

CAMP VERDE BUGLE

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Nine Seasons and Counting

New year for Verde Valley CSA starts May 20

Greg Macafee
Reporter

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VERDE VALLEY - Beginning on May 20, the Verde Valley Community Supported Agriculture will be back for a ninth season.

The 22-week season will run until October 14 with weekly pickups available in Camp Verde, Cornville and Sedona.

Season memberships cost \$550. Members receive a basket each week that will contain enough produce to feed a family of four for the week.

Verde Valley CSA Director Meghan Kincheloe said this allows the farmers to receive the money up front so they don't have to worry about selling enough produce on a week-to-week basis.

Each week, the VVCSA provides produce from local farms in the Verde Valley and the Prescott area.

The CSA brings produce from two different farms in the Verde Valley, Willowbrook Farm and Whipstone Farm.

In the past, they have brought in produce from Tyler Zander at Zopilote Produce as well.

All three farms balance out the variety of produce that is offered very well.

"Onions, kale, tomatoes, head lettuce, potatoes, carrots, melons, beans are just an example of some of the produce that is provided," Kincheloe said. "This way we are able to provide smaller amounts of a wider variety for the customers."

Willowbrook farm was the first farm that was involved with the CSA and is run by Denise Gould and her two daughters, Hope and Hilary Barnett who wanted to return to Camp Verde to help their mother with the farm and to learn the farming practices.

Gould, who has been farming in Camp Verde for 12 years, has a background in education and a Master



Hope Barnett tends to the family's Willowbrook Farm as she and her sister get ready for the beginning of the Verde Valley CSA season, May 20. This is the ninth season of the area's CSA. VVN photo by Greg Macafee



Sisters Hope and Hilary Barnett, pictured, help their mother Denise Gould run Willowbrook Farm. Willowbrook is one of the main farms that grows produce for the CSA and was the farm that originated the CSA nine seasons ago. VVN photo

Gardener certification. Gould was one of the first farmers by Greg Macafee. who helped start the VVCSA and now is passing off the reigns to her daughters and Kinchlowe.

"It was something that I wanted to learn while my mom was still active," Hope Barnett said. "We have always been growers and the reigns have kind of switched from our mom and Diane to us and Meghan."

Whipstone Farm came into the picture a couple of years ago and opened up the VVCSA with the Sedona drop-off point.

"Before they came into the picture, we only had one drop-off in Cornville," Kincheloe said. "When they joined, we were able to have another drop-off in Sedona and then in Camp Verde so it all just worked out."

Whipstone is a family farm in Paulden that is ran by Shanti and Corey Rade.

Their farm was established in 1995 as a large garden that produced more food than their family could eat.

The farm has grown every year since then and now takes up about 15 acres and produces over 100 varieties of vegetables, along with flowers, herbs, and eggs.

Other than the VVCSA the Rades sell their produce to three other farmers markets as well as some local restaurants.

Hilary and Hope Barnett said that the Rades are a huge part of the CSA.

"They supply maybe half of the produce that we use if not more, they are a huge help, they supply a local CSA closer to their farm as well and the farmer markets." Hope Barnett said.

The CSA which starts on May 20 just had its 50th member sign up.

"It is really a win-win for both ends," Hilary Barnett said. "The customers are able to get great produce at wholesale prices, it's freshly picked, and for the growers, we get pre-paid and we are able to get rid of 50 pounds of tomatoes in one week, which is really good for us."

The CSA is a non-profit volunteer organization and provides high-quality produce to the Verde Valley at wholesale price.

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