



# Vermont Valley Community Farm

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## The Pumpkin Pick!



**Sunday, October 3**

**Time: 1 to 4 pm**

(please come within these times, no dogs please)

**RSVP:** Please go to the following link to reserve your pumpkins. One pumpkin per person.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MJDB7CQ>

We need your RSVP so that we know we have enough pumpkins. It is a good crop this year; we do not expect to have to offer less than the "one pumpkin per person" requests.

In addition to pumpkins we have gourds and a cornstalk patch. We have harvested the popcorn from the stalks (which will be in your shares); you are welcome to wander through the tall stalks and clip some stalks to take home for decoration. Bring clippers.

### Finding the Patch:

The pumpkins are across the valley from our house, the same area as the pea pick. We rent this land from our neighbors who live there. PLEASE respect their property and DO NOT walk around their yard or farm buildings. The pumpkins are at the far end of the valley so you may want to bring a wagon or other large wheeled device for transporting pumpkins and children. A bit of a walk.

**Parking:** Park close to the next car to save space; there is limited parking. If you arrive after 2:00, drive up Cedar Hill Lane passed parked cars, there will likely be lots of empty spaces from people who have already left.

**Directions:** From Madison take Highway 14 (University Avenue) to Black Earth. Turn left at the stop light onto Hwy 78 (the Shoe Box Shoe store is on this corner) You will go thru Black Earth for 1/2 mile and then turn right onto County F. Follow County F and continue to Cedar Hill Lane (about 4 miles). Turn right onto Cedar Hill Lane; and drive to the end of the lane. A map to the farm is on our website at [www.vermontvalley.com](http://www.vermontvalley.com).



## When Is The Last Delivery?

### Standard and Large Shares:

October 14th is your last pickup.

### Every Other Week Shares:

- If you get a share this week (Sept 23) your last delivery is October 7th.
- If you get a share next week (Sept 30) your last delivery is October 14th.

**Fruit Share Members:** Same as the every other week schedule above; then Nov 11th & Dec 9th (to coincide with storage share deliveries).

## Survey and Sign-Up Form

- Next week we will e-mail the annual Survey and a 2011 Signup form to you.
- Please promptly return the survey.
- We rely on your input as we plan and make changes for next season (and that planning begins now). We want to know what you appreciated about your CSA experience and how to improve. We do make changes based on your feedback. What you have to say is incredibly important to us. Thank you.



**“How’s the farm doing”** is the most frequent question we get; maybe you’re wondering the same thing? One can take this question several ways; of course being the farmer I immediately think of the crops. Overall, it has been an excellent year. We’ve had week after week after week of warm weather. The rains have been very consistent, and not too much at once with the exception of one week in July (7 inches over 3 days). We can always irrigate our crops, but there is something about rainwater that the plants like better; we can see the difference. Water is the most important addition to the soil, so the right amount at the right time is oh so important. The rains consistently arrived on Sunday night/Monday, rather than Friday evening when we had ordered them. Rains at the beginning of the week provide a challenge for getting into the fields for harvest, planting and weeding. Challenged we were, but never beaten. We always figured out a way to get those crops out of the field. And all of the crops got planted, maybe their schedule had to be altered oh so slightly.

Warm and wet growing conditions very much favored the warm loving crops; the tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers and melons. Last year’s members may remember the lack of tomatoes due to Late Blight. Well, this year has been a banner year for tomatoes. Tomato harvest, washing, counting and bagging has defined our weeks. Today’s lunch-time conversation touched on how happy everyone was to have fewer tomatoes to bag up this afternoon (sorry if this simple joy is only shared by your farm crew, or maybe you have had enough tomatoes too?). Eggplant taller than a full grown 5 foot tall worker share. Red peppers that just do not seem to end. For the first time in a long time, every pepper will mature before the frost hits. And how about those melons?

One drawback to constant moisture is increased disease pressure. This was most evident in our green bean plantings. We like to deliver a lot of green beans, our goal each year is at least 6 deliveries; which did not happen this year. Green beans are particularly sensitive to various rot organisms during germination which is exacerbated by saturated soil. Sure enough, we could not get a good stand of beans this year. Excessive moisture (from the bean plant’s perspective) will cause the bean to drop its flowers; the flowers become the bean you eat. Sure enough, the fruit set (yes a bean is a fruit) was very inconsistent. Knowing problems were occurring, we planted extra plantings, but to no avail. Better beans next year. A few other crops were negatively effected by the constant moisture. Onions and carrots had a very hard year. You will unfortunately see fewer of these than in years past. Each year there are vegetable ups and downs.

This was our first year fully using the new land we purchased near Arena. It was a growing experience and things went quite well for the most part. This is top quality vegetable land that we are happy to have. All of the potatoes were grown in these sandy loam soils and the yield and quality is very good. Because of the bumper crop of potatoes in 2009, we carried over potatoes to deliver at the beginning of this season. We heard from many of you that you liked that; so we are going make it a standard practice. We have an excellent storage cooler for potatoes so it makes sense to stretch out the potato deliveries over the full 20 week season, rather than burying you in potatoes in September and October. We also planted our sweet potatoes and a planting of melons in this field; from which we learned there are a lot of vegetable starved deer in the nearby woods. We lost all 1300 orange fleshed melons to the deer, thank goodness for the abundance of melons and smaller population of deer on the home farm. The sweet potato foliage was munched on heavily, we will find out next week the impact on the yield. Next year, the deer will be fenced out of such crops.

The other way we could interpret the question “how is the farm doing”. The farm is doing well. With your support, we are able to continue improving the facilities and equipment on the farm, pay all of the bills on time, and have something left over at the end of the year. The farm is able to continue to employ people, which now a days is a significant accomplishment. We try and are able to do better for the workers each year as well. No major health/body melt downs for the farmers this year; although growing vegetables is a physically demanding job; lots of chiropractor visits, yoga, massages and acupuncture. And we eat real well too, pretty important for healthy bodies and clear minds. The future of the farm is intact with several people planning to be here for a long time to come. We hope you are as well.

*David*