



## Create a Successful Giving Garden in YOUR P-Patch

### WHAT to grow & HOW to get it to the people who need it

- ✓ **Plant fewer crops.** For example, in a 100 sq ft. garden, plant 2 crops at a time. It is easier to harvest and the food banks and meals programs will appreciate this more.
- ✓ **Batch harvest.** Plant crops that can be harvested all at one time if you aren't in the garden every day. For example, green onions versus peas or green beans.
- ✓ **Successive plantings.** Many crops can be grown several times a year—for example, lettuce, green onions, spinach, radishes, carrots and cilantro, just to name a few.
- ✓ **Connect with the program you are growing for,** whether it is a meals program or a food bank. Know your demographics, and the food will be better received. Know your food bank coordinator, and you will have a great ally.
- ✓ **Bring the food in before the food banks open** to give volunteers and staff enough time to process your donations. Reference the schedule in this packet to find out the best time for your specific food bank.
- ✓ **Food banks love herbs.** Package them well. Small amounts of herbs tied together with string are a good way to distribute. Please label herbs; lots of folks have never seen them fresh!
- ✓ **Label any produce that is not “basic,”** such as kale, chard, fancy greens, and odd-colored squash. See our website (under “More Information”) for multilingual downloadable signs.

[www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Nutrition/Lettuce](http://www.solid-ground.org/Programs/Nutrition/Lettuce)

- ✓ **Keep track of donations throughout the season** and advertise them to your gardeners. There is nothing better than seeing the huge impact that you have when you donate.
- ✓ **No scale at your garden?** Lettuce Link can get one for you.



## WHO? Tips for success & getting others involved

- ✓ **Identify a team of at least two people** who are willing to coordinate. If you have a designated plot, one person can do the planting and harvesting and the other can do the delivery.
- ✓ **If you don't have a designated plot**, one person can get the word out to the gardeners, help them glean and then the other can make the deliveries.
- ✓ **Ask for help.** Many folks assume that there is no one else in the garden who wants to help. Meanwhile, there are gardeners who want to help, but who don't feel included. Create a mini job description (or ask Lettuce Link, we have several from gardens that use them) and distribute it to your gardeners.
- ✓ **Right job, right volunteer.** Maybe the food bank garden coordinator is not the best person to be doing outreach to others in the garden, and vice versa.
- ✓ **Find the gardeners that are really good at growing veggies or fruit.** And ask them to share their expertise with others and to donate some of their high quality produce.
- ✓ **Host glean-out days.** Think of them like mini Days of Giving. Ask everyone in the garden to participate. Create a system so that gardeners know ahead of time to harvest certain crops on a specific day by a specific time—then you can deliver it to a local food bank or meals program.

## Gardens with a dedicated Giving Garden or Food Bank Plot

- ✓ **Put signage in the plot** to inspire others to grow and give a little extra.
- ✓ **Include the Giving Garden/Food Bank Plot in EVERY work party** that you have at your garden. Connect with your work party leaders, and make sure they know how important it is to have people helping you.
- ✓ **Tell your gardeners where the produce is going.** People are more likely to donate if they know where and to whom it is going.



## Gardens without a dedicated plot &/or the gift of gleaning

- ✓ **Market it!** Post clear and easy to read signage, asking others in the garden to donate. Lettuce Link can help create and laminate signage for your garden. Talk donations up at all events, work parties, potlucks, etc.
- ✓ **Pick a consistent time and day for donations.** This may be once a week, twice a month, or three times a season.
- ✓ **Schedule a few “Days of Giving” throughout the summer.** Advertise to your gardeners a week or so ahead of time so that they can plan to donate. It is helpful to use a 5-gallon bucket with a big sign saying DONATIONS.
- ✓ **Connect with another garden that has regular pick ups** and deliver your produce to them. Interbay, Picardo, University, Ballard, Magnuson and others have regularly scheduled pick-ups during the summer and fall months.
- ✓ **Plant a Row for the Hungry.** Individual gardeners all agree to plant a crop, like green onions, garlic, lettuce, etc., and MARK the crop with a row marker. Encourage gardeners to plant the crop within two weeks of each other. When the crop is ready, send an email out, or put up a sign, and have a harvesting party with volunteers.
- ✓ **Find a cool spot for gardeners to donate produce from your garden.** Some gardens use coolers, others have a shady storage area.
- ✓ **Tell your gardeners where the produce is going.** People are more likely to donate if they know where and to whom it is going.
- ✓ **Use stakes as a gentle reminder to folks not to waste produce,** following Ballard’s example. They have three types of stakes.
  - **Stake #1** has a **?** on it. This means, “Would you like us to harvest this, it sure looks like you might?” [This stake is placed in a garden by you or other giving garden volunteers.]
  - **Stake # 2** has a **YES** on it. This means, “Why yes, please harvest my produce.” [Gardener removes stake #1 and replaces with this one.]
  - **Stake # 3** has a **NO** on it. This means, “Thank you very much, I will harvest my own produce.” [Gardener removes stake #1 and replaces with this one.]
  - **Or a simpler version:** If you know you have produce to donate but are too busy to harvest, place a designated stake asking for help.

*Note:* Stake systems will only work if you are set up to send a volunteer or two out to do the harvesting.



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## Food Bank Growing Calendar – Seattle

Plant seeds during the following months:

| February                      | March                        | April             | May              | June               |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Arugula                       | Arugula                      | Arugula           | Beets            | Basil              |
| Beets                         | Beets                        | Beets             | Broccoli         | Beets              |
| Chard                         | Cabbage (Nerva)              | Broccoli          | Brussels sprouts | Brussels sprouts   |
| Chinese Cabbage (Michihili)   | Carrots                      | Cabbage           | (Buckwheat)      | (Buckwheat)        |
| (Fava Beans)                  | (Calendula)                  | (Calendula)       | Cabbage          | Cabbage            |
| Garlic, cloves                | Chard                        | Carrots           | (Calendula)      | (Calendula)        |
| Joi Choi                      | (Fava Beans)                 | Chard             | Carrots          | Carrots            |
| Lettuce                       | Joi Choi                     | Cilantro          | Chard            | Chard              |
| Mustard                       | Kale                         | Dill              | Cilantro         | Cilantro           |
| Nerva                         | Lettuce                      | Green onions      | Cucumbers        | Collards           |
| Onions, bulb                  | Mustard                      | Leeks             | Dill             | Cucumbers          |
| Peas (Snap, Snow)             | Onion Sets                   | Lettuce           | Kale             | Dill               |
| Radish                        | Peas (Snap, Snow)            | Peas (Snap, Snow) | Potatoes         | Kale               |
| Spinach                       | Radish                       | Potatoes          | Tomatoes         | Lettuce            |
| Tah Tsai salad/mustard greens | Spinach                      | Radish            | Pumpkins         | Summer Squash      |
| Turnips                       | Tah Tsai salad/mustard green | Spinach           | Summer Squash    | Turnips            |
|                               | Turnips                      | Turnips           | Winter Squash    | Walla Walla Onions |

| July                      | August                     | September                    | October    | November   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Beets                     | Arugula                    | Arugula                      | Arugula    | Fava Beans |
| Carrots                   | Beets                      | Beets                        | Fava Beans | Garlic     |
| Chard                     | Chard                      | Chard                        | Garlic     |            |
| Chinese Cabbage           | (Corn Salad)               | Joi Choi                     | Lettuce    |            |
| Collards                  | Chinese Cabbage            | Lettuce                      | Mustard    |            |
| Green Onions              | Lettuce                    | Carrot (Merida)              |            |            |
| Kale                      | Radish (Misato Rose Flesh) | Radish (Misato Rose Flesh)   |            |            |
| Radish (Daikon, European) | Spinach                    | Mustard                      |            |            |
| Turnip                    | Walla Walla Onions         | Tah Tsai salad/mustard green |            |            |



## Donation Tips

### A. What to Grow & When

- When growing for a food bank, it is preferable to grow a high volume of a single crop, harvest it, then plant another crop. Below are a few suggestions for planting full beds in succession throughout the growing season (harvest times are estimates).
  - Plant radishes in February, harvest in April; then plant beets, harvest in June; then plant carrots, harvest in September; then plant lettuce, harvest in October; then plant garlic, harvest in spring.
    - OR
  - Plant chard in February, harvest in April; then plant turnips, harvest in June; then plant squash, harvest in September; then plant lettuce, harvest in October; then plant cover crop.
    - OR
  - Plant green onions in March, harvest in June; then plant cucumbers, harvest in September; then plant spinach, harvest in October; then plant winter wheat as a cover crop.
    - OR
  - Plant bok choy in March, harvest in May; then plant cucumbers, harvest in September; then plant broccoli, harvest in spring.
- June is an in-between month when it comes to summer harvests. Cool weather crops may have started to bolt and it will be weeks before the warm weather vegetables are ready to collect. To keep yields high, lean on some trustworthy producers: beets, chard and turnips planted in April, along with kale, will be ready to clip and transport to the food bank in the waning days of June and early July.
- Plant quick growing and large-yielding vegetables:

| Harvest           | # of Days | Harvest              | # of Days |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Arugula           | 40-55     | Lettuce              | 40-60     |
| Beet Greens/Bulbs | 55/75     | Mustard              | 30-65     |
| Chard             | 55+       | Spinach              | 30-55     |
| Chinese Choy      | 45-60     | Radish (Small Salad) | 35-45     |
| Collards          | 55+       | Tah Tsai             | 40-55     |
| Joi Choi          | 55        | Turnip Greens/Bulbs  | 30/65     |
| Kale              | 50+       |                      |           |

## B. Preparing Produce for Donation

- Wash produce and place in boxes or bins. Some locations prefer to receive produce in individual bags (refer to the handout “Growing Produce for Others” to see what your site prefers)
- If using bags, sprinkle some water in with greens and carrots to keep them fresh, especially during the hot months.
- Deliver collections to food banks within 24 hours of being harvested. Consult the food bank donations sheet in this packet to identify your local organizations and the best times to drop off donations.

## Soil Tips

Intensive urban gardening can take a toll on a garden’s soil. Here are a few tips to help maintain good soil by incorporating more organic material. Remember: **Good Soil = Abundant Harvests.**

### A. Harvest Smart

When removing plants that have completed their life cycle, cut them off at the base of the soil to leave the roots intact in the ground. This leaves the roots behind to decompose—adding an easy source of green manure. Plant new crop seeds in the layer of soil over the old roots and sprinkle them with a light layer of compost.

### B. Interbay Mulch Method

This technique adds organic matter to the soil during the winter months and also prevents the leeching of nutrients and the erosion of soil (caused by heavy rains that occurs when soil is left bare or without a cover crop).

#### **Materials:**

- Green plant material (cover crop that has been clipped at the roots, non-weedy greens such as broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower bottoms and squash vines)  
*Note:* No tomato vines
- Leaves (not horse chestnut or walnut)—or use shredded (non-shiny) newspaper as a leaves replacement. Fluff it with a pitchfork before mixing it with the greens and coffee grounds. Use a 40% newspaper to 60% green ratio.
- Coffee grounds (collect from a local coffee shop)
- Burlap bags or 100% cotton material (such as old T-shirts or sheets)

**Directions:**

- 1) Chop up and bruise green plant material to create a green pile that will provide about 50% of the material needed for the mulch.
- 2) Gather enough fall leaves to match the green material collected (the green to brown ((leaves)) ratio should be 50%-50%). Toss the brown and green piles together with a pitchfork.
- 3) Layer this mixture on vacant areas in the garden and water lightly.
- 4) Spread coffee grounds over your green/brown mixture.
- 5) Cover everything with your chosen cloth.
- 6) The Interbay Mulch mixture will decompose during the winter and will be ready to be planted in when spring arrives.

**C. Grow Cover Crops**

Cover crops boost organic matter, compliment crop rotation, and shade out weeds. The following options are easy to grow:

**1) Buckwheat** is a spring-sown cover crop that grows rapidly and overwhelms weeds. Buckwheat flowers attract pollinating insects to garden plots.

**Directions:**

- Scatter seeds across the soil and water well until established.
- Harvest buckwheat after 30-40 days. Use a shovel to turn the crop under the soil and water well to start the decomposition process.
- Or harvest each plant at the soil line and toss the green material into a trench. Bruise and chop the greens with the nose of the shovel, water well, and cover with soil. Wait two weeks and plant a new crop next to or directly on top of the trench or turned-in green material.

**2) Calendula** is an early flower to appear and one of the last to succumb to frost. The beautiful bright flower petals are edible and invite pollinators.

**Directions:**

- Scatter seeds.
- Harvest after about 10-13 weeks. Cut seed heads off before incorporating the green manure into the soil.
- Use a shovel to turn the crop under the soil or trench.
- Water and wait two weeks before seeding a new crop.

**3) Corn salad** can be planted in mid-August for a winter cover crop. By the time spring rolls around, the plants can be plucked out for salad donations and another crop planted in its place.

**4) Fava beans** grow very well in Seattle and provide bountiful quantities of green manure as well as a large seed crop for food bank donations. They reduce soil erosion and stifle weeds. When planted in the fall, a gardener should expect a tasty food bank harvest in June and July. To cultivate fava beans as a Green Manure:

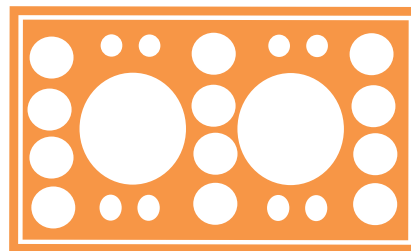
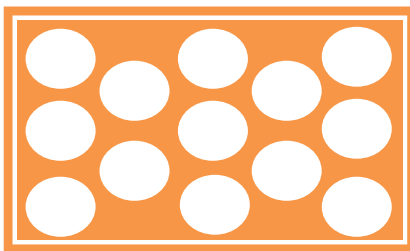
- Cut the plants off at the base of the soil and leave the root system intact.
- Dig a trench in the garden and lay the plants inside (cutting stems into smaller pieces).
- Water the trenched plants and then cover with soil.
- Plant the next crop on top of, or next to, the trench two weeks later.

**5) Mustard greens** planted in late August and early September can overwinter and the surviving plants can be turned in or trenched in the spring.

## Big Yields, Small Spaces

### A. Plant in grids & patterns

- Move away from traditional row planting to fit more plants into a smaller space.
- Vegetables planted like the images below can shade out weeds and conserve water on hot days.



### B. Grow plants “up”

- Trellises can be made from metal ironing boards, piping, bamboo, skis and other found objects. Just make sure they are sturdy and tied well to support plants.

### **C. Timing is everything**

- Wait until mid-February to start planting the vegetables intended for a cloche (small greenhouses made of PVC piping and plastic that extend the growing season). By then, the soil temperature may be higher, allowing for better seed germination.
- In April the soil is warm enough to plant most seeds directly outdoors.
- Choose a warm day in May to plant or transplant the seeds for fall and winter crops. Keeping the seeds/seedlings moist and a little shaded is important so they don't produce flowers instead of fruits after being transplanted.

### **D. Grow in a cloche!**

- If using cloches, vent them during warm days (so heat doesn't damage plants) and open them in rainstorms/irrigate them (to prevent the soil from drying out).
- Remove cloche when the weather warms and acclimate plants by gradually exposing them to nighttime temperatures over 1-2 weeks.

## **Garden Invaders**

### **A. Hiding from humans**

- Let one or two plants in a garden flower and go to seed. A few overgrown plants near the path can stop wandering hands from detecting your produce.

### **B. Avoid aphids**

- Control populations in early spring by rubbing them out, blasting them with water from a hose, or spraying a soap solution on the nymphs and their tiny black eggs.
- Sometimes the eggs and nymphs will be hiding in the crevices, the folds, and the leaf undersides of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflower and other crops in the Mustard Family.
- Soap Recipe: Fill a 24 oz spray bottle with water and add 1 teaspoon of biodegradable kitchen soap and 1 drop of lavender oil. Similarly, try 1 teaspoon of biodegradable kitchen soap and 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil that has had a garlic clove sautéed in it.

### **C. Be on snail & slug alert!**

Slugs and snails flourish under warm cloches and in beds of green leafy vegetables. Limit their damage with three common organic methods of catching them:



- Hand pick slugs and snails.
- Make a slug trap by burying a plastic tub in the ground, leaving the top lip 1/4 inch above the soil line. Fill with 1-1/2 inches of cheap beer or yeast mixed with water and don't remove the dead slugs, as they attract others. Change beer or yeast mixture weekly.
- Lay down small boards or flip terracotta pots upside down on top of soil to furnish shelters for snails. Then, pick out the resting slugs and snails.

#### D. Stop Critters: "Hey, why are the onion bulbs pulled out of the soil?"

- A crow, rat or other unseen force romps through the garden and pulls up the onion bulbs. Laying a floating row cover or a sheet of chicken wire elevated on rocks over the onion bulbs will keep them intact until their roots become established.

### Seed Saving Tips

- Dry seeds on sheets of newspaper.
- Or, clip stems of plants to the sides of brown bags so that the seed heads dangle inside. Collect seeds after the pods dry.
- After planting, make sure the seedlings look like the mother plant and the leaves appear to be healthy and disease free.
- Easy vegetable seeds to save: arugula, beans, beets, chard, kale, lettuce, mustard greens.

### Get to Know Your Greens!

Greens are high in nutrition, tasty, and grow well in Seattle. Here is a list of some great producers:

- ✓ Arugula ✓ Collards ✓ Gai Choy ✓ Japanese Red Giant ✓ Michilili Chinese Cabbage
- ✓ Mustard ✓ Nero di Toscana Kale ✓ Nerva Chinese Cabbage ✓ Osaka Purple Mustard
- ✓ Southern Giant Curled ✓ Swiss Chard ✓ Tah Tsai ✓ Tendergreen Mustard

*Thank you to Terri Bullert, Bradner P-Patch Gardener, for sharing your gardening knowledge and compiling the resources for this guide!!*

