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Awesome harvest at Ossome Acres



Noella and Aaron Oss of Ossome Acres launched a CSA Harvest Box program this summer.

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It's the peak of the growing season in Chilliwack farm country.

The vehicles are pulling up every five minutes to pick up 'harvest boxes' at the sprawling family farm on Camp River Road.

Noella and Aaron Oss of Ossome Acres have launched a CSA Harvest Box program this summer. They say it's the first of its kind on the north side of Chilliwack.

The heirloom tomatoes are ready to go after being cultivated in a greenhouse made from repurposed windows.

The dark wine-coloured tomatoes are tucked in with pale yellow carrots, squash, cucumbers, romaine lettuce, peppers, purple snap beans, and something called 'pea radishes' in a recent Oss box.

That dazzling array of colourful fresh produce was only available last year at the local farmers' markets from these growers.

Now they're building a CSA box program to provide friends and customers with the freshest, and most naturally grown produce possible.

"It shows that budding farmers still do exist and right in our own backyard of Chilliwack," says Noella Oss, explaining a little about the CSA program, which stands for Community Supported Agriculture.

They're actively working an acre of land, for the second season in a row, and carrying on the agricultural tradition as the fifth generation farmers. Customers sign up in advance, which helps them with the advance costs of getting a head-start on the season.

"We converted a hay field on the farm into a thriving vegetable paradise, complete with two greenhouses and farm animals."

Aaron's grandfather, Norm Standeven, 90, was born on the farm.

He farmed it for 30 years as a dairy operation.

"I think it's great that they're doing this," he says about their garden. "One thing about it, you know what you're getting."

Downtown Chilliwack resident Paul Yua drives out to the farm every Saturday morning to pick up one of their harvest boxes.

"I'm inclined to choose organic," he says.

Ossome Acres farm is not certified organic, but they do use natural growing methods, Noella points out.

"The things they grow are so beautiful and the taste is so special — and I think it's healthier," adds Yua.

Each box is \$20 per week, picked up at the farm, and featuring an ever-changing variety of fresh produce in season.

"It's important to know something about the farmers who grow your food," says customer Sherri Sladek.

"They took the time to show my daughter around the farm, saying 'This is what we're growing,' which was great."

Her family enjoys juicing the fresh Ossome veggies, and making smoothies to retain the valuable nutrients in their raw state.

Sladek says she also appreciates the fact that the Osses seek out unique varieties of vegetables, which they grow with organic methods and without spray.

“You just can’t find this everywhere, with a fifth generation farm family at work.

“This is priceless and they’re doing their darnedest to make a go of it.”

Bruce Tiessen of Chilliwack said his family has really savoured the CSA experience so far.

“We like to support local growers. We didn’t know what to expect with this, but we’ve really enjoyed every box so far. It’s the variety, the flavours and the experience.”

The Ossome Acres season runs until October 20, with the possibility of an extension.

“We do still have a few spaces available at a pro-rated cost,” Oss says.

For more go to www.ossomeacres.com or 604-807-0753.