



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Sharing Garden Bounty

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Take a small plot of dirt, even only a square foot, throw in some lettuce seed, wait for some sunshine, and two to three weeks later - you have fresh, crisp greens for a salad. Love to stir fry? Plant some beets, Swiss chard, collard greens, or bok choy. Beet greens in particular are full of vitamins, colorful and add a little twist to the meal. Later, nice red beets are great for eating or canning. All these can still be planted right now. Working in the garden is a great way to enjoy fresh air, get some exercise and relax.

Vegetable gardeners know that one zucchini plant is not enough but two may be more than you need! Even with the mild weather this spring, many plants are now shooting up and producing in abundance. If you find your garden is producing more than your family and friends are able to use, there are a number of ways to share the bounty.

The Food Bank accepts donations of fresh fruit and vegetables that store well in a refrigerator, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm. They are located at 220 Thurston Avenue NE in downtown Olympia. You can also volunteer to grow produce for the Food Bank through the Kiwanis or through Garden Raised Urban Bounty (GRuB). For more details, as well as how to pick up produce if you are in need, see www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org/produce.htm or call at 360-352-8597.

Another option for giving away or selling your garden surplus is to list it on local exchange websites such as:

- www.2good2toss.com
- www.craigslist.org

Both sites are free to use and have a farm and garden category.

The Food Bank's need for fresh produce is greater from the months of January through May. Now is the time to be planning and planting a fall/winter vegetable garden. The Thurston County Food Bank encourages gardeners to consider growing more produce in the winter-time or even planting a row of winter vegetables for the food bank.

An upcoming workshop on fall and winter gardening given by GRuB will go over the basics of winter gardening including what varieties do well in our climate. The workshop repeats three times in different locations: in Rochester at ROOF on Wednesday, July 28 from 5:30-6:30 pm; in Olympia at Thurston County Courthouse on Saturday, July 31 from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm; and in Shelton at PUD No 3 on Saturday, July 31 from 3:00-4:30 pm. Register on-line at www.sustainsouthsound.org or by calling 360-357-2380.

If you are not a gardener but want to get in on the action consider joining the Thurston County Food Bank Gleaners. They visit cooperating local farms and gardens to harvest produce that might otherwise go to waste. It makes for a fun and invigorating exercise opportunity. Transportation is even provided!

To learn more, visit www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org or leave a message with the gleaning coordinator at 360-352-8597 x108. If getting your fingers dirty isn't your idea of fun, share the information about gleaning to friends that have unpicked fruit trees or who keep trying to give you more zucchinis!

Those fruits and vegetables are good food full of important nutrients. Let's not allow them go to waste!

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