



Fact Sheet

Village Harvest is a nonprofit volunteer organization in the greater San Francisco Bay Area that harvests extra fruit from backyards and small orchards, then passes it along to local food agencies to feed the hungry in the community. Since our founding in 2001 we've become one of the oldest and largest organizations of this type; in 2009 over 900 individual volunteers harvested 173,000 lbs of nutritious fruit.

In addition to our nationally recognized Harvesting for the Hungry program, we provide information and education on fruit tree care, harvesting, and using fruit through our web site www.villageharvest.org and toll free telephone (888) FRUIT 411.

Context

- Even in our prosperous area, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties provides food assistance to an average of 236,000 people every month, most of which are families with children and seniors. (December 2009 information).
- There are many millions of pounds of fresh fruit going unused and to waste just in Santa Clara County backyards, and millions more throughout the greater SF Bay Area.
- A backyard fruit tree usually produces far more fruit than a household can use themselves, and there is enough going to waste from local backyards and farms to provide for our local community's hungry.

Mission and Programs

Our mission is to bring together neighbors and community organizations to provide food for the hungry, preserve our agricultural heritage and skills, and promote sustainable use of urban resources. We do this through the following programs:

- **Harvesting for the Hungry.** VH organizes and coordinates volunteer harvesting teams to pick fruit from local backyards and small orchards, distributed to community charitable food organizations.
- **Homeowner Education.** VH provides information and referrals at no charge on fruit tree care, harvesting, and where to take their excess fruit to benefit the community.
- **Preserving.** Volunteers provide education and information training sessions, tastings, and recipes on using home-grown fruit to create jams and other preserved foods.
- **Orchard Preservation.** We assist public and private orchard owners in restoring the health and sustainable use of their orchards, with excess fruit provided to the hungry.

Results

- Harvested 173,000 lbs of fresh fruit in 2009, from about 500 homes and small orchards. Harvest weight up 42% from 2008, number of properties up 50%.
- As of 5/1/2010, have harvested 80,569 lbs of fresh fruit in 2010, up 47% compared to 2009.
- Delivered 2.5 million servings of fruit for the hungry since our inception in 2001.
- Harvested fruit is donated to 15 food agencies in the South Bay, plus other agencies in Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, and Yolo Counties.

Organization:

- Village Harvest is a nonprofit IRS 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded in 2001 by volunteer and Executive Director Joni Diserens.
- Volunteer run with up to 900 volunteers participating every year and over 2000 registered volunteers. Our volunteers range from school children to seniors, from athletes to developmentally disabled. We have hosted groups from high tech companies, church groups of all faiths, community service organizations, schools, and gardening groups.
- Headquartered in San Jose and the South Bay, but with volunteer teams throughout much of the greater San Francisco Bay Area including Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Yolo Counties.
- To support our growth, we applied Silicon Valley technology and business skills to create the software and “virtual organization” that enable us to manage the thousands of homes and volunteers that participate.
- Funded by private contributions, foundations, and the sale of volunteer-made preserves.

For the Community:

- Web site www.villageharvest.org offers information on fruit tree care, harvesting, using fruit, and recipes.
- Tree owners who want to offer their extra fruit can visit our web site and sign up from the home page. Those without convenient Internet access can call toll-free number (888) FRUIT 411 (888-378-4841). A tree owner can keep what they need, and the rest will be donated to local agencies to feed those in need.
- Volunteers can also find events and sign up through the web site.

Additional Facts:

- Our record breaking tree is in the Cambrian area of San Jose; we typically harvest over 1,800 lbs from this single grapefruit tree every year. The average tree we harvest yields about 250 lbs. of fruit a year.
- In parts of Santa Clara County, the soil is so deep and fertile that it's not unusual for us to be harvesting nearly 1000 lbs of fruit on a regular basis from these trees. The old time farmers knew what they were doing when they choose Santa Clara Valley.
- Harvesting for the Hungry was piloted as a concept in Palo Alto with 5,000 lbs harvested in 2001.
- During the current Light Brown Apple Moth Quarantine, Village Harvest operates under special Compliance Agreements with 5 counties that enable us to continue backyard harvesting in quarantine areas.

For Further Information:

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