GIVE BACK KIT

The Can You Dig It initiative invites and supports individuals to create inclusive food-growing gardens in collaboration with their community. We produce food (awesome!) and offer opportunities for individuals of diverse backgrounds to experience social inclusion, establish meaningful relationships, and contribute to their community by giving back part of their produce to those in need (even more awesome!).

For as long as we can remember, growing food has been as social activity that brought people of diverse backgrounds to interact over a common activity. Gardening within your community provides you with opportunities to grow your own food, share your expertise, learn from your neighbours, and be part of a meaningful growing movement. Community gardens are also a place to make your contribution to the greater community!

As a garden supported by the Can You Dig It initiative, we invite you to give back a percentage of the yield of your garden to support food security initiatives in your community. Giving back not only provide people in need with fresh organic produce, it feels good 😊 and makes you part of a community that care for each other. Everyone has contribution to make, gifts and abilities, and we are proud to offer such opportunity!

For more information, please visit [www.cydi.ca](http://www.cydi.ca), follow us on [facebook](http://facebook), or send us an email at [info@cydi.ca](mailto:info@cydi.ca).

How to donate?

- Consult with your fellow gardeners and decide on a way to give back – see below for ideas.

- The frequency of donation depends on what is growing in our garden and when you planted it. In most cases a donation can be made every week from mid-June to September. To get the best of your harvest we suggest you to schedule a donation day every 10 to 14 days.

- Schedule donation days in advance so that gardeners can plan to be there to harvest the produce. Although timing might not always work for everyone to be present the day of donation to pick their produce themselves. Discuss with your fellow gardeners of strategies to collect the produce in a way that maximise your time and energy.

- A suggestion is to have 2 or 3 volunteers assigned at each donation day to pick up a small proportion of the produce from each garden bed. Gardeners who do not want specific produce from their bed to be harvested for donation (for example: John is happy to donate lettuce and spinach, but asks to not disturb his rhubarb) can let the assigned volunteers know ahead of time.

- Another strategy would be to have garden beds allocated specifically for donations and assigned volunteer gardeners to care for them.
Include everyone in the process when you plan for donation. If your garden offers gardening spaces to individuals with developmental disabilities and newcomers to Canada, make sure to offer them the opportunity to contribute and be the ones in charge of that give back piece!

Use the Can You Dig It brown bags and the plastic bin provided to carry your donation. Give away the brown paper bags, and bring back the plastic bin to your garden for future donations.

To preserve the quality of your fresh produce, you want to harvest quickly and bring the donation to your location of choice in a matter of a couple of hours. Tip: to prevent your leafy greens to wilt, store them in an airtight plastic bag before putting them in the Can You Dig It brown paper bag. See below for tips on when and how to harvest produce from your garden!

Be proud of yourself!

Record your donations

Use a calendar to note:
1. How many bags have been donated at each donation day, and
2. Where the produced have been brought to or how they have been used (on-site Give Back box, Harvest Meal in the garden…).

Send the information to Can You Dig It (info@cydi.ca) by September 30th. The garden supported by CYDI recording the most donations at the pro-rata of the gardeners will win a fabulous fruit tree of their choice planted in their garden. The garden will also be featured in posAbilities's newsletter and on our website andfacebook page. Just a way to show the world how fabulous you are!

Where to donate?

There are many ways of giving back to your community! Consult with your fellow gardeners to decide where and how you want to donate part of your produce. Follow us on facebook to learn about what the other gardens are doing and get inspired!

You may decide to support a local community kitchen, or to offer food to a community school serving free meals to their students. You can organize a BBQ or a Harvest Meal in the garden where you prepare the food from the garden and invite the neighbors to share your meal!

No need to go far to find people in need of healthy and nutritious food. You can install a Give Back bin in your garden, with a sign inviting walkers and neighbors to help themselves from the bin. You can then put a bag of produce in the bin on a regular basis. Harvest a bag for you, and a bag for the bin!
List of places your garden can donate to

Here are also some suggestions of projects or places where you can donate fresh produce. Talk to the organization before hand regarding your donation. They will be able to tell you when is the best time to bring the produce, what quantity they can work with, who to contact on site... Don’t hesitate to ask what the produce will be used for. It’s a good way to get to know the communities you are giving to!

**Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society**
- Food donations can be brought to the Food Bank warehouse at 1150 Raymur Avenue, Vancouver. The warehouse is open Monday – Friday, 7:00am - 3:00pm
- For fresh produce, please go to the end of the building to the loading dock, and a staff person will be happy to help you with your donation.

**First United Church Downtown Eastside**
- 320 East Hastings St, Vancouver
- Tel: 604-568-0725 and ask for the kitchen

**Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House**
- 501 East Hastings St, Vancouver
- Tel: 604-215-2030 / Fax: 604-215-2080

**Downtown Eastside Produce Project**
- The project donates fresh produce to Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside elementary schools and community centres
- Please email Jim Duggan [jvdugg@gmail.com](mailto:jvdugg@gmail.com) to work out details or call 604-834-4914

**The Harvest Project**
- 1073 Roosevelt Crescent, North Vancouver
- Donation Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10am-4pm and Saturday, 10am-2pm
- [info@harvestproject.org](mailto:info@harvestproject.org) / Tel: 604-983.9488

**SHARE Society**
- Food donations can be brought to the SHARE Food Bank at 2615 Clarke St, Port Moody. Monday: 9:30am - 7:00pm and Tuesday - Friday: 9:30am - 4:00pm
- For more information contact Leanne Beatty, SHARE Food Bank Coordinator at [leanne.beatty@sharesociety.ca](mailto:leanne.beatty@sharesociety.ca) / 604-931-2451

**Surrey Food Bank Society**
- 10732 City Parkway, Surrey, BC
- Tel: 604-581-5443 / Fax: 604-588-8697
Getting the best from your garden: Harvest Tips

There is so much excitement when we plant seeds, and then when we see our little sprouts burst through the soil. We take such good care to water them, and we ask the sun to shine so they can grow – we love our plants so much that sometimes we forget to harvest them! Here are some tips about different plants to help you harvest them at the right time in the right way.

**Helpful vocabulary:** **BOLT:** When a plant sends up a flower stock and produces seed, right before it dies (with root crops and leaf crops this usually means the root and leaves become bitter, shrivelled or woody/fibrous)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANT</th>
<th>WHEN to HARVEST</th>
<th>HOW to HARVEST</th>
<th>TAKE NOTE!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radish</td>
<td>As soon as it makes a round bulb that you can see peeking through the soil.</td>
<td>Pull them out by their leaves, rinse them off and enjoy! Leaves are edible too – steam or stir-fry them.</td>
<td>Do not leave radishes in the ground for long! They turn woody, get eaten and bolt – they need to be harvested as soon as they are round!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>Generally zucchini tastes best when harvested between 10 and 12” long.</td>
<td>Snap the zucchini off from the base of the vine, using your hand or a pair of hand pruners. Do not pull the zucchini off or you may uproot the whole plant.</td>
<td>You will need to check your zucchini every 3 to 4 days in the summer, as they will grow rapidly, everyday! The outer skin will get very hard and the inside will turn hollow and have large seeds if the zucchini sits on the bush too long.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Give it a light squeeze, when the tomato is slightly soft to the touch it is ready to harvest. Make sure to feel your tomato when it is still green so you know what it feels like when it is firm and not ripe.</td>
<td>Snap the tomato off the fruiting branch by the short stem that connects it. Leave any unripe tomatoes on the branch to continue ripening. Be careful not to pull. Use hand pruners and snip the tomato if it is too difficult to snap off.</td>
<td>Tomatoes come in many different colours besides red. They can be dark green/purple, bright orange, yellow or pink! So using touch to tell if they are ready is more reliable than going by colour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Read the variety of your cucumber and note how big they grow. Once the cucumber reaches it’s correct size, harvest it right away!</td>
<td>Pinch the stem of the cucumber at the vine, or use scissors or hand pruners to snip. Be very careful not to pull hard, as cucumbers have tender roots and you can easily pull up the whole plant accidently!</td>
<td>If cucumbers are not harvested once they reach their ideal size, they will become bitter and their skin will toughen. It’s better to harvest them small and tasty, than forget and let them get bitter and in-edible.</td>
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## CAN YOU DIG IT!

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<td>Leafy Greens: Kale, Collards, Spinach, Chard and Leaf lettuce</td>
<td>For the most tender greens, harvest any of these plants when the leaves are only 4 – 5 inches long. For a larger harvest, allow plants to grow for at least one month, and then begin to harvest the largest leaves.</td>
<td>All leafy greens will continue to grow if you harvest the leaves from the bottom, so pick the largest leaves first. If you pluck the newest leaves from the center, you may stop the plant from growing.</td>
<td>Most of these crops grow best in the cool of the spring or the fall. In the heat of the summer they might get bitter and tough. Although there are some lettuce varieties created to remain pleasant tasting right through the summer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrots and Beets</td>
<td>Any time you like – it is a good idea to dig a little around the top of the carrot to see how big it is. If it’s not big enough for you, just leave it to grow some more.</td>
<td>With carrots it is often a good idea to use a digging fork to gently dig up the carrots, if you pull them by their greens sometimes the greens snap off and the carrot stays in the ground! Beets can be easily pulled out by firmly grasping all the greens and pulling up – save these greens and add them to soups and stir-frys!</td>
<td>Carrots and beets (unlike radishes), will keep in the ground for a long time, even over winter. However, if you overwinter carrots and beets, when the warm weather arrives the following year they will bolt, so dig them up in the spring at the latest.</td>
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<td>Green (Snap) Beans</td>
<td>While they are still slender and somewhat flat, before they become fully round and you can see the outline of the seed. Bush beans generally ripen all at once, and can be harvested within 10 days of the first bean ripening. Pole beans need to be continually harvested over several months and will continue fruiting until the cold kills them.</td>
<td>Pinch beans off the plant at the thin stem that connects them to the vine. Be careful not to pull them off, as the plant is easily uprooted.</td>
<td>The roots of beans are very beneficial to the soil, so instead of pulling them right out when they are done, just cut the plant off at the soil surface and let the roots stay and return nutrients to the soil.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Once the leafy top of the plant flowers and begins to die back. If you want to store your potatoes wait for two weeks after the green leafy plant has died.</td>
<td>Use a digging fork, rather than a shovel to gently dig below where the potatoes will be and lift them from the ground.</td>
<td>Potatoes will only grow ABOVE where the mother potato was planted. Also, do not eat potatoes with green spots or green flesh – this means the potato was exposed to sunlight and it now contains toxins.</td>
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Thank you for giving back to your community!

www.cydi.ca