + **Add-ons** you may purchase
- + Weekly **recipes and e-newsletter** to help you use the food we give you
- + **Resources on storing veggies, canning, & more**
- + Exclusive access to several **u-pick crops**
- + Discounts & first access to **on-farm workshops**
- + Invitations to visit the farm for a **CSA member tour & CSA member picnic**





ADD-ONS (FRUIT, MUSHROOMS, ETC.)

We will offer bulk tomatoes from our farm and also **eggs, mushrooms, peaches, apples, and other fruit** from local partner farms. These will be an additional cost to the price of your farm share but are available for pick-up at the same time as your regular weekly pick up.

If you'd like weekly flowers along with your veggies, we're offering **our first-ever flower CSA** this year! For 10 weeks, you can get seasonal bouquets at your same veggie pick up location.

MISSING WEEKS OR PLANNING VACATIONS

If you will be away during the harvest season, feel free to have friends or family pick up your share. Vacations are a great way to share the CSA experience with someone else! Excess produce from our farm is donated to the [Sources Food Bank](#) and our [other community partners](#).

SPLITTING MEMBERSHIP WITH SOMEONE ELSE

With our take-what-you-want system, it's harder to plan quantities for every other week pick-ups like we used to offer. Do **consider joining with another person** with the same one-adult, two-adult, three+ household size to purchase a share! Just make sure to coordinate and **alternate your pick up weeks**. If you do this, give us everyone's names when you sign up so we know who to expect and get everyone on the CSA newsletter for any updates.

If you'd like to join with another person but don't know who to do it with, let us know at csa@arocha.ca so we can connect you with each other.

CAN SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP?

Definitely. If you cannot pick up your share yourself, simply send a substitute! All they have to do is **give your name** during pickup and **bring your canvas bag**.

MEMBERSHIP PERKS & FARM EVENTS

U-PICK

We are planting a section of the farm near the parking lot to give you a chance to **harvest to your heart's delight!** This is a first for us so tell us how you like it. This is only for you as CSA members. We are offering snap peas, green beans, zinnias, and cherry tomatoes. *A note for those that do not want to pick: we will still have these crops picked for your shares.*

Watch for **updates in your CSA member newsletter** for instructions. Come any time during daylight hours and bring your own bags, buckets, or bins. If you come on Saturdays, our market store will also be open as well where you can register for a self-guided farm tour.

Only the marked u-pick rows are available for harvesting. Please keep pets and children from walking in other fields.

ON-FARM WORKSHOPS

We are planning **several Saturday workshops** this summer and fall using our farm-grown goodies – we're very excited! As a CSA member, you will have **early access to sign up** for workshops along with **a discount** given in your CSA newsletters. We will send more details closer to the growing season but our short-list includes:

- + Natural botanical dyes
- + Farm-fresh herbal drinks (teas, shrubs, and lacto-fermentation)
- + Dried flower wreath-making
- + Seed saving 101

Additional workshops are possible – if you have a wishlist, let Abby know at csa@arocha.ca!





CSA MEMBER FARM TOUR (JUNE)

We will offer a **farm tour** at one of your June pickups (for those in Vancouver, we can have your harvest here for pick up if you plan to make the trip). Stay tuned for details and date in your CSA newsletters. We'd love to connect with you and have you learn about the land that feeds you.

CSA MEMBER PICNIC (JULY)

In July, we will host a Saturday **CSA members-only picnic** to enjoy the fullness of summer on the farm! Bring your own picnic feast along with your blankets, friends, kids, (leashed) dogs. **We will provide some farm-fresh herbal drinks.**

ANNUAL SITE EVENTS

SUMMER CELEBRATION (JULY)

In July, A Rocha Canada hosts an annual Saturday summer celebration for a family-friendly afternoon with tasty food trucks, kids' activities, guided tours, live music, and more! Stay-tuned on our website and CSA newsletter for the date and line-up.

HARVEST CELEBRATION & PUMPKIN PICKING (OCTOBER)

In October, A Rocha Canada hosts an annual Harvest Celebration with kid's activities, music, apple pressing, folk dancing on the lawn, hay rides, and more.

We invite you as CSA members to **help harvest pumpkins** in the morning before the Harvest Celebration. **Choose your own pumpkin** to take home, nibble pumpkin snacks together, and **enjoy the rest of the day's festivities!**



SEASONALITY CALENDAR

What can you expect when?

This chart is our best estimate though weather, pests, and other events can affect actual production from year to year. A check mark means this may be available anywhere from *one* to every week of the month.

VEGETABLE / HERB	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT/NOV	STORAGE
ARUGULA	✓	✓		✓	✓	
BASIL		✓	✓	✓		
BEANS, GREEN		✓	✓			
BEETS	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
BOK CHOI	✓	✓		✓	✓	
BROCCOLI		✓	✓	✓	✓	
BRUSSELS SPROUTS					✓	
CABBAGE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CARROTS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CAULIFLOWER	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CHICORY					✓	
CILANTRO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CORN, SWEET			✓	✓		
CUCUMBERS		✓	✓	✓		
DILL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
EGGPLANT		✓	✓	✓		
FENNEL	✓	✓		✓	✓	
KALE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
KOHLRABI	✓			✓	✓	✓

VEGETABLE / HERB	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT/NOV	STORAGE
LEEKS				✓	✓	
LETTUCE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
MELONS			✓			
MIZUNA	✓		✓	✓		
MUSTARD	✓	✓	✓	✓		
OKRA			✓			
ONIONS				✓	✓	✓
PARSLEY		✓	✓	✓	✓	
PARSNIPS					✓	✓
PEAS, SNAP & SNOW	✓	✓				
PEPPERS, HOT		✓	✓	✓		
PEPPERS, SWEET		✓	✓	✓		
RADISHES	✓			✓	✓	✓
SCALLIONS	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SPINACH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SUMMER SQUASH		✓	✓	✓		
SWISS CHARD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
TOMATOES, CHERRY		✓	✓	✓		
TOMATOES, SLICERS		✓	✓	✓		
TOMATILLOS		✓	✓			
TURNIPS	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
WINTER SQUASH				✓	✓	✓



PAYMENT POLICY

HOW TO PAY

This year, when you sign up for your share [on our website](#), there are two payment timelines:

1. **Paying the full amount upfront.**
2. **Paying in three instalments** ($\frac{1}{3}$ to secure your spot, $\frac{1}{3}$ by July 14th, $\frac{1}{3}$ by September 1st).

If you choose instalments, we will email you an invoice for the last two payments. **Securing your share is a contract with us for the full season** and a commitment to make subsequent payments. If you cannot continue with payments, you will need to transfer your share to someone else (reach out to us at csa@arocha.ca!).

There are two payment methods to secure your share:

1. **Pay online** on our website.
2. **Pay via cheque.** We will wait two weeks to receive your cheque. If it is not received by then, we will consider your share sign-up void. Cheques can be written to A Rocha Canada with a note or **“CSA Payment” in the memo line** and mailed to 1620 192 Street, Surrey, BC V3Z 9V2.

We welcome you to split a share with another person/group of the same share size (one-adult, two-adult, three+) so you each get veggies every other week. When you sign up, one person/group will sign up and pay but you will be prompted to give us everyone's names and emails then. You will be responsible between yourselves to alternate your pick up weeks.

SHARE PRICE ASSISTANCE >> [GIVE HERE](#)

Did you know?... **We gave away 15 shares last year for free to local newcomer families** through our [Farm to Families program](#) thanks to the generosity of many supporters. We'd like to do it again! **If you are able to this year, consider giving 15% above your share cost toward this fund.** You can donate to our Share Price Assistance fund when you sign up (or any time!). As a registered charity, any donations are tax deductible. This fund goes to two things:

- + **Free shares** to local newcomer families or others in need of full assistance.
- + **Discounted shares** to other CSA members who need some financial assistance this year.

We know it's hard to keep up with rising prices so we would like to offer **some discount** for those that need financial assistance. Reach out to us at csa@arocha.ca if you need assistance.



CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

Membership costs are not refundable. This is because we use the money early in the year to pay for our upfront costs (seeds, compost, labor, etc.) in order to plant your food and flowers. If you would like to end your membership mid-season, we ask that you find someone to take over your share (send us an e-mail at csa@arocha.ca to coordinate a transfer).

Exceptions can certainly be made for unforeseen circumstances such as illness, life-changes, etc. If you have to move out of the area and cannot continue your share, we can offer a refund on a prorated basis.

SAFETY ON THE FARM


We are a working farm and while we minimize any risks to you and your family when you are visiting, do keep these things in mind:

- + **Uneven ground** and tripping hazards are present like irrigation lines.
- + **Douglas fir trees** around our barn and fields drop branches in windy conditions (and sometimes out-of-the-blue!).
- + **Farm equipment and tools** should not be moved or used.
- + **Dogs** are welcome at pickup but must be leashed if they are outside of your vehicle as we often host school groups on-site and other events. This is also a residential property with staff and conservation residents living on site.
- + **COVID-19 protocols** should be followed according to public health guidelines. If you're sick for any reason and cannot pick up your share, ask a friend to pick it up for you.

Please supervise your children and pets at all times.

No adults, children, or pets should enter any of the farm fields with the exception of the small u-pick area when we open it to you.



A man with a full red beard and a black cap with a red strap is smiling broadly. He is holding up a large bunch of fresh orange carrots with green tops in his right hand. He is wearing a brown t-shirt and sunglasses hanging from his neck. The background shows a light-colored wooden building with a white door and windows, and a grassy area with other people in the distance.

Three cheers for this year's
farm-fresh veggies!!