

Hello Giving Gardeners & Helpers!

JUNE, 2019

Thanks for volunteering to help with the Giving Garden. We are asking volunteers to sign up for a week of taking care of the garden including watering, weeding, and harvesting vegetables. The weekly shifts are from Monday to the following Sunday.

The plants are too young to harvest in the early part of the summer so the weekly shift would include watering the 3 garden beds and weeding if necessary. The gardens are located on the south side of the church. Please bring all your own gardening tools. The church may be locked when you arrive. Feel free to call ahead if you think you may need access to the building (651-699-1378).

WATERING

If you are standing at the gardens and facing the church you will see a which connects to the water supply. If not connected, connect the hose to the faucet and tighten by turning to the left. Then turn on the water by turning the handle to the left. Pull the hose, which is attached to a water sprayer, out to the gardens. Begin the spray of water by pushing the button on the sprayer. **Please water the GROUND / SOIL, not the actual plants, as much as possible.**

Watering only the leaves (or watering from above) can promote moisture on the plants which can lead to rot and disease. As the plants grow you may need to gently put the sprayer between the plants so that you can wet the soil. You may consider watering each garden box once and then watering them again after the water has soaked into the soil.

Turn the water off by turning the faucet handle by the church to the right.

You may need to water every day or even twice a day (morning and evening) if it is very hot. If it rains during the week you may not have to water.

If it is not your week to water, please leave the gardens alone. It may be dry when you see them, but a volunteer may have plans to come in the evening, as many cannot be here in the morning. Trust the process! The gardens are in danger of being over-watered by people who mean well, but are taking someone else's volunteer slot when they interfere.



HARVESTING

- Bring your own pruning shears, scissors or sharp knife to harvest. Do not tear plants, as this can cause damage for further growth. Specific harvest instructions are listed on p. 3-4 of this document, and will be laminated by the garden sign to remind you.
- To preserve the quality of the food we're harvesting, we'd like to have our volunteers put the leafy greens (herbs, kale, etc.) in the refrigerator in the main kitchen. We have 3 stacked tubs sitting in the fridge that we can put our produce in (or next to if you fill all 3). The tubs are labeled "food shelf produce".

- You'll find the bins sitting on a shelf inside the right fridge. They are behind the door marked with the red X.



- Reminder: tomatoes don't like the refrigerator - so when we get to that part of the harvest season, please keep them out of the fridge. Place them in the bin marked for the food shelf (usually located by the microwave).
- If at all possible, **please try to harvest on Sunday morning** when the building is open so that the vegetables are ready for our volunteers who take the food to Francis Basket. We have volunteers available to drop off the produce on Monday, so this is really the best option. Call the custodian if you cannot get into the building. They may be here until 6PM on Sunday nights. 651-315-0673.
- If you find something that is in dire need of harvesting mid-week (and that won't stay fresh until Monday), please know that Frances Basket is only open for limited hours on Monday, Tuesday & Friday, and we don't have anyone planning to check for produce on days other than Monday. We may need you to drop the items off yourself, or we'll have to do some work to coordinate a pickup/drop-off to prevent spoilage.
- For harvesting at the beds, we have some plastic bags tied onto the red donation barrel inside the parking lot doors. Place each type of item in separate bags (cilantro in one bag, kale in one bag, chives in one bag, etc.) and label the bag. You may want to bring some bags of your own based on the supply at the barrel. The leafy vegetables fill up those bags quickly. There are also some paper bags next to/in the barrel; these might work better for the tomatoes when we're ready to harvest those.
- Please don't be shy about harvesting. If you think that veggie needs to be picked, pick it. The kale is abundant - pick the big leaves and make room for the new shoots to get some sun so we can pick those up & comers in the next few weeks.

WEEDING

Please dispose of weeds in the garbage on the north side of the church.

Once again, thank you for all your care and attention to the Giving Garden!



BEST PRACTICES FOR HARVESTING



- **ALL TYPES:** Please label each harvested bag, and do not combine different vegetables/ herbs in bags.
- **PARSLEY:** Cut at the base of each stem with 3 more segments. Leave the stems with two or less segments so they can mature longer. Remove outer stems to ensure oldest stems are harvested and younger stems can produce new growth.
- **CILANTRO:** Cut the stem about 1” from the bottom. Try to harvest when plant is short. If the leaves are large, they can be picked individually. *Cut off and toss leggy stems with flowers. This means the plant has “bolted.” It has grown fast and produces flowers for survival. We try to prevent this.*
- **CHIVES:** Cut with sharp utensil about 1” to 2” from ground.
- **KALE:** Do not cut the center (taller) stem as that will kill the plant. Cut leaves off near the base stem with a sharp tool. Harvest outer leaves first. Kale can be eaten cooked or raw.
- **ONIONS:** Harvest when neck bends over and is soft. If there is a stiff neck, wait longer.
- **CARROTS:** Harvest when shoulders are ½” to ¾” in diameter.
- **COLLARDS:** These are most tasty and tender when young: up to 10” long. Harvest from the bottom of the plant up. It will look like a tree (like kale). Be careful not to damage the stem. Leave at least 4 leaves at the

top to allow new growth. Collards are generally cooked as greens and one pound is a good amount for a recipe. So if there's not a lot to pick, leave it for next time.

- **PEPPERS:** Recommended: Wear gloves! Use a hand pruner, scissors, or sharp knife to cut the pepper off the stem. Do not tug the pepper off, as tugging may harm the stem and break the vine. Leave about ½” of stem on the pepper. Wash your hands after harvesting as residue may burn. Do not touch your eyes/mouth/nose. Harvest into UNSEALED bags (moisture enclosed with a pepper will cause harm).
 - Jalapeño Pepper: Deep green hot pods. Matures to bright red 3” fruit. Usually harvested green.
 - Thai Chili Pepper: Can be harvested green or red. Red is hotter. Harvest at about 1” in length.
 - Numex Suave Orange Pepper: Slow to mature but high yield potential. 2 ¼ “ approximately, plump, wrinkled, bright yellow-orange.
 - Poblano: Size is important. Pick when a bit smaller than your hand. Slightly wrinkled. It is a deep, dark green color when ready to use. It will be red if you plan to dry it.
 - Ghost pepper: Red indicates ready to harvest. 1 ½ to 2 ½” long. Takes 100-120 days to harvest (late September).
 - Lady Bell: This is a regular green or red pepper. Pick when they reach a desired size. The longer they are on the plant, the sweeter they become.
 - Hungarian Wax Pepper: 6” to 8” long. Yellow.
- **TOMATOES:** Okay to pick when they have turned color, but not completely red. A fully ripe tomato may promote splitting and pests, so harvest before they are fully ripe. They will ripen more off the vine. Roma tomatoes are smaller and red from the bottom to top is an ideal time to eat them. Can be picked when they are orange/red. Many of our gardeners save plastic containers such as those containing strawberries that you buy at the store to put the tomatoes in when harvesting.

** Thank you! **