

AmpleHarvest.org^(SM)

"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Of interest to editors and journalists covering: Hunger in America, Gardening, Sustainable Communities and Global Warming

AMPLEHARVEST.ORG ENABLING LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES TO GET FRESHLY PICKED PRODUCE FROM LOCAL BACKYARD GARDENER'S EXCESS HARVEST PARTNERS WITH NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION

Gardeners encouraged to share excess garden bounty instead of leaving it to rot in their garden

WEST MILFORD, NJ. – August 6, 2009

In May 2009, the AmpleHarvest.org campaign announced a new web site enabling neighborhood food pantries to be easily located by local backyard gardeners wishing to share their excess garden bounty with neighbors in need.

AmpleHarvest.org is pleased to announce a joint effort with the National Gardening Association to inform millions of backyard gardeners throughout the United States about the AmpleHarvest.org campaign.

Local food pantries usually receive their supplies from regional food banks, government programs and neighborhood donations. They generally do not include fresh produce because of distribution and storage issues leaving food pantry clients with access only to canned vegetables and fruit.

With one out of eight American families now relying on pantries to help feed them, the pantries often have a hard time meeting the demand.

At the same time, millions of backyard gardeners across America frequently find that their vegetable and fruit gardens provide far more produce than they can possibly use or share with friends. The remainder is often either left to rot in the garden or put into the trash, which produces methane as it decomposes - a global warming gas.

Gardeners who want to share part of their harvest are often unable to find local pantries because they typically don't have yellow page listings or an Internet presence.

To address this, the web site enables food pantries to register their name, phone, address, an optional photograph of the pantry to make it easier to find, and day[s] of the week and time of the day they'll accept the gardeners produce.

Once a pantry has registered, backyard gardeners in the region can use the site to get a listing of all of the pantries within a specified distance of their home, along with detailing driving instructions to the pantry. Since its rollout 10 weeks ago, over 600 food pantries in America have already registered (www.AmpleHarvest.org/all-pantry.php) with more signing up every day.

In partnership with the National Gardening Association, AmpleHarvest.org is informing gardeners nationwide that they can share their garden bounty and thereby diminish hunger in America. It is encouraging nursery and garden shop owners to post a flier (available at www.AmpleHarvest.org/downloads/GardenShop.pdf) near their cash registers or in another conspicuous location to inform their customer about the campaign.

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Food banks and food pantries, often desperate for additional food resources, have expressed enthusiastic support for the AmpleHarvest.org campaign. According to Tony Mans of the Second Harvest Heartland Food Bank in Minnesota, "We have been trying to find a good way to communicate to gardeners which food shelves they can donate to. I think AmpleHarvest.org is the missing link we have been looking for."

AmpleHarvest.org operates on an all volunteer basis. There are no costs to the food pantries or the gardeners for using the site, nor is there any advertising on the site.

According to its founder, Gary Oppenheimer, "In our current economic climate, food pantries need community support more than ever, while at the same time, many people are unable to make monetary donations. The AmpleHarvest.org campaign enables backyard gardeners to help feed the hungry by reaching into their backyards instead of their back pockets".

About AmpleHarvest.org

AmpleHarvest.org is an outgrowth of Sustainable West Milford, a 503(c)(1) sustainability organization and has received support from many groups including the USDA, Google Inc, National Gardening Association, Rotary International, VFW, YMCA, numerous faith groups, Garden Writers of America, food/hunger bloggers and many food banks overseeing the pantries (see www.AmpleHarvest.org/feedback.php).

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign is a grassroots effort to diminish hunger in America using already existing resources without spending public or private monies. Due the urgency of the hunger crisis in America, AmpleHarvest.org went from initial conception to release in only two months.

For more information on the campaign, visit www.AmpleHarvest.org or call 973-409-4093.

About the National Gardening Association

The National Gardening Association (NGA) founded in 1973, is a national nonprofit leader in plant-based education, respected for its award-winning Web sites and newsletters, grants and curricula for youth gardens, and research for the lawn and garden industry. NGA's mission is to advance the personal, community, and educational benefits of gardening by supporting gardeners and teachers with information and resources.

To learn more, please visit www.garden.org and www.kidsgardening.org.

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