

We're excited you're thinking about starting a program  
to recover food and help your community.



# INSPIRE OTHERS

Sources of  
Produce



# Introduction

Food Forward collects fresh fruits and vegetables from places where they would otherwise go to waste. This produce is perfectly edible, but our food system generally isn't structured to support the collection and redistribution of food to those who need it most. With our three programs, we recover fresh produce from backyard fruit trees, orchards, farmers markets, wholesalers, and occasionally farms.

We do not recover produce from grocery stores or restaurants since this work presents many logistical challenges, and we prefer to focus on other sources.

Food Forward recovers hundreds of varieties of fruits and vegetables through our programs:

## Backyard Harvest

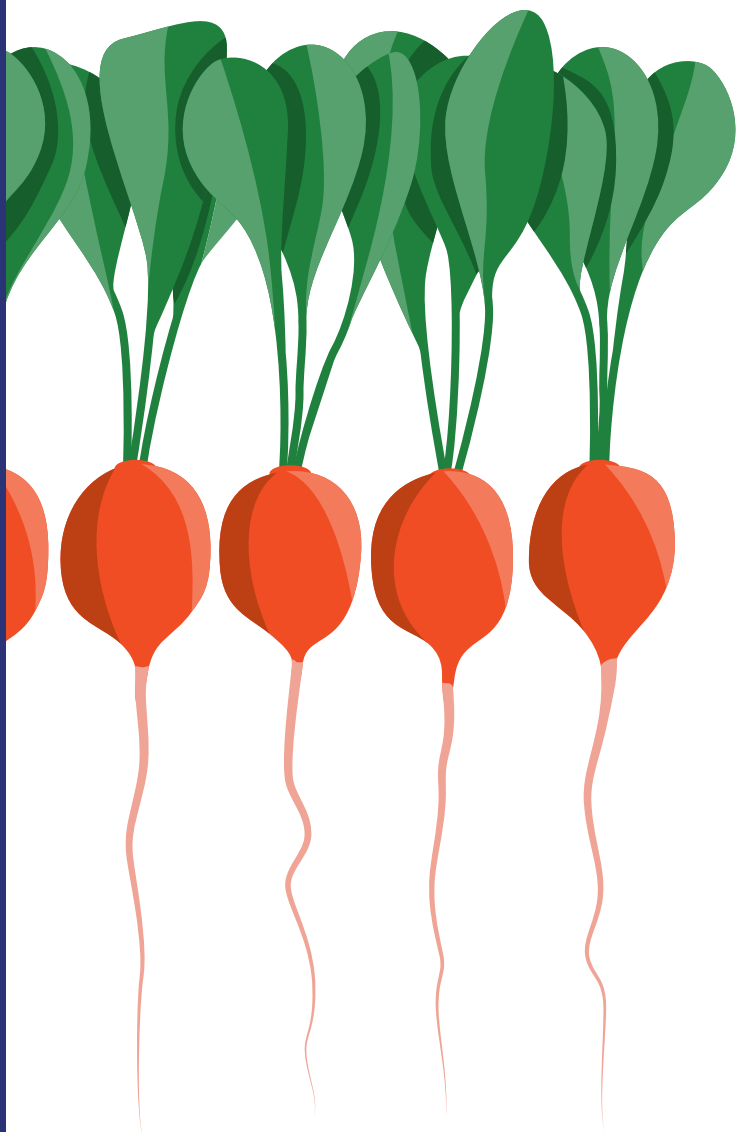
We primarily collect citrus, but we also recover persimmons, pomegranates, avocados, apples, garden vegetables, and more. We even collect a few pears, guavas, and kiwis! It's rare that our partner hunger relief agencies can't successfully distribute a type of produce, but we get creative when this happens. Kumquats, for example, are a small fruit we have a hard time placing with agencies. However, a local brewery, Smog City Brewing, takes surplus kumquats from the Backyard Harvest program and creates a delicious beer, the proceeds of which benefit our work.

## Farmers Market Recovery

We collect just about any fruit or vegetable you'd find at a farmers market, though certain items are donated more often. Farmers generally donate their less shelf-stable items — so, we get a lot more greens, tomatoes, citrus, zucchini/summer squash and stone fruit than heartier items such as onions, potatoes, and winter squash.

## Wholesale Recovery

We accept most fruit and vegetable varieties and aim to recover the highest quality donations that are available to us through our wholesale produce donors. Sometimes, we do turn down produce if its condition does not meet our quality standards.



## How we get people to donate

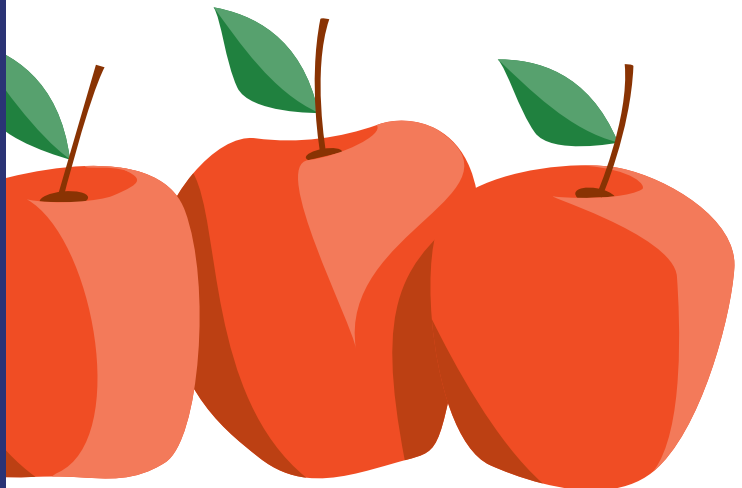
Each of our programs provides a service to our produce donors.

- **Backyard Harvest:** Fruit tree owners don't have to deal with excess fruit and yard waste.
- **Farmers Market Recovery:** Farmers don't have to take on waste costs or haul goods back to the farm.
- **Wholesale Recovery:** Wholesalers don't have to take on waste costs.

For all three programs, we also provide tax receipts based on weight to donors, which allows them to take a deduction and save money.

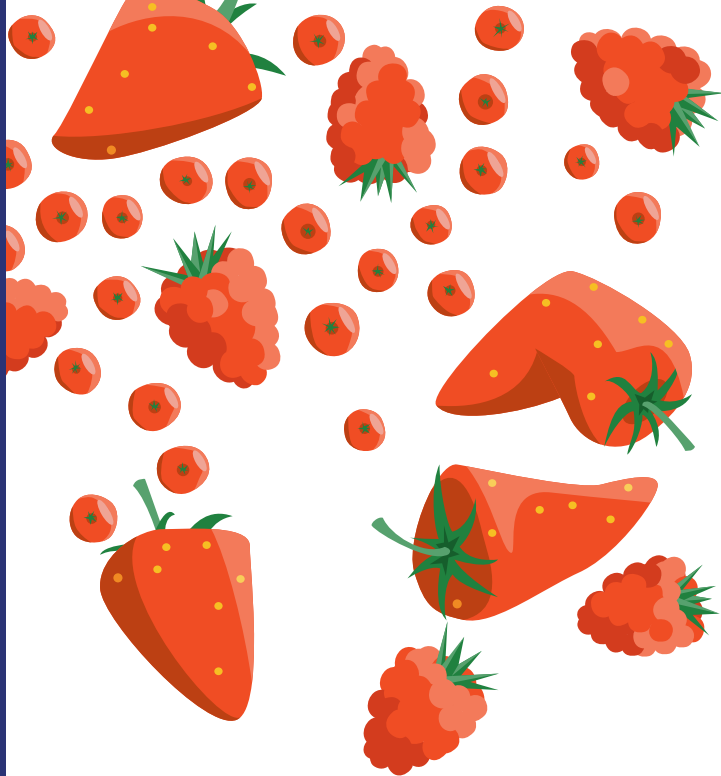
Donating produce also makes people feel great. Many fruit tree owners express that donating their fruit is a small, easy action that provides big benefits to the community. Farmers put so much love and work into growing their produce, and knowing that it's feeding someone experiencing food insecurity encourages them to donate.

**Now that you've learned a bit about our food sources, let's think about identifying sources of food for your community.**



## Questions to consider

- Where is food going to waste in your community? Are there fruit trees, farms, farmers markets, community gardens, restaurants, bakeries, or grocery stores where you notice food waste?  
Start by addressing one source of food waste, and master that first. Each type of food recovery has different needs in terms of equipment, people, recovery schedule, and relationships.
- Are there any organizations, schools, businesses, or individuals who are doing food recovery in your community? Many food banks, for example, have food recovery programs.  
If so, we recommend getting involved with their work first before starting your own initiative.
- Who will be giving you the food?  
What incentives can you offer them?
- What equipment will you need?  
See our Equipment section for ideas.
- How will you ensure the quality of the food you are recovering?  
What kind of standards will you follow?  
Recovering produce that ultimately ends up discarded creates a burden on recipients, and setting quality standards will ensure that you only recover food that is able to be eaten.  
For produce, it's helpful to learn what "ripe" looks, feels, smells, and tastes like for the fruit and vegetable varieties involved.
- How long will it take you to collect and distribute the food to individuals or hunger relief agencies? What are the distances and transportation needs involved? What are the food handling and storage requirements (permits, certificates, etc.)?



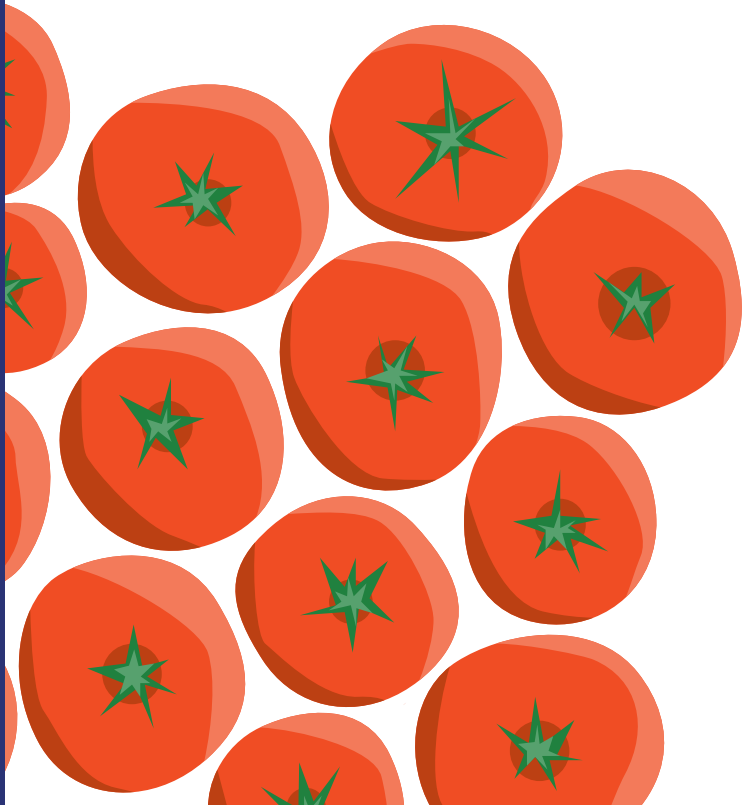
## Tips

- Learn about the legal doctrine surrounding food recovery (Good Samaritan Food Donation Act).
- Learn about food safety. You may want to get certified.
- For fruit harvesting, learn about local pests and diseases. It may be valuable to consult with an arborist or other landscaping professional. Some tree diseases spread when fruit is moved, which you want to avoid. For example, if you are harvesting citrus, check with your local agriculture authorities to find out if Citrus Greening Disease (also called Huanglongbing) is an issue in your area; if so, learn what precautions are necessary in order to prevent the further spread of this serious issue. Areas of California and Florida are particularly impacted, but others may be, too.

## Getting the word out

We rely on word-of-mouth, as well as formal relationships, to find and secure donations. Showing up consistently and reliably is important for fostering these relationships.

- With Backyard Harvest, people with produce often find out about us through neighbors, friends, social media, or NextDoor postings.
- At farmers markets, we establish relationships with the market managers and gain their permission to “glean” the market. We show up every week so the farmers get to know and trust us.
- At the Los Angeles Wholesale Market, we establish relationships with wholesalers who know to call us when they have surplus produce.



For more booklets visit  
[foodforward.org](http://foodforward.org)