

# Growing a Giving Garden



## Food pantries need fresh produce

Food pantries are mostly reliant on donations from food rescue organizations or charitable gifts from the community, often near the end of shelf life. Fresh produce is often in high demand and choice is often limited. Join the movement towards improved community health and greater food equity within your region by donating produce from your garden this year. Here are a few suggestions on how to get started!

## Helpful tips to get started

- **Find a location and time to donate.** Call your local food pantry to see if and when donations can be accepted. Don't know where your local food pantry is located? Visit our website for a comprehensive listing of locations near you.
- **Grow what they need.** Depending on the demographics of the community, there may be special requests for product often unavailable. It's a great way to try a new variety in your home garden!
- **Consider higher yielding varieties.** Plant prolific varieties so you can ensure that there will be excess to share from your home garden. Indeterminate tomatoes, vining cucumbers, cut and come again lettuce, and hardy winter squash are a few examples.
- **Consider succession planting.** Many plants and varieties with shorter maturity dates can be planted twice or even three times a year. Root vegetables, greens, and summer squash are a few examples of plants that you can start in May, and plant again in July for another bumper crop.



## Other suggestions and techniques

- Save berry containers, rubber bands, and paper bags for packing materials to the pantry. Use only disposable containers.
- Ask the pantry if product needs to be washed. If not, bring material as soon as it is harvested to maintain freshness, and try to harvest shortly before distribution hours.
- Consider volunteering on site once a week at your local pantry. You will not only meet some of the recipients of your garden goodies, you'll get a better understanding of how your donation is making a difference!

# How we can help you grow



## The GardenWorks Project's mission

The mission of The GardenWorks Project is to promote organic suburban agriculture to improve the well-being of our community, the environment, and those facing food insecurity. We empower, educate, and support all food growers in their efforts to nourish their families and neighbors in need.

## Ways to get involved

- **Join the Food Growers Network.** Membership is \$25 and receive free seeds, resources, and access to educational classes throughout the year. To find out more, visit our website.
- **Visit our demonstration gardens.** We've joined forces with the DuPage County Fairgrounds and Events Center in Wheaton to create a self-guided, educational space for anyone interested in gardening. Learn about food growing at one of our on-site trainings, and meet local food growers working to build a more accessible food system together.
- **Participate as a volunteer.** One of the easiest ways to get involved with GardenWorks is to volunteer. Our volunteer-based model brings education and service in partnership with a valuable mission. Join us today!
- **Join Fresh Food Connect.** Join our newest partnership, Fresh Food Connect, which will connect home gardeners within the area with ways to nourish our neighbors.



## What is Fresh Food Connect?

Fresh Food Connect aims to grow a more local and resilient food system by connecting gardeners with their communities through the ease of a free mobile app.

The GardenWorks Project has partnered with Fresh Food Connect to connect gardeners with food pantries so everyone can play a role in building a more sustainable and healthy region. Scan to learn more and register as a local grower!