



Harvest Checker

The main responsibility of the Harvest Checker is to reduce produce waste. This includes performing twice-per-month harvest checks in garden plots; notifying the WCG Garden Manager about waste; and overseeing the alternate distribution routes for gardeners unable to use all their vegetables. If you are ever unable to complete these responsibilities, please contact your WCG Garden Manager.

As per garden policy, gardeners are expected to harvest their ripe produce regularly. However, it is often the case that gardeners are overwhelmed with produce during the harvest season, with one-third of plots showing produce waste. This is a tremendous loss of fresh vegetables, and it can encourage passersby to assume that the plots are abandoned and that they may harvest without permission. In this way, one plot's food waste becomes a liability for the entire garden.

Twice Per Month Harvest Checks

From July through October, please perform harvest checks during the week of the 1st and the 15th of each month. Carry the plot map and record any produce waste you see. Specifically, look for overripe dropping, or rotten fruits from tomatoes, cucumbers, etc; overgrown summer squash like zucchini; greens that are bolting (going to seed) without any harvesting; Snap peas and snap beans that are drying on the vine, etc. To help gardeners identify when they are in need of harvesting, please mark their plot with a yellow flag from the shed.

Obviously, these determinations will be subjective, so it's good to know the stages for harvesting different vegetables. Some gardeners also may intentionally allow produce to go beyond its edible stage in order to harvest seeds. Don't worry - the WCG Garden Manager will clarify this with gardeners when issuing harvest reminders. Always err on the side of waste prevention, as the overall purpose is simply to remind gardeners of the expectation to regularly harvest, and encourage them to share. If you interact with gardeners during the course of your duties, please approach them in a positive and helpful way. It is not your role to enforce plot harvests.

Shortly after each harvest check, forward the plot numbers and a brief description of the produce waste to the WCG Garden Manager. They will provide the gardeners with a harvest notice. If you DO NOT have any violations to report, please contact the WCG Garden Manager and let them know that is the case. If they don't hear from you, they will assume you were unable to complete the check and find someone else as a substitute.

Overseeing Alternate Distribution Routes

Each garden has a "free basket" that hangs on the outside of the garden fence in which gardeners can leave surplus produce for anyone. Alternatively, community gardeners can send a message to the garden email group identifying produce in their plot that they would like to share with others. This email gives other gardens permission to harvest the specified produce.

These two produce distribution methods require very little effort on your part. However, please clean the free basket regularly of any spoiled produce, and also line the bottom with straw or newspaper to keep the heat off of the free veggies. Any additional distribution options you want to try will require the approval from your WCG Garden Manager first. For example, some Harvest Checkers request to retrieve the free basket at a regular time of month (Sunday nights at 7pm, for instance), store it in a cool place, and then distribute the contents to a food bank. Other possible options include taking it to senior centers, selling it to raise garden funds, or just going door to door in your neighborhood.

