



Wednesday, June 13, 2012

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## Fresh local produce is available early



Walking through the great opening celebration of the outdoors market in Ste. Anne de Bellevue last week, you may have been surprised by the amount of fresh local produce that is available in May.

Clearly, it is asparagus and rhubarb time; but it is also possible to buy different fresh salad mixes, spinach, lettuces, green onions, radishes, spring turnips and fresh herbs such as chives, dill and cilantro. Producers with heated greenhouses even bring beans, melons, peppers and cucumbers to market!

At the Tourne-Sol Co-operative farm ([www.fermetournesol.qc.ca](http://www.fermetournesol.qc.ca)), in Les Cèdres, they built a 5,250-square-foot greenhouse last year to increase their early offerings in April, May and June. One of the owners, Frédéric Thériault says: "We will soon pull carrots and beets out of this unheated greenhouse, too. This is really early for Quebec standards."

But the best way to ensure your access to local, exceptionally fresh, organic produce, is without a doubt the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model.

With the CSA basket program, such as that offered at Tourne-Sol co-op farm, people sign up for a weekly (or bi-weekly) vegetable basket of outstanding quality and freshness. Baskets go from mid-June to mid-October, and consist of a surprise box with 10-12 organic 'in season' vegetable items.

"We've made sure that people have a lot of choices and can exchange produce if they desire," says Thériault. "Moreover, members get to develop a privileged relationship with their family farmer who gets them to discover new vegetables, shares recipes and storage tips, and send farm news through a newsletter and facebook."

Registration season is on for the basket program at the Tourne-Sol Co-op Farm which delivers baskets at a pickup location in Beaconsfield on Tuesdays and in Les Cèdres on Thursdays. The farm also launched their new website this winter, and it is now possible to register online for the basket program. For more information : [www.fermetournesol.qc.ca](http://www.fermetournesol.qc.ca)