



Providing Produce for the Food Pantry: A Guide for Gardeners

Food pantry: _____

Street address: _____

Phone/email contact: _____

Donation hours: _____

Requested produce items: _____

Thank you for donating your produce to help feed those in need!

Please follow these practices in your garden to help ensure the produce you donate is fresh and healthy!

- ❖ Donate fresh produce grown in soil free of heavy metals like lead and mercury. Make sure your garden hasn't been exposed to flooding or run-off from nearby farms.
- ❖ If you use animal-based compost, make sure it is well composted and applied at least 90 days before harvest to prevent the possibility of produce carrying harmful germs.
- ❖ Keep animals, including pets and wildlife, out of the garden. This can be easier said than done, but animals can carry diseases. Do your best to keep them out of the garden. Use fences, noisemakers or predator decoys in your effort to keep them out. Do not harvest produce that animals have contaminated.
- ❖ Know where your water is coming from. If your water is from a well make sure that the well is tested yearly. City water is fine to use in a garden. Use only potable (drinkable) water for rinsing harvested produce.
- ❖ Keep garden tools clean and periodically sanitize them to keep tools from spreading human or plant diseases. To properly sanitize equipment like nippers or hand shovels, wash tools in soap and water, rinse with clean water, and dip into a sanitizing solution. Allow to air dry. A good sanitizing solution is ¼ t. concentrated bleach (8.25% hypochlorite) per quart or 1 tsp. per gallon of clean water.
- ❖ Wash Your Hands! Handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands before you enter the garden and as you leave. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water and dry them thoroughly. Hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not readily available. Wash your hands before harvesting, after handling compost, plant debris or garbage, after touching animals and after using the bathroom.
- ❖ Be well. Do not work in the garden or harvest if you have been sick.
- ❖ Make your donation count by harvesting for quality – this is generally early in the day – and coordinating delivery so that the pantry can use your donation. Ask the pantry what their guests would like to see. Make your donation count!