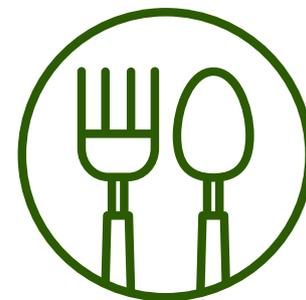


Food Destination: Fiatarone Farms



25-year-old **Kieran Fiatarone** worked on a farm in Mangrove Mountain while completing his university degree in Environmental Science.

Combining his experience on the land, his scientific knowledge and his passion for the environment, he has now created a chemical-free, small-scale market garden; growing seasonal vegetables to provide directly to the people of the Central Coast.

Q. What's the inspiration behind Fiatarone Farms and how did it come to be?

The great goal of Fiatarone Farms is to produce nutritious high-quality fruits and vegetables with minimal environmental impact. I've worked for around five years on a farm in Mangrove Mountain, where I now lease a block of land that comprises stone fruit, citrus orchards and field tomatoes of exceptional quality.

During this time, I also completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science at the University of Newcastle. The creation of the Fiatarone Farms market garden is a marriage of the two.

Q. What's involved in an average day for your business?

Between rolling my ankle, chasing my tail and breaking things, work gets done! An average day doesn't really exist. Market gardens function through diversity, so this means managing a wide variety of plants and relevant tasks. The most time-consuming jobs are probably planting and harvest. These take the most planning and care.

Q. What have been the biggest issues you have had to overcome?

My Environmental Science degree was primarily focused on ecosystems and their functions. So, me starting a farm is akin to a physio pulling teeth – although fortunately I had the experience of working on a farm during my degree to help me out. Running a business has plenty of hurdles but I'm learning as I go.

The variable climate has been tough to mitigate. I've been able to overcome this with a large diversity of plants but right now I do have some plants that have frost damage and heat stress so I'll continue to look for the best ways to manage this.

Q. What do you see as the future for sustainable, seasonal and locally-sourced food on the Central Coast?

There's a fantastic network of people in this scene and I'm confident that there will be a surge of similar farms popping up around the Central Coast. I hope to continue to grow to become a well-established producer and help others start similar operations.

Q. How does Fiatarone Farms support the Central Coast in becoming a premier food and beverage destination?

I sell seasonal vegetables direct to the public, and supply to Nurtured Earth Organics and Like Minds Café - two high-end operations where quality is foundational. By supplying to local businesses and providing seasonal veggie boxes direct to customers, Fiatarone Farms betters the opportunity for residents to enjoy some of the fantastic produce grown in our region.

Q. What's your pick of the crop right now?

The coriander is something truly special. And for those coriander haters - broccoli.



FIND OUT MORE

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