



Harvest Group

Team Leader Information



Thank you for volunteering to take on a team leader role with the Harvest Group. This helps allow the program to expand and take on the care of more fruit trees in our community.

As a Harvest Group team leader, you are committing to supervise three harvests and three pruning sessions over the next 12 months. In return, you will have access to training in Level 2 First Aid, Volunteer

Induction, a How to Teach Pruning Basics workshop and other Growing Abundance Workshops, all at no cost to you. We will also require you to complete a Police check, which The Growing Abundance Project (TGAP) will organise and pay for.

Below is an outline of your role and the information you will need to pass on to harvest/pruning session participants. We hope you find it a useful checklist to guide you.

Before the harvest/prune:

- Communicate with Harvest Co-ordinator what your availability is for leading harvests/prunes and if this changes during the season so harvests can be timetabled.
- Harvest co-ordinator will then timetable your harvest dates for the season and let you know (hopefully) a week before, where you will be harvesting/pruning for your session- Sometimes this may change as birds, wind etc can quickly change our plans.
- Or/ if you know of a fruit tree in your area which will be good to harvest, you can contact the fruit tree owner (FTO) to work out if they are willing to be a part of the program, register their property and organise a time and day for the harvest/prune.
- Harvest coordinator then sends a group email to Growing Abundance network (each Monday) to advertise time and date of harvest/prune, including information for volunteers on what to bring and where to meet.

On the harvest/pruning day:

- Collect Harvest Kit (includes first aid kit, registration forms, etc), Chook buckets (labelled) & picking crates from designated location.
- Meet in the IGA car park at the advertised time and allow 10-15mins extra to fill in forms, register new volunteers and coordinate carpooling to site. Carpooling is an important aspect of the program, as Growing Abundance is encouraging the reduction of our community carbon emissions. Suggest use of public toilets before you depart.
- Complete Attendance Record form and Volunteer Registration form(for new volunteers) while waiting for people to arrive

- This is also a good time to give a bit of a brief history of site's involvement with Harvest Group (eg 'this is our third year harvesting here'), answer questions about Growing Abundance, suss out what kind of experience people have and introduce volunteers to each other.
- Explain clearly (draw maps if necessary) where harvest site is, where to park at the site and how the convoy will happen.

At the harvest/pruning site:

By the time you arrive, people are usually raring to get stuck into the but it is really important to take a moment to gather everyone together and have a quick chat before you start and give an introduction to all present including:

- Welcome to site
- Introduce volunteers to FTO (if present and willing)
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) considerations:
 - Use of ladders- not covered by our insurance
 - Long grass/snakes
 - A defined boundary for group to remain within
 - Toilet location
 - Clean hands for handling fruit- sanitiser in the harvest kit
 - Be aware of other people harvesting/pruning
 - Safe use of tools
 - Don't lift heavy things/proper lifting/don't overfill boxes- need to stack without squashing fruit.
 - Swap jobs regularly to avoid injury
 - Drink water
 - Location of first aid kit and identification of designated first aid person
- Introduction on what and how to harvest/prune – *see below*
- Outline and delegate different jobs- picking up windfall for chooks, sorting fruit into different grades, picking, collecting full boxes and taking to the cars etc
- Partner new harvesters up with old hands as required
- Check in with owner about whether they want tree cleared or some fruit left on tree. Leave fruit at height easy for owner to pick later or pick a box for them.
- Only pick ripe fruit or fruit that will continue to ripen off the tree- sometimes we will do multiple harvests at the same site as not all fruit is ripe at the same time.
- Check with owner if they have chooks to give rotten fruit to (if not we has a list of local free range chook farmers who will take it) and/or where they would like their pruning's piled.
- If someone is collecting windfall, make sure they clean their hands before harvesting fruit for eating
- Fruit to be sorted into '1st grade' (eating) and '2nd grade' (bottling/stewing) and 'chooks'
- Remind harvesters that we will be pruning these trees in winter/harvesting in summer (to encourage people to be involved in both)
- Thank volunteers for coming and make sure they have fruit to take home if wanted
- Let volunteers know where the fruit they have picked will be distributed (local Primary and Secondary schools and emergency food relief)
- Give fruit and/or thankyou note to FTO
- Complete *Harvest Record form* or *Harvest Maintenance form* and return to Harvest Coordinator

Note that your role as a HTL isn't so much to harvest the fruit as it is to keep an eye on the group and make sure that volunteers (including the FTO) are safe and comfortable and that the fruit is being picked and sorted or the trees are being pruned appropriately.

After the harvest/prune:

- Take fruit to designated sorting/distribution site (or organise another volunteer to do so)
- Harvest Coordinator then labels boxes for collection by schools etc.
- Return harvest kit with all completed forms to same place you collected it from.
- Call or email Harvest Coordinator if there is anything needing attention.

Harvest Kit contains:

- First Aid kit
- Emergency water supply
- Sunscreen
- Mobile phone – please ensure you have your phone on and with you for a harvest session in case of emergency
- Sterilising hand wash
- Forms:
 - *Harvest Attendance form (to be completed each session)*
 - *Volunteer Registration form (for new volunteers only)*
 - *Volunteer Information sheet (offer to new volunteers to take home)*
 - *Harvest record sheet (to be completed each harvest session)*
 - *Maintenance record form (to be completed each pruning session)*
 - *How to Harvest*
 - *Basic Pruning*
- Buckets for windfall chook food
- Boxes for fruit
- Tool kit list
- Tool kit (pruning tools)

The following documents are available as references for team leaders

- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Support Procedure

How to Harvest

- Try and leave some stalk attached to the fruit to increase the storage life of the fruit
- Fruit to be picked into GA collapsible crates or shallow cardboard boxes (too deep and the fruit will squash and spoil quickly); and sorted as it is picked into 1st/2nd/chook food grades
- Do not shake tree to get ripe fruit off
- Ripe fruit will come off the tree easily (lift and twist) – there should be no need to yank fruit
- If apples, quinces, feijoa and pears are picked a little bit early it will continue to ripen – this can help getting to the fruit before the birds and wildlife. This is not true for peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots or cherries; they must be picked when fully ripe.
- ***Don't take fruit off the ground for eating*** as you can't be sure how long it's been there and could be bruised (and will go off quickly) or contaminated by E. coli.
- Wind fall fruit (off the ground) should be collected and put into a compost pile on site but away from the trees to reduce breeding habitat for pests and diseases, or collected for chook food and brought back to community house (65 Templeton st)
- After handling windfall fruit, wash/sterilise hands before handling fruit for eating
- Consult with FTO if they want any fruit left on the tree in easy to harvest places for their own use
- Fill out Harvest form in as much detail as possible including how much fruit is still to be harvested and if there is any disease/pest issues