



### **About the Farm**

Cotyledon Farm is a Community Farm encompasses 5 acres of arable land and produces chemical-free vegetables, fruit, herbs and eggs. The farm's top priority is to produce and provide a diverse offering of vegetables and eggs while using sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Cotyledon Farm is also committed to supporting and providing access to its and other local and sustainably produced food, to the general public and food insecure communities. Unsold or unsaleable food is fed to the farm chickens, making the farm a producer of zero organic waste. We use the chicken bedding and waste in compost and apply to growing areas.

### **About the Farmer**

Cotyledon Farm is owned and operated by Head Farmer, Amanda Barker. Ms. Barker is a social entrepreneur who has devoted more than a decade to sustainable agriculture and food security, with a particular focus on being inclusive to communities of all backgrounds. Amanda Barker holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University. Previous to the founding of Cotyledon Farm, Ms. Barker founded and operated Nuestro Huerto, Worcester's first CSA and largest urban farm. Ms. Barker gave Nuestro Huerto a strong foundation and operated it for 7 years. In 2016, and with the help of the Regional Environmental Council (REC), Barker transitioned the land to New American farmers and neighborhood residents. This land is still in use today, where refugee farmers grow food for themselves, their families and their community. Ms. Barker founded Worcester's largest community garden, located on City of Worcester owned land, Camp Street Community Garden, which provides garden space for over 40 gardeners. The REC now manages enrollment for the Camp Street Community Garden. In 2017, Barker established Cotyledon Farm in Leicester MA. She moved to deteriorating farmland in Leicester, MA to serve a wider community on a larger land base with greater infrastructural support. The current focus of the business is on creating a strong

foundation for the business while using regenerative agricultural practices to both build the soil and grow chemical-free food for the public.

### **Farm Infrastructure**

Cotyledon Farm is located on a family homestead that has been maintained for over 100 years and totals 60 acres. The property is peppered with stone walls, towering deciduous trees, artistic perennial flower plantings, and perennial herb plots that are maintained through mulching, hand harvest and minimal fertilizer inputs. The farm currently encompasses 5 acres of arable land within this property with approximately 1.5 acres in cultivation due to equipment and infrastructural limitations. On this property Cotyledon Farm also has a wood-pellet heated greenhouse, large high tunnel, permanent bed growing system with mulched walkways, a 4000 square foot chicken run, and over 100 free-roaming laying hens. The chickens receive local and organic feed and farm scraps. The farm includes a farmstand and CSA pick up building. The stand is just 100 feet off the road, and located between two busy roads, converging just a few miles away in the gateway city of Worcester. The membership and customer base come from the Worcester regional area.

### **Ethical Business Strategies for Equitable Access**

Cotyledon Farm has work-trade and sliding-scale payment options within its CSA and it accepts SNAP and HIP benefits, as well as Mass Farmers Market coupons for all of its eligible products. Cotyledon Farm is one of the few area farms accepting these critical benefits. The farm stand provides a la carte staples like meat, eggs, seasonal veggie bags, fruit, bread and ice cream to its customer base, all produced locally. Additionally, the farm sells wholesale to third-party vendors like Worcester Regional Food Hub, Maker to Main, Lilac Hedge Farm and the Regional Environmental Council. All third party customers are devoted to making local, nutritious food accessible to all.

Our sliding scale includes three price points for two sizes of shares. Members select their price point based on their income and family size and are encouraged to read the below document to gain a deeper understanding. We find that approximately 30% of our members select the lowest price point. HIP/SNAP customers are required to pay the lowest price point for the farm to remain eligible to accept these benefits. Work-Trade is most often fulfilled by those interested in accessing our food *as well as* receiving an education on the farm. This works like an internship, and work-trade members become part of the team on the farm. There are currently no paid staff. Their experience is not an exact dollar-for-dollar reimbursement for labor, as work-trade members often have no experience working on farms and require continuous on the job training in order to continue to participate. The farm is working towards hiring staff at a living wage and

reducing the number of work-trade participants so that greater continuity for both staff and the farm can be sustained.

**Visit this link For More Information [About Sliding Scale](#)**

All of our members work on the farm, a model gleaned from a now retired organic farm, Heirloom Harvest. Each member, as part of their payment and to help keep labor costs down, volunteers 5-10 hours (half and full share sizes, respectively) *per season*, or can choose to opt out for a fee. We find that members who work on the farm are more likely to understand and appreciate the effort required to operate a small-scale farm and these efforts help create connections and a sense of community within the farm member community.

You can find Cotyledon Farm on Instagram, Facebook

**If you have any follow up questions, please contact Amanda by e-mail at [CotyledonFarm@gmail.com](mailto:CotyledonFarm@gmail.com) and visit the farm website at [www.CotyledonFarm.com](http://www.CotyledonFarm.com)**