

Five Serves Produce Hawkesbury

CASE STUDY

**Alice Warner
established Five
Serves Produce
in 2017**



100 percent organic,
fresh, local produce
delivered straight to your
door weekly

Alice Warner is the owner of Five Serves Produce at Richmond. The farm operates as a Community Supported Agriculture program where customers in the Hawkesbury, Penrith, Hills and Blue Mountains commit to buy 6-12 weeks of seasonal vegetables.

Alice started farming “to provide the local community with fresh organic food that wouldn’t otherwise be available.”

“I left my career in teaching to pursue my passion for growing food. I completed an agricultural degree before seeing an ad for a farm hand. This practical experience was critical, and gave me the skills and knowledge to start my own farming business.”

“I love that no day is the same, the problem-solving aspect of farming is really interesting” Alice says.



“The biggest difference between gardening and small-scale market gardening is succession planning. Learning how to create a reliable supply of a range of vegetables through an annual succession plan is an essential skill, one that I continue to refine with my farm and the seasons.”

Farming involves constantly observing and learning. Alice regularly listens to podcasts, seeks advice from other farmers through social media networks and refers to key references including “*The Market Gardener: A Successful Grower’s Handbook for Small-scale Organic Farming*” by Jean-Martin Fortier.

“The heat waves in January 2019 were a challenge. We are still learning which crops are more resilient to extreme heat, can germinate in those conditions and don’t require excessive amounts of water. Due to the heat and increased

pest and disease pressure I had to close the business for four weeks at the start of the new year. Repeated crop failures meant that we couldn’t provide our regular customers with their weekly box of vegetables.”

“There is so much trial and error in small scale market gardening. This year due to a warmer autumn I trialed a second crop of pumpkins I am hoping we can harvest before the frosts begin” says Alice.

“I am fortunate to have the opportunity to lease four ha on flat and fertile land beside the Hawkesbury River which is ideal for growing vegetable and has a reliable water supply.”

“I love enjoying my homemade beetroot pesto with fennel – because of the colour and knowing I have grown it all!” says Alice.



What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

- CSA is a farming system developed in Japan by a group of mothers who were concerned about the quality, freshness and nutritional benefits of their food.
- CSA farms support local food production and allows communities to connect with where their food comes from.

The CSA Network Australia and New Zealand

- This organisation is an advocacy group, dedicated to highlighting, growing and supporting CSA farms.

For further information:



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Five Serves Produce



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