



Food Bank Growers' Guide

Frequently Asked Questions on Growing Fresh Produce for Thurston County Food Bank

Thank you for your interest in growing for the Food Bank! The purpose of this guide is to orient you to our produce program and donation process. Our community members in need greatly appreciate every pound of produce you contribute. Below you will see a list of the most frequent questions we receive about growing for the Food Bank, and our answers.



Where is the Food Bank located?

Our address is 220 Thurston Ave. N.E., in downtown Olympia. We are two blocks north of the Transit Center.

During what hours do you accept donations?

We take donations Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

TCFB Produce Program
220 Thurston Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98501
Phone: (360) 352-8597 Ext. 105
produce@thurstoncountyfoodbank.org
gleaning@thurstoncountyfoodbank.org

What time of year does the Food Bank need produce the most?

We need produce year round. We receive the most produce in the months of July-October, and the least during the months of January-May. We greatly encourage those who have greenhouses to grow for us in the winter! We also encourage purchasing and donating bulk produce in the winter.

What are the best items to grow?

The Food Bank receives a sufficient supply of summer squash, green beans, and potatoes from the community. We encourage you to grow all other fruits and vegetables.

What are the top produce items you need?

- Beets
- Bell peppers
- Berries
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Cherries
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Garlic
- Hardy greens (kale, collards, etc)
- Onions (all kinds)
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Pears
- Peppers
- Plums
- Radishes
- Rutabagas
- Tomatoes

Please no overgrown summer or winter squash. We have difficulty storing and distributing these items.

I have produce in my garden that is ready to donate. What's next?

1. If possible, stop by the Food Bank before harvesting and pick up some black produce crates (they preserve produce well and allow us to stack it efficiently in our cooler.)
2. Contact us and let us know when you are planning on dropping off your produce. We will make sure a staff person or volunteer is available to assist you.
3. Bring donations to the big roll-up warehouse door on the Franklin Street side of the building. If you were not able to pick up black crates ahead of time, please ask for assistance transferring your produce into black crates. We also have special crisper bins that help greens stay fresh.
4. Weigh your produce by type on the scale next in our receiving area (near the doorway with the plastic curtains). If you have your own scale, feel free to weigh your produce ahead of time and bring the information with you.
5. Log your donation in the produce binder by the doorway with the plastic curtains.
6. If putting away your own produce in our walk-in cooler, please fill the crate until it is "just under" full. This will allow the next person to stack another crate on top of yours without crushing your donation!

I want to grow for the Food Bank, but I need (fill in the blank) to get started. What should I do?

Please let us know how we can best help you and your gardening efforts. Feel free to call or email us at anytime. We may be able to refer you to gardening resources available in the community. If you need help harvesting, contact our Gleaning Coordinator at gleaning@thurstoncountyfoodbank.org.

If I have more questions, who should I contact?

Call our produce manager at (360) 352-8597 ext. 105, or send an e-mail to produce@thurstoncountyfoodbank.org.