



PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION

FARMING IN THE NEW AGE WITH SPADE AND PLOW ORGANICS



Last month, the PCFMA team had the opportunity to spend a day on the farm with the innovative crew behind [Spade and Plow Organics](#). Just off the highway in sunny San Martin, California, Spade & Plow Organics farm sits on a modest plot of land nestled between the South Bay and Salinas Valley. Fed up with corporate agriculture and looking for a change of pace, Mike Thorp and his two sons, Sam and Nick, set out to keep the tradition of local farming alive in Santa Clara County, starting on 10 acres of land in 2015. Originally inspired by the idea of working directly with their community, the team of father and sons have been making the most of every aspect of farming in an urban environment, and have been defining what organic small-scale farming looks like in the new age.

Farming on limited space, flexibility has been key to helping Spade & Plow Organics maintain success. They grow different varieties of produce year-round, practicing strict crop rotations and working diligently to encourage biodiversity. Crops like baby greens, which they plant every week, provide consistency and availability of fresh products weekly, ensuring that there is always enough product for all of their different marketing outlets. This consistency also frees them up to experiment with new crops as well. Purple sprouting broccoli, for example, was just starting to bloom for the first time at Spade & Plow Organics when we went to visit! At the request of a few Santa Clara County restaurant chefs, the team decided to plant a test run of the uniquely beautiful variety of broccoli and were waiting with excitement to see their labor come to fruition.

Selling their crops through a few different outlets is essential to Spade & Plow's success. Their delicious harvests can be found at PCFMA's [College of San Mateo Farmers' Market](#) every Saturday, as well as a few farmers' markets in Santa Clara County. Additionally, Spade & Plow participates in a [Community Supported Agriculture](#) (CSA) Box program each

week. The CSA allows Spade & Plow Organics to pair up with other nearby farms and sell pre-ordered boxes of fresh produce to local shoppers. Between their farmers' markets, CSA boxes, and working with local restaurants, Spade & Plow Organics can make use of nearly everything they grow. This allows the versatility to respond to their customers' feedback which influences what they choose to plant ensures that there is always a growing demand to buy up their supply!

With their community at the heart of everything they do, Spade & Plow Organics are part of the younger generation of farmers behind redefining agriculture in the modern age. Flexibility, innovation, and mindfulness have helped them realize their dreams of bringing certified organic farming to the urban Santa Clara County area and preserve clean land for farmers of the future. "My biggest pride is being able to feed and serve my local community," said Sam Thorp.

You can find artichokes, brassicas, baby greens, and more seasonal produce from Spade & Plow Organics at the PCFMA [College of San Mateo Farmers' Market](#) every Saturday. Look for them on social media [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @SpadeandPlow.