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CSAs a great way to participate in local agriculture

By **Alison Layman** For the Camera
 Posted: 02/08/2011 02:06:03 PM MST

Q. I don't have the resources to start my own vegetable garden, should I invest in all the equipment, or try a CSA first?

A. Starting a garden takes a lot of planning and effort. When we think of growing conditions in Colorado, the dry arid climate often dis-

suades would-be gardeners. Historically, however, Colorado was founded on grazing and agriculture. Local production of high value horticulture products including vegetables is growing nationwide and Boulder County is one of the leaders. Local vegetable farms are making a comeback as residents acknowledge the advantages of local food benefiting the economy, and influencing affordable, healthy eating habits. Joining a CSA is a great way to weekly try new vegetables, learn how to prepare them, and determine which varieties you would like to plant in your future garden.

The exciting news is that you no longer need to invest in new tools for your gardening needs. The ReSource Tool Library, a program of the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC), rents tools for next to nothing. While you are visiting the ReSource Yard on Arapahoe looking for beams and railroad ties to line your garden, you can also visit the ReSource Tool Library, become a member and get the tools you need to get your garden going. The ReSource Tool Library has an extensive list of tools, see conservationcenter.org/ToolLibraryToolist.htm#top

To learn more about CSA opportunities, Transition Colorado distributes a directory called Boulder County's Eat Local Guide and Directory. The directory is designed to gather and store local food and farming producers and support CSA activity in Boulder County. In the words of Lynette Marie Hanthorn, Transition staff, say a thank you to our farmers who keep our local economy healthy and sustainable.

The Center for ReSource Conservation, Transition Colorado, and many other representatives, are in the process of setting up a "food-shed alliance" to identify practical ways to stimulate food production in our community, and link it with consumers. CSAs are a great mechanism to drive this movement. Recently, the Northern Colorado Regional Food Assessment was completed and includes valuable insight on the advantages of supporting agriculture. Visit larimer.org/foodassessment/

Alison Layman is communications coordinator for the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) is a non-profit organization that implements programs for the Boulder County community through the Waste (Deconstruction/Re-Use), Energy, and Water Divisions. Visit conservationcenter.org or call CRC for further information on xeric gardens, composting, and community partners 303-999-3820.

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Another resource for finding a CSA that works for you is <http://coloradocsas.info> (disclaimer, I run this site). It has over 90 Colorado farm shares.

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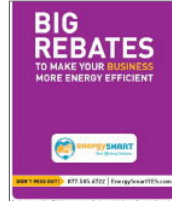
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