

Why I live here



Darryl Wong and partners run the Freewheelin' Farm in Santa Cruz, CA. (The name? They deliver food into town by bicycle.) freewheelinfarm.com

Broccoli by the sea

Bay Area native **Darryl Wong** fell in love with farming on the Santa Cruz coast

I grew up in the suburban East Bay, and my friends tell me they never thought I'd end up as a farmer in Santa Cruz. I didn't either. I thought I'd do something in a hard science. But that's what's exciting about farming: You have to experiment.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION Our farm has a mythic quality to it; the 180° ocean views are epic. But farming right on the water has drawbacks too. Sometimes we [Wong, Kirstin Yogg, and founder Amy Courtney] call our 9 acres the tundra because it's so windy. We can't grow hot-season crops like peppers and tomatoes, but broccoli, spinach, lettuce, carrots—they just love it here year-round. **PLANTING THE SEEDS** My father was a second-generation Chinese immigrant, and every night when I was growing up there was a fresh meal on the table—wontons, Chinese vegetables. In college I did a study abroad program, and I'd always find myself in the kitchen.

When I got home, I applied to the farm and garden apprenticeship program at UC Santa Cruz. **GROWING THE BUSINESS** Our CSA has 75 members, and I love the connection to people buying our food—my plants are like my babies. But I want to push the envelope: How can we get this food into schools? Into hospitals?

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS The sustainable agriculture community here is great: There are a lot of farmers in their 20s and we all keep in touch. What I love about our movement is that it's not about saying no to something, it's about the joy of growing and eating food.

—AS TOLD TO ANNA NORDBERG