

## Two Looks at Hunger in America

**One out of six Americans needs food assistance, but the local food pantry usually can't provide fresh produce.**

It is not news that the economy, although recovering, remains difficult for many people.

What might be surprising is how many of your neighbors are now "food insecure" - a fancy government term for hungry. The statistic from *before* the recession was that 36 million people were receiving *some* type of assistance for food. Now it has grown to **49 million people** or about 18% of the US population.

The place where families usually get food assistance is called a "food pantry" - most often a small room in a neighborhood building such as a house of worship or similar setting. They are typically supplied by regional food banks, sometimes local grocery stores and the generosity of the people in the neighborhood.

They usually have shelves containing dry packed or canned foods, juices, and other household necessities. There may be a refrigerator with dairy products and other perishables at the pantry.

However, fresh produce is almost never available.

It does not have to be that way.

**Millions of Americans grow more food in their home gardens than they can possibly use, preserve or give to friends.**

It is not news that the economy, although recovering, remains difficult for many people.

Even before the economic problems started, many Americans enjoyed growing fruits and vegetables in their backyard gardens. They got pleasure from being outdoors while also having a supply of fresh food for the table.

Now, more than **40 million people**, including some driven by economic uncertainty, are gardening in their backyards as well as in community gardens.

For many, it can feel like forever while they wait for their garden to start producing tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, squash, etc. But once they start harvesting their crops, it often comes with a vengeance.

The typical backyard gardener will consume as much of their harvest as possible, can, preserve or pickle some, and then share more with their friends and neighbors. Yet in many cases, the harvest continues.

The rest often ends up left to rot in the garden, put in the compost pile, or worse, tossed into the garbage, contributing to climate change.

It does not have to be that way.

# AmpleHarvest.org<sup>(SM)</sup>

*"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"*

**The AmpleHarvest.org campaign diminishes hunger in America by enabling backyard gardeners to share their excess garden produce with neighborhood food pantries.**

These backyard gardeners would be happy to share some of their harvest with a neighborhood food pantry but usually can't because the pantries are often hard to find - many not having a web site or even a phone number.

To address this situation, the AmpleHarvest.org<sup>(SM)</sup> Campaign has been established with the goal of enabling America's backyard gardeners to quickly find local food pantries in need of fresh produce.

The AmpleHarvest.org web site enables a food pantry to register its name, address, phone, and other information including an optional photo of the building to make it easy to find. It also accepts information on the days and hours gardeners' donations will be accepted. Food pantries can also list store bought items they need, helpful to users of our free **Ample Harvest iPhone app**.

Gardeners with extra garden produce as well as other donors simply enter their address or zip code to view all registered food pantries within the distance they are willing to travel. AmpleHarvest.org can also display a map and detailed driving instructions for the donor.

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign is a grass roots effort and has the support of the US Department of Agriculture, Google.com, VFW, Rotary International, Garden Writers of America, National Gardening Association, numerous faith groups and many other organizations. Everyone involved has donated their time and talent. More than 2,500 food pantries nationwide have already registered. Use of AmpleHarvest.org is free of charge both for food pantries and gardeners.

## You Can Help Diminish Hunger in America

If you know of a food pantry in your community, you can help diminish hunger by giving [www.AmpleHarvest.org/pantry.pdf](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/pantry.pdf) to the pantry manager. Remind them that AmpleHarvest.org is totally **free**. There are over 30,000 food pantries in America... nearly every community has at least one.

If you are, or are friends with a backyard gardener, a local farmer, garden club or community garden member, you can help diminish hunger in their community by sharing [www.AmpleHarvest.org/gardener.pdf](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/gardener.pdf) with them. Also ask your local garden shop to post [www.AmpleHarvest.org/downloads/GardenShop.pdf](http://www.AmpleHarvest.org/downloads/GardenShop.pdf)

**An estimated 100 billion pounds of food - enough to totally eliminate hunger in this country, is thrown away annually.**

**It does not have to be this way - and you can help change it!**

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