

Frequently Asked Questions

How to Start A Fruit Share Group

It's so great that you're here! You've probably seen some fruits or veggies that need rescuing and you want to do something about it. Good for you. That's exactly how we started too.

Starting from square one and plotting a path on your own can be pretty daunting. To give you a head start, here's our perspective on some Frequently Asked Questions. Our responses are based on our experience - your situation will likely be a little different so take what you can and leave the rest.

We hope this info helps you on your journey.

Where do I begin?

Start where you are right now. Look at your situation and identify your key goal in starting a fruit sharing group. Is it to make sure unused fruit gets used, build a group of like-minded people, provide fruit to the less fortunate, build a sustainable food organization in the community, get access to funding dollars, create work for your volunteers, etc.

Being clear on your ultimate goal will help in every step of the process from recruiting volunteers, promotions, media opportunities and partnerships with other organizations/events.

Consider the size and scope of your program. How big and far reaching do you want this program to be? Ultimately you might want to rescue fruits and vegetables in your entire town or city. That's awesome - for a 5 to 10 year plan! We highly recommend you break the program down into manageable pieces. Think about growing one neighbourhood at a time or focus on one or two types of fruit to start with. Add other activities like workshops, summer fun fests and booths at farmers' markets over time.

Our best advice - plan wisely, gather and build the necessary resources and grow slowly.



Can I do it on my own?

It is possible, but we certainly wouldn't recommend it. Think about the long term viability of the program and your own sanity! Getting early buy-in and support from other individuals and groups is super important. It will make it much easier to recruit people, find funding, plan, organize, maintain, promote and grow your program for the next 5 to 10 years.

We recommend that you start with a planning group of at least 3 to 5 dedicated, committed and passionate volunteers who are willing and able to help with the initial planning, brainstorming and leg work.

Also, consider the option of operating as a program of an existing organization. This will make some of the administrative details such as banking, accessing grants and getting insurance much easier.

In 2015/2016 Fruit Share became a program of the Manitoba Association of Home Economists. We pay them 10% of our income as an admin fee and we get the benefit of credible, ongoing bookkeeping services and are covered by their general liability and Directors & Officers Liability Insurance. Before that, as a non-legal entity, we had to partner with other organizations to access funding and insurance.

Who could I approach to help out?

Try organizations that have an interest in healthy living, the environment, sustainable living, food security or community development. Maybe there's a food bank, gardening club or church group that may be able to offer some support or that may have individuals interested in helping.

If you know of people who are interested in being fruit picking volunteers, ask them if they'd like to help in the planning end of things as well. Suggest some very specific tasks they could help out with e.g. making a flyer, posting or distributing flyers, making and managing a Facebook page, etc.

Reach out on social media and don't be afraid to tell friends and family your plans and invite them to join.

How much time does it really take?

It's easy to underestimate the amount of time and energy a program like this will take - after all it's just organizing a few people to pick some fruit - right?! Sure, that's how it starts, but people really love this fruit sharing idea which means it generates a lot of interest very quickly.



Coordinating the actual harvests is just one of the tasks involved in running the program. Here are some of the other types of activities required:

Recruiting, promoting and publicizing the program to media, the general public, fruit owners and volunteers

Planning and coordinating key events (fruit preserving workshops, team leader training sessions, volunteer appreciation event)

Administering daily operations including scheduling picks, record keeping, basic bookkeeping, blogging, responding to inquiries, attending meetings and managing all logistics

Communicating and networking with all media, stakeholders, volunteers, charities, fruit owners

Evaluating and preparing reports on strategies and best practices for the future

A sample task list that we used in our third and fourth year of operation is attached in Appendix A.

Do we really need a Phone/Email/Website/Facebook page?

You may not need all of those to start with, but you definitely need some way of communicating with volunteers, homeowners, community organizations and media.

Media? Yes, whether you like it or not, at some point your local newspaper, radio station or community paper will likely call to get more info on what you're doing - like we said before, people really like this idea and want to share it with others! So, be prepared. Welcome the coverage and have someplace where you can direct the general public to get more info - ie. a website or facebook page.

You could use your personal phone number and email as a contact point but remember it's going to go on posters, flyers and other information that may stay around for a few years. Do you really want your phone number and email readily available for the next few years?

Here's how we handled this.

Phone – In our first several years we used a virtual phone number through United World Telecom. The account was taken out by one person who allowed their credit card to be used. Fruit Share reimbursed the person monthly. It cost under \$7/month in the off season and no more than \$30 in the peak season. The virtual number was forwarded to any number we



wanted (eg Summer Coordinator or any volunteer's house) or it could be sent to a voicemail account.

In 2015 we cancelled our phone number and have gone to online communication via Facebook or email only. We did this during our transition to make Fruit Share more sustainable and more of a self-serve program.

Email - Fruit Share has set up email through a free gmail account. At one point we had different addresses for different committees and volunteers. However, that required quite a bit of coordination so we've returned to one central email account that is checked by a volunteer in the off season and the coordinator in the busy season.

Website - We have a WordPress blog site. This site is our main form of communication with the world and all our stakeholders. Our website has evolved over the years. At one point it contained our harvest management system and was the place where people signed up and harvests were coordinated.

Today, our website is simply a repository of information and recipes. It also is the place where people can link to Fruit Connect – the self serve fruit owner/fruit picker app.

We chose WordPress because it is fairly straightforward and easy to use. Different volunteers and Coordinators can navigate the backend fairly easily.

Facebook & Social Media- We have Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and are thinking about Instagram. Every social media platform you add requires work. Choose carefully and wisely. Unless you have someone super keen on managing one or more of these platforms, be weary of starting something you can't follow through on.

That said, our Facebook page is one of our key communication tools. People will go to Facebook and when they hear something interesting, they'll go to our website. We haven't used paid ads, so can't comment on that.

Our other social media platforms are hit and miss. They really depend on having a gung-ho volunteer to look after them. We don't always have that kind of volunteer.



Can we use the Fruit Connect System?

You bet. We're super proud of the Fruit Connect app and the fact that it has been developed and maintained by a leading web development company. Tactica Interactive knows app development and after working with us and other fruit rescuing groups for a couple of years, they know fruit rescuing!

You can work with Tactica to set up Fruit Connect as is in your community or you can ask them to tweak it to your customized specifications.

Yes, there are fees involved – but you won't have to start from scratch and you will benefit from having someone who knows their stuff and will be there for ongoing maintenance. Having someone there to keep a system like Fruit Connect current is HUGE!

For more information contact us at info@fruitshare.ca.

Do we need money and do we have to have a budget?

It really does depend on what size and scope you're planning. If it's just you and a couple of friends who are going to quietly pick fruit from people who you know or get to know - then you probably won't need any money, budget or major planning.

If you want to be a little bigger and more formal about the process then yes, you need some money to get started. It certainly doesn't cost a fortune, but there are some costs involved, even when you start out small.

Having a budget and a system for recording income and expenses is a great way of keeping track and planning for future years. It's also a key requirement if you're ever going to request funding from anyone. We highly recommend you get in the habit of creating a budget and keeping track of money coming in and going out. In addition to actual cash coming in and out, it's also a good idea to keep track of in-kind contributions that are being made (eg. volunteer hours, office space someone is making available at no cost, coffee being served at a volunteer meeting, postage or printing costs a volunteer pays without being reimbursed, a poster someone prints at home, etc.)

In our first year, everything was done by volunteers without any financial assistance. The initial website was created by accessing free online resources. A few posters and cards were printed and donated by volunteers and the various offices they worked for. All the



work was done via volunteers. Volunteer fruit pickers had to bring their own picking supplies and no additional programming was offered. And, there was no insurance coverage.

For Fruit Share Winnipeg, the number of calls we received by the end of the first season and the need for proper insurance led us on our search for funding. During the winter months, volunteer time was spent writing grants to secure funding to hire a summer coordinator, run workshops, create a professional website and to create print and display material.

At this point, the bare bone costs of Fruit Share are as follows:

- Salaries: \$4,000 - for a contract Summer Coordinator (May-October)
- Insurance: \$800 - for \$1-\$2 million general liability insurance
- Office Supplies: \$100
- Website Hosting Fees: \$500
- Fruit Connect Maintenance: \$1,000-\$2,000 (depending on updates)
- Displays, Conferences & Events: \$200

These are actual cash costs and does not reflect the in-kind contributions and volunteer hours.

Our income comes from fundraisers and membership fees.

If we want to do bigger projects, we seek out funding and grants.

Do we need a bank account?

We didn't need our own bank account until the end of our second year. Because we still weren't a legal entity, we went to our local credit union which offered a community group account. Today, all our banking goes through our parent organization – MAHE.

Do we need to worry about insurance and liability issues?

Yes, for everyone's benefit we highly recommend you talk to an insurance broker about adequate insurance coverage and how to reduce your liability. Being conscientious and aware of potential hazards and areas of concern is an important part of setting up a program like this.

Fruit Share was able to get insurance coverage by partnering with an established organization.



We also have all volunteers agree to a waiver when they first register with Fruit Share and when they sign up for specific picks.

Who can we share the fruit with?

Look around in your community for programs or organizations that could make use of fresh produce. Is there a soup kitchen, a breakfast program, a healthy eating course, a senior's centre, a church group, a healthy baby and me program, a women's shelter, a teen resource or family resource centre, a food bank, a day care or after school program, etc.

At Fruit Share, we started by approaching two or three different organizations to see if they'd be interested in accepting fruit. As word about our program spread, we soon had other organizations approach us for fruit donations

We make all of this information available to our volunteers who decide where to donate on the day that they pick the fruit. We also invite volunteers to share their fruit with other organizations they know of that may not be on our list. We just ask that volunteers let us know with whom they shared 1/3 of the fruit harvested.

How do we start promoting our program?

First, consider how far and wide you want to promote your program. If you want to stay small, start with word of mouth, flyers and/or presentations to small groups within your program area. Create a small notice for a newsletter in that community or for a specific group (eg. a garden club's annual renewal notice, a healthy community newsletter or a church bulletin).

If you want a larger reach, think about bigger publications and events where you might be able to put up a display.

You could also:

- Write a letter to the editor, an article or a press release for your local newspaper.
- Contact your local radio station for an interview.
- Post notices on free community announcement services.
- Ask each person on the planning team to use their social media networks like Facebook to share the launch of your program with others.
- Take some photos of fruits and berries in your neighbourhood and use them in your posters or social media posts.
- Offer to do a presentation to various groups. Eg. garden, senior or church groups.



Appendix B shows a sample of an ad Fruit Share placed for free in the neighbourhood newsletter.

Appendix C shows a sample of the first Press Release Fruit Share sent to all Winnipeg media outlets.



Appendix A

Fruit Share Tasks

This list was created as we were planning our 3rd year of operations. It was used as a reference point for our Advisory Team Volunteers and our Summer Coordinator.

Daily Operations

- Responding to all email and phone inquiries within 2 business days
- Maintaining and updating accurate database of volunteers
- Maintaining and updating accurate database of homeowners
- Maintaining and updating accurate database of picks and any notes
- Working with Volunteer Team Leaders and Homeowners to schedule fruit picks
- Attending Fruit Share Advisory Team Meetings
- Recording notes of Fruit Share Advisory Team Meetings
- Ensuring accurate bookkeeping or passing on all receipts, invoices, etc to appropriate Advisory team members
- Participating in fruit harvests and fruit donation drop offs as needed
- Accurately tracking and documenting statistics as required by funders, Advisory Team and website including but not limited to: number of volunteers, number and names of groups involved, number and type of fruit preserving workshops, type and quantities of product made and distribution or planned use of the finished product, number of harvests/homes reached, amount of material deposited in composters, amount of fruit harvested, amount of fruit shared with community organizations, who fruit was shared with, number and types of inquiries made to Fruit Share, monthly website, Facebook and twitter traffic, media coverage (community newsletters and big media), ways in which funders were mentioned

Volunteer Management

- Recruiting volunteer pickers in the target neighbourhoods
- Training volunteers on the systems, procedures and processes of Fruit Share
- Training volunteers on when and how to harvest each of the different fruits

Communication and Networking

- Developing and sending 3-4 newsletters/updates for volunteers, community organizations, fruit owners and stakeholder organizations
- Writing a minimum of 2-4 blog posts per week
- Making regular Facebook and Twitter updates
- Creating and distributing announcements regarding workshops
- Writing articles for community newsletters/newspapers
- Sending out promotional material as needed
- Building relationships and communicating with community organizations
- Updating and maintaining database of community organizations and key contacts



- Developing and distributing promotional materials as needed to conduct the business of Fruit Share (eg. posters, thank you cards, business cards, compliments of cards).
- Participating in media interviews for radio, TV or press

Planning and coordinating

- Working with external community organizations to set up 3 workshops throughout the season.
- Working with the Advisory Team to plan 3 Fruit Share events/workshops (launch, wrap up, Apple Cider Pressing event)
- Purchasing supplies for workshops.
- Helping community organizations set up workshops.
- Coordinating volunteer training sessions.
- Creating, setting up and participating in displays or opportunities to promote Fruit Share (eg. Street festival, Farmers' Markets, etc.)

Advisory Team Tasks

- Planning the annual goals and targets of Fruit Share
- Developing relationships with 1-3 key organizations/groups (food groups, garden clubs, neighbourhood associations, networks, youth groups, church groups, etc.) in each participating neighbourhood and providing information for a database of these organizations with complete contact information.
- Obtaining appropriate and complete insurance coverage.
- Ensuring ongoing promotion and publicity of Fruit Share for general awareness and for continued recruitment of volunteers and fruit owners.
- Holding 4-5 meetings of the Fruit Share Advisory Team to ensure Fruit Share is operating on target
- Recruiting, hiring and training staff and volunteers
- Securing funding
- Participating in key Fruit Share events (launch, wrap up, Apple Cider Pressing event)
- Maintaining accurate financial records of all income and expenditures of Fruit Share.
- Developing a year-end report outlining outcomes, best practices, potential sources of future funding and recommendations.
- Responding to media inquiries
- Developing a strategy for the future structure and operations of Fruit Share
- Connecting with and learning about other fruit rescuing operations
- Building relationships with other local food initiatives/organizations



Appendix B Sample Ad for Newsletter

Introducing...

FRUIT SHARE

By The South Osborne
Urban Community Cooperative

Do you have more rhubarb, apples, cherries, grapes, raspberries or other edibles than you can manage? Don't despair, call **Fruit Share!** **Fruit Share** connects fruit owners with volunteer fruit pickers to make good use of all those delicious edibles. Fruit owners make their fruit available for picking, volunteers pick the fruit and then the fruit is shared equally - 1/3 to the homeowner, 1/3 to the volunteers and 1/3 to community organizations such as Agape Table or Winnipeg Harvest. Everyone benefits! The idea is based on similar models in cities like Edmonton, Victoria, Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary. And now, Riverview and Lord Roberts are the first communities in Winnipeg to launch a similar program.

Are you interested in participating? Do you have fruit that needs picking? Would you like to be a volunteer fruit picker? Are you part of a community organization that could make good use of local fruit? If so, call the South Osborne Urban Community Coop at 990-3364 or www.fruitsharewinnipeg.blogspot.com.
We're currently looking for:

Rhubarb



Call 204-990-3364 today and we'll arrange to pick your rhubarb and put it to good use.

Fruit Share is one of many new and exciting programs of the South Osborne Urban Community Coop www.southosborneUCC.ca.



Appendix C

Fruit Share's Initial Press Release

For Immediate Release

Local, Sustainable Food Initiatives Launched

WINNIPEG, Manitoba – Fruit Share and Manitoba Veggie Delight are two new local food initiatives launched this spring in the hopes of rekindling knowledge and passion for home grown fruits and vegetables in Winnipeg.

“We have the potential to grow and harvest a great variety of fruits and vegetables right in our back yards. It's the ultimate solution to nutritious, local, fresh, tasty and sustainable food,” explains Getty Stewart, Professional Home Economist. Stewart started the projects with two blogs on the topic of fruit gleaning and home cooking. She hopes to inspire and share information on growing, harvesting and preserving fresh, home grown fruits and vegetables.

Working with the [South Osborne Urban Community Cooperative](#), (SOUCC) Stewart has launched Winnipeg's first fruit gleaning project called [Fruit Share](#). Based on similar models in cities like Edmonton, Toronto, and Victoria Fruit Share connects fruit owners with volunteer fruit pickers. Fruit owners make their fruit available to volunteer pickers who will pick the fruit and split it three ways. One third goes to the home owner, one third is split between the volunteers and the final third goes to community organizations who can make good use of the fruit (Agape Table, Winnipeg Harvest, Fred Tipping Place, etc.) Run solely by volunteers, Fruit Share hopes to begin harvesting rhubarb in Lord Roberts and Riverview this June.

Evan Bowness, President of the SOUCC, is excited about launching Fruit Share as one of several community food projects the cooperative is launching this year. “Projects like these are a great way to draw attention to food sustainability and to bring the community together to share skills and knowledge that may otherwise be forgotten.” In addition to Fruit Share, the SOUCC is working on a number of other food related initiatives in the Lord Roberts and Riverview area.

Stewart and her family also have a 30x40 foot garden plot at a community garden operated by the Riverview Garden Society. Relying on her experience as a farm girl, trial and error and the advice of fellow community gardeners, Stewart is growing her own vegetables and sharing her favourite recipes and preserving techniques on her blog at [GettyStewart.com](#).

People interested in learning more are invited to contact the South Osborne Urban Community Cooperative.

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Contact:

Getty Stewart, (204) 284-1234, getty.stewart@gmail.com

Evan Bowness, (204) 990-3364, umbownes@cc.umanitoba.ca – President, South Osborne Urban Community Cooperative

