

Saugeen River CSA member and Market customer inspection 2013

Visiting Cory Eichman's Saugeen River CSA Farm was sheer pleasure! We, the members, very quickly recognized the well organized structural and aesthetic functions of the farm. In long rows of robustly growing vegetables, flowers and herbs, the dedication and skill of his well-trained apprentices shows up strongly. Most of the gardens were diligently weeded, plants were well spaced and looked healthy and well nourished, making everything look beautiful and inviting. This shows commitment and care in an important aspect of Organic Gardening.

A very little re-usable ground material was in use to help keep rampant weeds under control in hard to get to spots, ie. around the squash patch. Also, re-usable row-cover material was in use over top of some of the most vulnerable plants, to protect from insect damage. Another tried and true method of insect management was in use also, that of crop rotation. Cory showed us carefully maintained maps and notes of his long-range garden plans that have spanned the years that he has been at the farm. Crop rotation is another main ingredient to organic gardening, and it is clear that his commitment to this method is strong.

Cory also showed us his complete record keeping for all purchases made, including seeds and other Organically Approved supplements and aids. To be honest, there was very little on that list, which showed that the systems which Cory has utilized are working pretty well on his farm, and he has managed to minimize outside sources, keeping with his goals of making his farm self-sustainable.

Fertilization methods at the farm use a combination of green manure and farm-produced, well-composted horse and cow manure, all applied in the dormant times throughout the year, and as part of the crop rotation system.

Cory's approach to composting encompasses a sustainable component, as each aspect of the farm is returned to the cycle of the farm. Animals living on the farm provide manure for compost, which in turn nourishes the plants. Enough hay was grown right on the farm this year to feed the animals year-round. The animals are grazed on a rotational system during half the year, leaving behind their manure to enrich the soil. Later in the season the hay which has grown up through that soil is cut, dried and stored for the winter month's consumption.

From a thorough visit of the farm and an in-depth interview with Cory himself, it is clear to us that Cory's approach to growing our food goes way above and beyond standards and expectations. Not only that, he also applies the standards for growing his food Biodynamically, with success.

As CSA members and market customers, we thoroughly and unreservedly approve Cory Eichman's farm as meeting the Organic Standards for Certification!

Signed: Natasha Bye, Oliver and Nicole Hartan