

Eat Local, Eat Pesticide-Free!

Tips for the budget conscious and community-minded

A fact sheet from Toxic Free NC

Locally-grown and pesticide-free or organic foods are healthier for us, for our environment, and for the we put our food dollars back into our local economy, and help local sustainable businesses to thrive.

It can be hard to find pesticide-free foods in many parts of North Carolina, and where they're available in stores, they can be on pricey. So, here are some ideas for people who want healthy delicious food, and don't want to drive a long way or pay luxury prices to get it:



Find farmers.

Don't worry about finding stores. Instead, find farmers near you and ask how you can purchase their produce. Visit a farmers' market and ask where their farms are located – some may be closer than you think! If you're web-savvy, you can check out:
www.LocalHarvest.org.

CSA.

Many farms offer subscription programs, called CSA (for "Community Supported Agriculture"). You pay one lump sum at the beginning of the year, and you get veggies every week, from a central drop site location. Splitting a share with other people can be very cost effective. Many CSAs also offer discounts in exchange for work hours.



CSA at your place.

If no CSAs deliver to your area, you might talk with a farmer about creating a new drop site. If several people who work at the same place, go to the same church, or have kids at the same school or childcare all want to buy shares from the same farm, that farmer might be interested in coming right to their lobby or parking lot to make deliveries.

Toxic Free NC is available to help you get started with these and other community food projects – please don't hesitate to contact us today!

Stock up.

A fresh tomato is a lot cheaper in July than it is in January. If the nearest pesticide-free farm is still a little far, or if you just want to take better advantage of the growing seasons, consider stocking up when locally-grown produce is at its peak and freezing or canning some to save for later. It's easier than you think, and it means you can have delicious, fresh tasting food all year round. For instructions on canning and freezing, contact your local county extension office, or visit your local library.

Farm-to-Cafeteria.

Do you or your family eat regularly in a cafeteria? Many schools, workplaces, and churches in NC have made arrangements directly with farmers or farmer cooperatives to supply food for their cafeterias. Ask about it at your cafeteria!



Veggie market.

Wishing you had a good farmers market closer to home? Why not talk with farmers in the area about starting a tailgate market at your church, school, or office once a week, or even once a month? Yum!



Community gardening.

Organic gardening can be a real cost saver, not to mention good exercise, and a lot of fun. Of course there's always the backyard and flowerpots, but if you don't have the space or know-how to start a successful garden, consider joining (or forming!) a community garden in your area. For a modest fee, community gardens usually provide you with space and the use of shared tools and watering supplies. And, since you're gardening alongside your neighbors, there are lots of opportunities to learn. Your local library, as well as websites like www.communitygarden.org are great places to look for advice on thrifty organic gardening.

Toxic Free NC is available to help you get started with these and other community food projects – please don't hesitate to contact us today!