

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY'S URBAN HARVEST

A guide to starting a home-grown produce swap in your community.

Cultivating Community supports the development of food projects in urban places.

Urban Harvest events, also known as food swaps, are a great way for back-yard fruit and veggie gardeners to swap their excess produce for food they don't or can't grow in their own garden.

Food swaps have many social and environmental benefits:

- Redistribution of food that may otherwise go to landfill.
- Creation of local food-gardener networks.
- Provision of healthy food to the community.
- Sharing of gardening and food preparation skills.
- Reduction of greenhouse emissions by avoiding long distance transportation of food



All you need is 3 ingredients !

1. People in your area who are passionate about food gardening and community.

2. A venue such as a park or community centre.

3. Surplus home grown food, recipes, seedlings, seeds, gardening knowledge or preserves.

Getting Started

1. Talk to people: keep an eye out for neighbours who have vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Contact local sustainability groups, Transition Towns Network and community centres. Form a group of 3 to 4 people to help start the first swap.
2. Find a venue: parks, community halls, schools or local markets provide a regular flow of passers-by. The space must be big enough that your tables and marquee do not obstruct other public activities. Other facilities you may need are toilets, a kitchen for food preserving workshops, access to public transport, and bike/car parking.
3. Connect with community: Link the swap with other events in your community such as farmers markets, craft markets, seed swaps or after school care activities.
4. Approach your council: councils often support community-based food projects and can provide a venue, publicity, photocopying and advertising support. They may have a similar project you can link in with.
5. Contact local organisations: health services, food banks or homeless services may accept food donations should your group ever have a surplus of produce that can't be distributed among participants, or invite them to participate in the food swap. Other groups to include are schools, senior and youth groups, community gardens, churches and neighbourhood houses.

Getting Started Continued..

6. Develop a questionnaire: a questionnaire can help you to
 - ⇒ building a network of contacts interested in the project.
 - ⇒ help to explain the concept new members.
 - ⇒ generate a list of available produce and document in what season the swap might experience down time.
 - ⇒ help in developing workshops, or allow others to offer suggestions.

Deliver the questionnaire via letterboxing, email or community organisations & schools. You can create free online surveys @ www.surveymonkey.com

Have a central address for surveys to be returned to. It could be someone's residential address, or C/O the council. Provide an option for low income earners such as drop box at the council.

You may wish to get the questionnaire translated into other languages. Cultivating Community, Friends of the Earth and Councils have a translation service.

7. Membership: most swaps are informal and operate on a system of trust, to allow the fluid exchange of food, information and friendship. People respond well to self-regulated participation and simply agreements of "donate and takeaway". Cultivating Community also records the quantity of food at each swap to calculate the amount of avoided landfill.
8. Promote the event: once you have the venue, times and dates planned you can promote the swap in council newsletters, community centres, local permaculture groups, seed savers, rare fruit societies, Transition Town and Slow Food movements. Media coverage will give your food swap extra exposure.

Getting Started Continued...

9. Equipment kit: include an eye-catching banner, colourful table cloths, surveys or flyers about the event, a list for names and contact details, a volunteer list for future swaps, or food-related workshop, and a produce list to document what people can bring next month.

It may be interesting to create re-usable labels that indicate what the food is, who grew it and how far it travelled to the swap e.g (Joe's carrots. Clifton Hill. Transported by bike!) Baskets and buckets with water in them for herbs or plants people bring.

Have a 'FOOD GARDENING WISH' book for people to leave their name, phone and wish. Someone may wish to learn how to grow carrots, get help building a chicken coop or composting system, and others may have the skills to make their wish come true!

Record who brought what so that the person who grew it can answer questions about how to grow or cook it. This will create a month-by-month/season-by-season food calendar and a list of who knows how to grow what.

A set of scales allows people to weigh the food they bring and the food they take home.

Bring a thermoses and cups so people can chat over a cup of tea!

10. On the day: talk to passers-by, chat, eat good food and share ideas. One of the exciting by-products of food swaps is that they end up being an informal skills exchange.
11. As the project grows, think about developing a roster system for setting up, monitoring and packing down the stall. This will cultivate greater community involvement and ownership of the food swap.

Questionnaire

Your responses to the following questions are important in helping to shape Cultivating Community's Urban Harvest. All information will remain strictly confidential.

What fruit, vegetables, herbs or seeds do you have that you'd like to share or exchange?	About how much surplus would you get from these? (bunches, buckets, kilograms...)	Around what time of year do you get your surplus from each?

What skills would you like to learn more about?

- ☐ Growing food
- ☐ Looking after fruit trees
- ☐ Picking and harvesting
- ☐ Pruning
- ☐ Preserving
- ☐ Jam-making
- ☐ Wine-making
- ☐ Olive oil pressing
- ☐ Gardening advice
- ☐ Compost-making
- ☐ Preparing food with local ingredients
- ☐ Other

What skills do you have that you'd like to share?

- ☐ Growing food
- ☐ Looking after fruit trees
- ☐ Picking and harvesting
- ☐ Pruning
- ☐ Preserving
- ☐ Jam-making
- ☐ Wine-making
- ☐ Olive oil pressing
- ☐ Gardening advice
- ☐ Compost-making
- ☐ Preparing food with local ingredients
- ☐ Other

Do you need assistance in harvesting and/or transporting your surplus produce?

- ☐ Yes, I'd like help with harvesting.
- ☐ Yes, I'd like help with transporting.

Do you have any suggestions for the Urban Harvest?

Name:
Address:Postcode:
Phone: Mobile:
Email:

How would you prefer to be contacted?

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Mail

Please return completed questionnaire to:

Cultivating Community, PO Box 8, Abbotsfield, VIC, or in person at our office - 108 Elizabeth St, Richmond, 9429 3084.

More Information

Cultivating Community

www.cultivatingcommunity.org.au

Friends of the Earth - Adelaide

www.adelaide.foe.org.au

CERES Community Environment Park

www.ceres.org.au/urbanorchard

This guide has been adapted from Friends of the Earth Adelaide, with thanks to Joel Catchlove. www.adelaide.foe.org.au and, City of Charles Sturt, with thanks to Julietta Cerrin, Mark Hannan and Caro McArthur



Cultivating Community is a non-profit organisation established to develop, support and grow community based food projects.

**To find out more,
volunteer or donate:**

Ph: 9429 3084

Cultivating Community's Urban Harvest project is supported by Yarra City Council.

