

AmpleHarvest.org^(SM)

"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"

F.A.Q.

General Questions

Q. What exactly is the AmpleHarvest.org campaign?

A. Created by CNN Hero Gary Oppenheimer, AmpleHarvest.org is a nationwide campaign to diminish hunger and malnutrition (while helping the environment) in America by making it easy for millions of backyard gardeners across the country to quickly find local food pantries eager to receive their excess garden bounty.

AmpleHarvest.org has received backing and support from the USDA, Google Inc., Feeding America and food banks nationwide as well as major faith organizations. It has been highlighted on the White House web site, PBS's "Growing A Greener World" as well as the CNN Heroes program.

AmpleHarvest.org enables gardeners to find food pantries within a specified distance of their home and then view the pantries desired day/time for receiving donations.

AmpleHarvest.org also displays personalized driving instructions to the pantry as well as (if provided) a photograph of the pantry - making it easier to find. For the benefit of gardeners during a non-growing season or anyone else interested in making a donation, AmpleHarvest.org also provides pantries the opportunity to list store bought items they are in particular need of.

Its vision is an America where millions of gardeners eliminate malnutrition and hunger in their own community. It accomplished this by educating, encouraging and enabling gardeners to donate their excess harvest to the needy in their community instead of allowing it to rot in the garden. There are no costs to the food pantries or the gardeners for use of AmpleHarvest.org. Our message to America is: **No Food Left Behind.**

Although there are a number of excellent programs that help farmers and community gardens get produce to food banks, AmpleHarvest.org is the only program in America that is solving hunger and malnutrition by moving information instead of moving food thereby helping local gardeners find neighborhood food pantries. AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization (EIN #27-2433274).

Q. What is the difference between a food bank and a food pantry?

A. Food Banks are large scale operations that collect and distribute food and other household items to local food pantries, soup kitchens, etc. Food Pantries are local walk-in facilities where families in need go to get food. *(Note: In some parts of the country, what we are calling a "food pantry" is instead referred to as a "food shelf", "food closet", "food cupboard", "food share" or even "food bank". For the sake of simplicity, AmpleHarvest.org uses only the terms "Food Bank" and "Food Pantry").* The typical food pantry operates out of a local house of worship or other civic building. Most of the foods distributed by the pantries are packaged, canned or dry goods. Refrigeration is usually limited to dairy items such as milk and cheese. Produce is rarely available.

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Q. How many food pantries are there in the country?

A. No one knows for sure. According to a study by FeedingAmerica.org, in 2010, there were 33,500 in their network - an increase of 13% from 2006. There are no accurate statistics on how many other food pantries exist outside of the FeedingAmerica.org network, but by some estimates, there may now be more than 40,000. Whatever the number, it is too large.

Q. Why don't pantries offer fresh produce?

A. Unlike supermarkets that get deliveries from food wholesalers daily assuring that you'll get fresh produce, food banks and other sources do less frequent deliveries of food to pantries. As such, lettuce or tomatoes that looked great on Monday when the food bank got them would be pretty limp or mushy a week later when finally delivered to the local food pantry.

Backyard gardeners however can harvest their produce and deliver it to the pantry on the same day. Furthermore, if the pantry clients pick up the produce that same day, they will benefit from eating food that is even fresher than what can be purchased at a food store.

Q. Why do gardeners grow more food they can use?

A. In an ideal world, gardeners would plant only enough to satisfy the needs of themselves and their friends. The reality of gardening (and farming in general) is that all sorts of things beyond the control of the gardener influence the ultimate size of the harvest. In a growing season with lots of sun, adequate rain, no late or early frosts, no serious pest problems (small pests such as fungus, pests a bit larger such as insects, pests a lot larger such as ground hogs or rabbits, and very large pests such as deer) etc., the grower gets a larger harvest. If however, any of the above appear (more often than not, several can appear at the same time), the harvest is significantly reduced.

Because the gardener never quite knows how good (or bad) the growing season will be, they usually grow more plants than they need--just in case a fungus laden insect traveling in the fur of a deer sized ground hog attacks the garden. The result is that if one or more of these bad things do not attack the garden, the harvest can easily exceed the needs of the grower. AmpleHarvest.org exists to insure that food gets to pantries instead of being left to rot in the garden.

Q. I don't garden/am not gardening right now... can I still contribute?

A. YES! Not everyone gardens and gardeners do not garden all the time. Food pantries need fresh produce - but they also need a variety of store bought items all year long.

Pantries are encouraged to add information to their AmpleHarvest.org page listing store bought items they are most in need of (they may also list items they **don't** need!). If the pantry you found has listed store bought items they need, buy what you can afford on your next shopping trip (or check your kitchen cabinets) and drop them off at the pantry at the day/time they listed for donations. The free AmpleHarvest.org iPhone and Android apps were designed to help you find a food pantry when you are not near your computer... such as when you are shopping.

Please check the expiration date on the items you are bringing to the pantry (from your home or from a store). Even canned goods expire. Food pantries do not distribute, and will dispose of food past its expiration date.

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Q. I think this is a great idea... how can I help?

A. Although there are already more than 4,600 food pantries across all 50 states already registered on AmpleHarvest.org, the key to the continued success of the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign is increasing the public awareness of the effort.

As more pantries AND gardeners learn about it, more food will find its way from backyard gardens to the kitchens of those who need it most. And you can help.

- Tell your friends and family about AmpleHarvest.org
- If your house of worship, town hall, community building, etc. houses a food pantry, inform the pantry manager about AmpleHarvest.org by giving them our **food pantry-food bank flier**.
- If someone you know gardens or belong to a garden club or community garden, give them our **gardener/farmer flier**.
- You can print out this **garden shop/nursery flier**, take it to your local
 - garden shop
 - nursery
 - lawn and garden section of your local Home Depot/Lowes/Sears/Wal-Mart, etc.
 - hardware store

and ask them to post it by their cashier or in another conspicuous location. You might also want to post a copy on the public bulletin board at your local

- library
- supermarket
- house of worship
- health club/recreation facility
- Put a link from your web site to www.AmpleHarvest.org. Several graphics and widgets are available for your use at our **link to us page**. Please email info@AmpleHarvest.org for assistance with setting up the link.
- You can help to sustain the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign by making a [monetary contribution](#). Donations of \$1,000 or more earn a special listing on the AmpleHarvest.org site (and our eternal gratitude). However, any contribution, large or small, one time or recurring is greatly appreciated and will help AmpleHarvest.org diminish hunger in America. AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization (EIN #27-2433274)

Q. I found your site and need food for my family... can you help me?

A. We're very sorry to hear about your situation.... many people across the country are having similar difficulties.

The AmpleHarvest.org web site is designed to help food pantries in your community, where you can get food assistance, get garden fresh produce from local gardeners.

While we can't help you directly, we know where you can get help - please visit

info@AmpleHarvest.org

11/3/11-FAQ

973-409-4093

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AmpleHarvest.org/211 or call **2-1-1**. You can also call 877-652-1148 if you have any trouble getting through to 2-1-1.

United Way has people you can talk to 24 hours a day in complete confidence. They have all the services available - both government and non-profit - on their computer screens, and they can help you find a nearby food pantry, as well as other services you may need.

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Food Pantry Questions

Q. Are there any costs associated with registering on AmpleHarvest.org?

A. Nope. None. Nada. Zippo. AmpleHarvest.org is totally free both for your food pantry (also called a food cupboard, food shelf, food closet or food bank in some parts of the country) as well as the gardeners using AmpleHarvest.org to find your food pantry.

Q. What type of agency can register at AmpleHarvest.org?

A. The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign is designed to make food pantries "visible" to neighborhood gardeners eager to share their excess harvest.

Other agencies such as soup kitchens and shelters may also take advantage of AmpleHarvest.org although our model was explicitly designed to meet the exact needs of food pantries.

The two requirements to register on AmpleHarvest.org are the agency must be a not for profit 501(c)3 organization and the donated food must be distributed at no charge to the recipient.

Individuals and for-profit organizations may not register on AmpleHarvest.org.

Q. Is the AmpleHarvest.org campaign different from Plant-A-Row for the Hungry?

A. Yes. Both programs work very hard to get fresh garden produce to the food insecure. AmpleHarvest.org is focused on getting fresh produce from millions of gardeners across all 50 states to local food pantries and PAR is available in those communities where they are set up to operate. AmpleHarvest.org offers gardeners nationwide online real-time information about their neighborhood pantries. Additionally, AmpleHarvest.org also offers gardeners and non-gardeners alike, the opportunity to see what store bought items the food pantries in their community are most in need of. A food agency can easily participate in both programs.

Q. Our pantry has no refrigeration for storing produce, what do we do?

A. Because many pantries have limited refrigeration capacity with little or no room for bulky produce such as lettuce or melons, they usually provide only canned fruits and vegetables.

AmpleHarvest.org solves this problem.

On the **Register a Pantry** page, you are encouraged to put the day[s] of the week and the time of day that gardeners should deliver their produce to you. You can then invite your clients to come later that same day to get the garden fresh produce. The produce should be in and out of your pantry within 1 to 2 days at most. Any produce harvested from a backyard garden can survive quite well without refrigeration for a day or so.





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Backyard Gardener Questions

Q. What do I do if AmpleHarvest.org does not list any food pantries in my neighborhood?

A. Your help can be critical here. Food pantries are often "under the radar"--they do not have a web site, signs on the front door, or yellow page listing. That is why we created AmpleHarvest.org, to make it possible to find a pantry in your neighborhood.

If we do not list a pantry in your area, please help us find one. How? See if a place of worship or other civic organization in your community has one. Call your regional food bank (www.feedingamerica.org can help you find it) and ask them if they can help you.

Once you do find one, contact them to see if they'll accept your produce. ALSO, please ask them to visit www.AmpleHarvest.org or print out **www.AmpleHarvest.org/pantry** and give it to them. You can also ask them to contact the other nearby food pantries to let them know about AmpleHarvest.org. If they are not Internet savvy, you may want to help them register on AmpleHarvest.org.

Once they are registered, the next backyard gardener in your area looking to share their bounty will not experience the problems you did.

Q. I love the idea of sharing my produce, what do I do once I have found a pantry?

A. First and foremost, see if a preferred delivery day of the week and time of day is listed. It is important to adhere to the pantries scheduling information if they provide it so as not interfere with their operations. If no day/time is listed, call or email them to find out when they would like you to deliver the produce.

On the day of your planned delivery, harvest your crops in the early morning while they still have some of the coolness of the evening air. If they have dew, wipe them dry with a paper towel. Each item should be visually inspected for serious bruising, insect damage, and ripeness. **Do not donate produce that you would not buy for your own family.** Produce that is overripe, has mushy spots, or is seriously blemished should either be made into a soup, stew, or go into a compost pile but not donated. (Note, if you used any pesticide on your garden, please take the time to clean each piece of produce as recommended by the pesticide manufacturer on the label before you let **anyone** eat it.)

Next, unless they have given you other instructions, package your produce in paper supermarket bags and take them to the pantry at the requested time. If you find the pantry convenient to get to, you can continue to share your produce with them through the rest of the growing season. Alternatively, you may decide to go back to AmpleHarvest.org next time and select a different pantry - spreading your produce over several pantries.

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Whichever way you choose to do it, it will be greatly appreciated. Lastly, please remember to let your fellow gardeners know about AmpleHarvest.org, so they can share the bounty of their garden at their harvest time.

Q. I have a lot of tomatoes but only a few of cucumbers, should I bother to bring them?

A. Yes! The produce you bring will be pooled with that of other backyard gardeners in your area. For all you know, the next gardener might bring only 3 tomatoes and two bags of cucumbers.

Remember, the key thing is that food should not be wasted, especially when so many Americans are having a hard time feeding their families. Your bounty, large or small, will help to diminish hunger in America.

Q. Are my donations tax deductible?

A. We are not tax experts, but our tax experts believe that donations may be tax deductible provided you can determine the fair market value of your donation. We spoke to our tax experts... but you'll need to talk to yours to get an answer that will be applicable to your situation.

Q. Do the pantries care if I grow organically?

A. Most do not - they are perfectly happy with fresh produce, organic or not. HOWEVER, you may want to let the pantry know if you use organic methods in case one of their clients prefers it. Having said that, if you do grow organically, you will harvest healthier food without depleting the earth as much.

Q. Growing season is over... can I still donate to a food pantry?

A. Pantries need your help all year long. Visit AmpleHarvest.org to see if your local pantry has listed any store bought items that they are in particular need of. Any donations will help.

Q. Would you like to know if I shared my garden bounty?

A. We'd love to know about it. Send an email to IShared@AmpleHarvest.org and let us know how much produce you were able to share. You might also want to visit our Facebook page and post the information there too.

There is no need to identify yourself if you don't want to, simply sign it with your initials and your city and state.

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Q. I know about a food pantry that is not on AmpleHarvest.org, what should I do?

A. Just because you know about the pantry does not mean that other backyard gardeners in your area also know about it.

Please make every effort to inform the pantry about AmpleHarvest.org. The key to success of the campaign is to have as many food pantries as possible listed on the site.

The best thing to do is either to visit the pantry and suggest that they go to www.AmpleHarvest.org to list their pantry, or if they do not have Internet access, print out the [pantry flier](#) in the green box on the left and give it to them. They may need your help to actually do the registration. Please remind them that there is absolutely no cost or obligations involved with listing on AmpleHarvest.org.

Q. What happens if someone becomes ill after eating something I donated?

A. You are protected by the Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act signed during the Clinton administration. The Act is intended to encourage donations of food to nonprofit organizations while providing the donor with "Good Samaritan" protection. You are provided protection from criminal and civil liability providing you did not exhibit gross negligence. The text of the act is at www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appc.htm