

**Virginia Tech Catawba Sustainability Center
Small Farm Incubator Plots - 2017**

The Catawba Sustainability Center’s Small Farm Incubator Plots program aims to incubate and grow viable, independent farm businesses and to serve as a model new-farmer program by providing access to land and resources in a low-risk environment.

Program Goals

- Accommodate up to 8 new growers and small farms
- Build infrastructure necessary to fulfill mission and serve as a model agricultural development organization
- Provide educational opportunities and skills training
- Support the local economy and local food system

The Catawba Sustainability Center (CSC) is establishing “Land-Use Agreements” with new and established farm businesses to utilize a portion of designated farmland to grow produce. The Center is committed to developing the incubator program, facilitating learning opportunities, and ensuring that land is available annually for new participants. All participants must follow the CSC’s Land Use Protocol and new farms must participate in one of the Catawba Sustainability Center’s training programs.

2016 Catawba Sustainability Center Growers’ Rates

ITEM	ANNUAL FEE	UNIT
¼ Acre Land w/access to water for 1 growing season	\$50.00	¼ Acre
Equipment Fee: Usage and Maintenance	\$25.00	¼ Acre
Pre-Season Land Preparation: Tractor Disk*	\$50.00	¼ Acre
Total for All Services:	\$125.00	

*Optional: Land Preparation must be requested by April 14, 2015.

Requirements for New Farm Participation

1. Complete program application and associated paperwork and submit to CSC – Applications can be submitted year round, but at least 30 days before farming activities will begin. You may arrange a site visit at any time with CSC management.
2. Participate in a farming education program:
 - a. CSC Training Program: Growers Academy, Midsummer Sustainable Gardening
 - b. VA Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Coalition Beginning Farmer modules
 - c. Other equivalent experience or training
3. Once accepted, you will be invoiced. Payment is due immediately upon receipt.
4. Pre-season land preparation will occur between April 1 and April 14, weather permitting.
5. Meet with CSC management at the Center for site orientation.
6. Submit a pre-season garden plan to CSC management for approval. The plan should include planned crops (including varieties), plans for rotation, and cover crop scheme.
7. Farming can begin once payment is received, and can continue until December 1. For alternative arrangements, please contact CSC management.

Other Farmer Responsibilities:

- Attend CSC Farm Incubator Orientation prior to farming: Early April – date TBA.
- Abide by Catawba Sustainability Center Land Use Protocol and Standards (attached).
- Develop and implement a plan to control weeds within your plot.
- Provide gasoline for roto-tiller and lawn mower and gas/oil mix for weed eater for use on plot.
- Clean and return tools and equipment to designated storage areas after use
- CSC provides a roto-tiller, push lawnmower, a handheld weed trimmer, and push weed trimmer for grower use.
- Mow and/or maintain walkways and fence row around plot according to maintenance schedule.
- Use drip irrigation or provide irrigation equipment
- Be available for at least one educational tour/demonstration during the growing season.
- Attend occasional meetings at the farm with CSC management.
- Plant cover crops in between cash crop plantings and for overwinter. Cover crop should be sewn by October 6, preferably in late September.
- Submit to CSC Management, a signed liability waiver for all persons entering CSC property.
- **If growers' plot is left unmaintained or is abandoned, CSC staff will mow the plot and seed with a cover crop. To cover these costs, the grower will be charged a fee of \$100, issued by an invoice from Virginia Tech .**

Attached:

Application, Land Use Protocols, Site Map, Garden Plan Template, Memorandum of Agreement, Liability Waiver