TC Metro Growers Network *Growers Spotlight* …

**California Street Farm**

August 18th, 2021

On a hot August afternoon, a companionable group of *Networkers* came to California Street Farm in NE Mpls. to see and learn about an urban market farm, *California Street Farm*, owned and operated by Chris Barth and Ashley Thorfinnson (Ashley was at home with a sick child).

Chris showcased their market farm where they are developing their intensive growing strategies to maximize productivity. These include succession planting, intercropping, vertical growing, transplanting, and small-scale season extension. Along with growing fresh, local food for the community, they have as their goals to improve food access and equity. This includes the Pay-As-You-Can Market every Monday, 4:30 to 6:30, during the season at the farm. They are improving their no-till techniques for soil health and focus on human-scale growing that is manageable. In addition to the demands of marketing produce at a profit, Chris and Ashly have off-farm jobs and raising a family.

Resources that Chris and Ashley are currently finding useful as they improve and scale their growing practices include, *The No Till Organic Vegetable Farm* by Daniel Mays, the *No-Till Market Garden podcast*, Jean Martin Fortier's Master Class and his book *The Market Gardener*, and the Land Stewardship Project’s *Farm Beginnings* program. As they think about what might be next for them, they’re interested in and inspired by *The Collaborative Farming podcast* and the work of Leah Penniman and *Soulfire Farm*.

Kiley Friedrich, Agriculture & Midwest Habitat Coordinator for the *Monarch Joint Venture*, and a volunteer at California Street Farm, discussed the importance of providing pollinator habitat. Next to a small patch of native flowers, she quickly identified two species of bumble bees and four other native pollinators. Increasingly, farmers and growers everywhere are realizing the benefits of pollinator habitat for the health of their crops, and the ecosystem ... you know, that which sustains us all! *(Or as I like to say, we need the insects more than they need us! --KH)*

Subscribe to California Street Farm’s excellent weekly newsletter [HERE](https://www.californiastreetfarm.com/)

TC Mero Growers Network Past events: [HERE](www.sfa-mn.org/tc-metro-growers-network-past-events)

---

Questions, comments, suggestions? Contact Network Coordinator Karl Hakanson, UMN Extension-Hennepin Co., khakanso@umn.edu

Check out the TC Metro Growers Network web site with more information about these topics and summaries/videos of past events: