

Minneapolis Giving Gardens Resource Guide

Thrivent Financial

Thrivent Financial is a faith-based membership organization, called to strengthen Christian communities by helping its members be wise with money and inspiring them to live generously. Helping communities thrive is a way of life for Thrivent members across the country, and for employees at its Minneapolis corporate center. In 2013, employees started a Giving Garden in Thrivent's parking lot, despite having no workable soil. Forty-three volunteers are perfecting the practice of straw-bale gardening, donating their harvest to nearby House of Charity. For more information, visit: www.healthyeatingmn.org/group/twin-cities-corporate-giving-garden-network/page/thrivent-giving-garden.

Contact Thrivent if you are interested in:

- ☼ Learning more about urban gardening without soil and land.
- ☼ Ways to approach your corporation or building owner with a gardening idea.
- ☼ Recruiting employee volunteers and keeping their interest level high through the growing season.
- ☼ Straw-bale gardening resources.

Email contact: Jeannie Lemere at jeannie.lemere@thrivent.com

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

In 2007, a trio of employees at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota requested permission to dig up a section of lawn at the headquarters to start a "Community Giving Garden." They recruited volunteers to help grow the garden and donate fresh fruits and vegetables to a local food shelf. The Community Giving Garden has been a catalyst for a network of more than 15 giving gardens across the Twin Cities. It's a great way to engage employees to help meet community needs in a healthy and rewarding way. For more information, visit:

- ☼ www.healthyeatingmn.org/group/twin-cities-corporate-giving-garden-network
- ☼ www.givinggarden.blogspot.com
- ☼ www.twitter.com/MNgivinggardens

Contact Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota if you are interested in:

- ☼ Joining the Twin Cities Corporate Giving Garden Network.
- ☼ Joining the Twin Cities Corporate Giving Garden group on the Healthy Eating Minnesota Network webpage: www.healthyeatingmn.org/group/twin-cities-corporate-giving-garden-network
- ☼ Receiving support and basic education about getting started and getting involved: www.bluecrossmn.com/internet_core/en_US/ccurl/778/609/giving_garden.pdf
- ☼ Learning more about the value of businesses getting involved in giving gardens. For example, the following is a recent article that was published in a national Human Resources publication – Workforce Management: www.workforce.com/article/20130401/NEWS02/130409998/dig-this-workplace-gardens-taking-root
- ☼ Attending Twin Cities Corporate Giving Garden Network's Garden Summits held twice a year. Members and companies interested in starting a giving garden are encouraged to attend and learn about best practices.

Email contact: Susan Schuster at susan_schuster@bluecrossmn.com



The Minnesota Project: *Fruits of the City* program

The Fruits of the City program matches teams of trained volunteer gleaners with registered homeowners who have fruit trees and local orchards to harvest fruit and support over 30 local food shelves. This program offers regular classes related to fruit tree care and maintenance, and also works to plant new community orchards at schools, corporate campuses, churches, community gardens, and other neighborhood spaces. In 2014, the program published a Fruit Tree Maintenance Guide (www.mnproject.org/foodFruitTreeMaintenanceGuideForm.html) to assist tree owners with tree care. For more information, visit www.fruitsofthecity.org.

Contact Fruits of the City if you are interested in:

- ☼ Organizing employees to kick-start your garden or orchard
- ☼ Developing an orchard onsite to support a local food shelf (e.g. receive site planning and landscape architecture resources)
- ☼ Connecting with educators that help fruit tree owners care for and maintain healthy trees
- ☼ Having volunteers come onsite to assist in harvesting your fruit for a local food shelf
- ☼ Volunteering to harvest fruit for other local food shelves
- ☼ Contracting with Fruits of the City to help plan your giving garden, host a volunteer day, and provide regular check-ins
- ☼ Additional fruit tree, orchard and edible landscaping educational opportunities
- ☼ Having Fruits of the City staff come speak at your worksite

Email contact: fruits@mnproject.org

Phone contact: (651) 789-3321

The Minnesota Project: *The Garden Gleaning Project*

The Garden Gleaning Project harvests and distributes fresh fruits and vegetables from gardens in the community to local food shelves. They also collect and deliver donations from local farmer's markets. These relationships between growers and food shelves build community and increase access to healthy foods. In 2013, the program published a resource guide to assist gardeners and food shelves grow and source more fresh fruits and vegetables. For more information, visit www.gardengleaning.org.

Contact Garden Gleaning Project if you are interested in:

- ☼ Organizing employees to kick-start your garden and grow food for a local food shelf
- ☼ Registering your garden with Garden Gleaning Project and donating fresh fruits and vegetables
- ☼ Having volunteers possibly come onsite to assist in gleaning your produce
- ☼ Additional volunteer opportunities for your employees, such as collecting produce at Farmer's Markets
- ☼ Learning about the type of fresh fruits and vegetables food shelves need most
- ☼ Receiving a free copy of the new resource guide
- ☼ Having Garden Gleaning Project come speak at your worksite

Email contact: gardengleaning@mnproject.org

Phone contact: (651) 789-3321



Minnesota State Horticultural Society

The Minnesota State Horticultural Society (MSHS), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, helps its members and the general public become better gardeners through education, encouragement, community, and by publishing the award-winning magazine *Northern Gardener* (www.northerngardener.org). MSHS' plant donation network, Minnesota Green (www.northerngardener.org/mngreen) serves the greening efforts of nonprofit volunteer gardeners statewide by providing them with plants and support. Lastly, in an effort to better serve the low-income community through gardening, Garden-in-a-Box (www.northerngardener.org/classes/garden-in-a-box) provides families and school children with a garden box, soil and vegetable plants as well as gardening guidance. This year, they are distributing 300 free Garden-in-a-Box kits to schools and nonprofits in the Twin Cities, Duluth, Red Wind and other locations.

Contact the Horticultural Society if you are interested in:

- ☼ Becoming a member of MSHS and receiving the *Northern Gardener*, discounts at nurseries and greenhouses statewide, free tickets to the Home and Patio Show in St. Paul and the Home and Garden Show in Minneapolis, and much more.
- ☼ Garden-in-a-Box, raised garden beds that are available for purchase in cedar or polypropylene.
- ☼ Using their extensive lending library of horticultural and gardening books.
- ☼ Volunteering at MSHS events and meeting other gardening enthusiasts.
- ☼ Attending gardening classes by local experts.
- ☼ Nominating your community project for a Greening Award.
- ☼ Receiving a free copy of their *Creating Community Gardens Handbook*.

Email Contact: Vicky Vogels at vickyv@northerngardener.org

Phone Contact: (651) 643-3601

Minnesota FoodShare

Each March, Minnesota FoodShare directs the March Campaign, the largest food and fund drive in the state that restocks almost 300 food shelves across Minnesota. Minnesota FoodShare works with thousands of congregations, companies, schools and community groups to help them organize food drives, and serves as a clearinghouse for cash donations, which are distributed to Minnesota food shelves participating in the March Campaign. In the summer, Minnesota FoodShare operates GardenShare, a program that facilitates community gardens focused on food shelf donations. Minnesota FoodShare also works year around to increase statewide awareness of hunger, nutrition and poverty issues. For more information, visit www.mnfoodshare.gmcc.org.

Contact Minnesota FoodShare if you are interested in:

- ☼ Conducting a "Giving" healthy food/fund drive.
- ☼ Having a conversation about the logistics of starting and maintaining a giving garden (or "GardenShare").
- ☼ Connecting with a Minneapolis food shelf.
- ☼ Working on advocacy related to reducing hunger.

Email contact: Courtney Zaato at czaato@gmcc.org

Phone contact: (612) 276-1556



Gardening Matters

Gardening Matters is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting and preserving community gardening across the Twin Cities. They connect gardeners with comprehensive resources, training, and network opportunities; provide public education; and advocate for supportive community garden policies. Gardening Matters also launched the Local Food Resource Hubs Network (www.gardeningmatters.org/hubs), which are community-based networks of residents, organizations, and businesses supporting each other to grow, cook, and preserve fruits and vegetables and increase access to fresh food. For more information, visit www.gardeningmatters.org.

Contact Gardening Matters if you are interested in:

- ☼ Assistance starting and organizing a giving garden, including a "start-up" workshop designed to aid in organizing the people-power you will need.
- ☼ Receiving start-up guidance documents to help establish your new worksite giving garden (e.g. Start Up Guide from Haberman, a Minnesota-based media and marketing firm that started an employer garden).
- ☼ Resources to help your team grow successfully, with membership to the Local Food Resource Hubs. Members of the Hubs Network can take advantage of a bulk-buying program for seeds and plants, participate in classes and events, and share resources with others members in their neighborhoods.

Email contact: Nadja Berneche at nadja@gardeningmatters.org

Phone contact: (612) 821-2358

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners – Hennepin County

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteers promote environmental stewardship by providing research-based horticultural information and education to enhance the quality of life in our communities. Experienced Master Gardener volunteers are available to guide your organization through the planning, planting, maintenance and harvest of your giving garden. For more information, visit www.hennepinmastergardeners.org.

Contact University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners in Hennepin County if you are interested in:

- ☼ Garden planning. Soil preparation and amendment. Layout, seed and plant selection. Row and plant spacing, and vegetable rotational plan.
- ☼ Vegetable gardening basics class customized for giving gardens taught in a classroom setting.
- ☼ In the garden, side-by-side teaching and support.
- ☼ On-site guidance for planting days.
- ☼ On-going guidance for garden maintenance and insect/disease issues.
- ☼ On-site continuous consultation for vegetable and fruit harvesting.

Note: They will arrange it so that your worksite can work with the same team of Master Gardeners throughout the gardening season.

Email contact: hcmg@umn.edu

Phone contact: Terry Straub at (612) 596-2130



The Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network

The Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network is a collection of food shelves and hunger relief organizations committed to increasing the amount of healthy foods available to individuals and families in need. More than a dozen Minneapolis food shelves are working together to: 1) access high-quality, fresh produce and healthy items from farmers markets, community gardens, and retail food stores; 2) educate clients about healthy food options; and 3) develop messaging to encourage everyone to donate healthier food items. The Minneapolis Healthy Food Shelf Network is supported by the Minneapolis Health Department, with funding from the Statewide Health Improvement Program from the Minnesota Department of Health. For more information, visit www.healthyfoodshelves.org.

Visit this website if you are interested in:

- ♻️ Locating and connecting with a local food shelf near you
- ♻️ Learning about what produce items to donate
- ♻️ Learning about alternative options to support your local food shelf if a giving garden is not possible

Email contact: SHIP@minneapolismn.gov

