

**HARVESTCROPS
PRODUCE GOOD
SENIOR GLEANERS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

For more information: Monte Turner 503-364-1542

For immediate release

PHOTO and FEATURE OPTIONS: Spend an hour with a gleaning group. Gleaning groups also can arrange photos/interviews of people involved in the food recovery process ranging from picking to transporting to distributing to consuming at a family meal.

**Website links people with spare fruit
to groups feeding hungry residents**

Visit www.sandiegogleaners.org to help feed hungry

A joint Website helps county residents and businesses end food waste and hunger in San Diego County by donating surplus fruits and vegetables to gleaner groups feeding the hungry.

Visit www.sandiegogleaners.org to learn how you can join hundreds of people already involved. The groups need all types of fruits and vegetables, volunteers of any age, assistance transporting collected food and cash donations to support their work. The site provides descriptions of each group, contact information and the geographic area each serves.

The site is hosted by the San Diego Food Systems Alliance and was compiled by an SDFSA-affiliated group that meets monthly to coordinate gleaning activities.

Last year San Diego gleaners distributed nearly 252 tons of food, reported Monte Turner, a Senior Gleaners volunteer who helped develop the site. "However, in our county alone, at least 500,000 tons of food is wasted annually, adding 18 percent to landfill volumes, while 500,000 people live in poverty," he said.

"Rather than compost edible food or dump it in landfills, everyone agrees it makes more sense to support groups like gleaners that will get the food to people who need it," Turner said. "I can't think of many other programs that help the environment, assist homeowners, reduce waste and feed hungry people all in one integrated process," he added.

Turner noted that groups listed on the Website work with donors who have only a couple of backyard trees, homeowners with small orchards and farmers with hundreds of trees. A new project collects unsold produce from several farmers' markets.

Volunteers may choose their level of commitment, Turner said. Volunteers in the listed gleaning groups include many who have picked fruit weekly for decades while others

only have time to participate once or twice. One gleaning group relies solely on volunteers above the age of 55. Other gleaners include scout troops, students completing community service requirements and members of service organizations.

The federal Good Samaritan Food Donation Act protects donors from liability. Donors may claim tax deductions for the value of their contributions.

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NOTE: The San Diego Food System Alliance is a multi-sector coalition of more than 30 members representing all aspects of food supply and food issues in the county.

WHAT'S A GLEANER? For centuries, gleaners have collected food that would otherwise be wasted to feed the hungry. The term originates from the practice of landowners leaving portions of their fields or crops for the poor to harvest to feed their families.