

From the Farm to You

*Julian Cunningham
Swallow Crest Farm*

Julian Cunningham started small. He and his wife Lisa Bate bought four acres and the buildings of the 1889 Cooper homestead in the Creston area. He tilled up a garden on three-quarters of an acre of rich Flathead Watershed soil. Lisa and Julian shared their produce with five other families. Over time, Julian scaled production and started selling shares to community families interested in produce from the small farm. Today, Julian's Swallow Crest Farm provides full and half shares to over 100 families as well as produce for some restaurants. In-season vegetables and fruits are available for about 23 weeks from mid-May through mid-October.

Julian does most of the farm operations by hand, with the help of a small tractor for cultivation. He enhances soil fertility by applying composted animal manure and

by systematically rotating produce crops with cover crops each year. This process helps to restore essential soil nutrients while also providing habitat for honeybees and other beneficial insects. The farm is home to many swallows, bluebirds, and bats that provide good biological control of insects. His goal is to implement the soundest practices to enhance soil, air, water and natural wildlife resources while providing a variety of healthy, high quality food.

Julian is happy to see locals take an increasing interest in where and how their food is grown and how it is transported. He believes the relationship between farmers and people who eat farm produce is healthy for citizens and strengthens communities.

Source: Swallow Crest Farms, 2010



Produce from the farm