



Harvesting Options:

Ideas for Harvesting Backyard Fruit

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Harvesting Options

In spring, we welcome the sight of beautiful, blossoming fruit trees as they erase the memories of a long winter and usher in the promise of warm sunny days ahead. Only later, when those same branches are bearing ripe, heavy fruit does the magnitude of the harvest sink in. It can seem like an endless, overwhelming prospect. But, it doesn't have to be. There is help available. You simply need to ask.



*A little boy was having difficulty lifting a heavy stone.
His father came along just then.*

*Noting the boy's failure, he asked, "Are you using all
your strength?"*





"Yes, I am," the little boy said impatiently.

*"No, you are not," the father answered. "I am right
here just waiting, and you haven't asked me to help
you."*

Author Unknown

Creative Harvesting Ideas

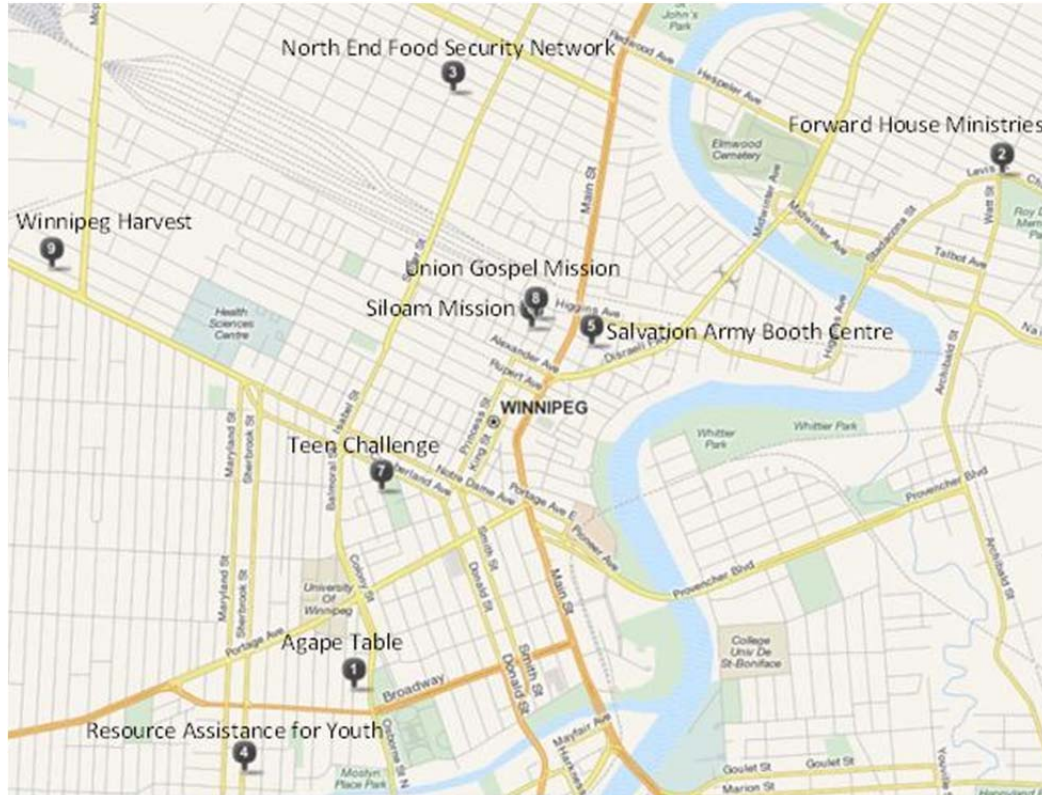
Your fruit tree has more fruit than you can manage. You're eager to do something before you're overwhelmed with wasps, the smell of overripe fruit and sight of squished fruit throughout your yard. Here are some creative ideas for harvesting your fruit and putting it to good use.

-  Ask your extended family to help harvest your fruit. And, while they're picking for themselves, ask them to pick some more for a local food charity (read Sharing the Harvest at www.fruitshare.ca).
-  Host a picking party. Picking is much more fun when there are several people doing it together. Serve some ice tea and a tray of cookies and you're guaranteed to have a good time. Once they're in the spirit, encourage them to pick an extra bag for a neighbour down the street who might not be as agile but would appreciate some fresh fruit. It's a great way to build positive relationships with your neighbours.
-  Call or email [Fruit Share](http://www.fruitshare.ca) to come harvest your fruit for you. Fruit Share will send a team of volunteers who will pick your fruit and then share it three ways - 1/3 stays with you (if you'd like), 1/3 is split between the volunteers and 1/3 is given to a community organization that uses fresh fruit. Call (204)-272-8520.
-  Hire a neighbourhood teenager to harvest your fruit for you. If you don't know who to call, ask your community centre for a list of neighbourhood babysitters or dog walkers. These keen, young individuals might consider adding fruit picking to their repertoire of services offered.

- 🌐 Post a notice at your local garden club, church or community centre stating you have delicious, free fruit available for picking.
- 🌐 Put a classified ad in your community paper or online at places like Kijiji. There are a lot of people who welcome the opportunity to get fresh, local fruit.
- 🌐 Ask some of the vendors at your local Farmers' Market if they would be interested in picking your fruit. For a list of Farmers' Markets in Manitoba visit the [Farmers' Markets Association of Manitoba](#) or call (204)485-7574.
- 🌐 Ask a local community group to pick your fruit. For example the Boys and Girls Club, Scouts Canada, Brownies, school groups, etc.
- 🌐 Call a local Hutterite Colony to see if they'd be interested in picking your fruit. A listing of Manitoba Hutterite Colonies can be found at www.hutterites.org under the Hutterite Directory.

Map of Food Charities

A map of Winnipeg organizations that accept fresh fruit.
For an online version and more details about each organization visit www.fruitshare.ca.



- 1 Agape Table
- 2 Forward House Ministries
- 3 North End Food Security Network
- 4 Resource Assistance for Youth
- 5 Salvation Army Booth Centre
- 6 Siloam Mission
- 7 Teen Challenge
- 8 Union Gospel Mission
- 9 Winnipeg Harvest

Harvesting Tips

If you are able to assemble a picking crew to help harvest your bounty, here are a couple of harvesting tips to consider.

- 🍏 Before picking from a tree or bush, rake up any fruit that may be lying on the ground so that you can keep it separate from the fresh fruit you pick. Fallen fruit is at risk of contamination and should be composted.
- 🍏 Inevitably, some fruit will fall to the ground as you are picking. This fruit may end up with cracked or bruised skin. Before using this fruit, consider the conditions of the ground it fell on. If you have any reservations, compost the fruit. If you'd like to use this fruit, do it as soon as possible after picking and consider a high heat process to kill any possible bacteria.
- 🍏 Try to pick fruit with the stem attached to extend the storage life of the fruit.
- 🍏 As much as possible, use two hands when harvesting fruit. Use one hand to hold the branch close to the fruit and the other to pull and twist the fruit. When using just one hand to "yank" the fruit, you may damage the tree or end up with a lot of leaves with your fruit.
- 🍏 For difficult to reach fruit, use a fruit picker designed for that purpose rather than attempting death-defying climbing acts.
- 🍏 Bruised fruit will spoil much faster than intact fruit. Keep heavily bruised or broken fruit separate. A rotten apple really does spoil the barrel!

- 🍏 Shaking trees is not advisable as the fruit will become bruised and the trees can be damaged. If you do choose to shake the tree, have a team of people hold a very large bed sheet underneath the tree. It's fun to see how many they can catch and how many land on their heads! But be aware, often more apples fall on the ground than in the sheet. Be prepared to use those apples right away for applesauce or apple juice.
- 🍏 Place picked fruit in cardboard boxes rather than plastic bags. Boxes will allow better movement of air throughout the apples which extends storage life.
- 🍏 Store fruit in a cool, dark place and check it frequently for signs of spoiling or worms. It is best to use or give away picked fruit as soon as possible to ensure it remains at its best.
- 🍏 Remember to have fun! Spread out a picnic blanket and have some snacks to make the harvest enjoyable and memorable.

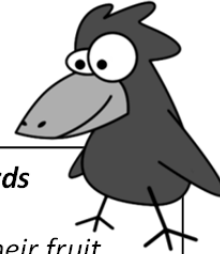
Benefits of Harvesting Fruit

Perhaps you're wondering if you could just leave the fruit and avoid harvesting it all together. It certainly is an option, but here's a list of reasons why it is better to find a way to harvest your fruit than to let it rot on the tree.

- 🍇 Enjoy delicious, tasty fruit you grew yourself.
- 🍇 Take advantage of free, local, nutritious and organic food (if you haven't used any sprays or powders on your tree).
- 🍇 Try out new recipes and preserving techniques. The sweet/tart combination of our prairie fruit is the envy of many chefs and has endless uses.
- 🍇 Experience the exhilaration of sharing your bounty with others. There are many community organizations which use fruit to help families and individuals in need.
- 🍇 Reduce pest problems in your yard. Wasps, squirrels, racoons, mice and other critters are drawn by the smell and taste of over ripe fruit. To avoid run-ins with these critters, harvest your fruit as it ripens.
- 🍇 Reduce the mess of dropped fruit in your yard. Sooner or later that fruit is coming off your tree! To avoid a squishy, gooey mess under your feet, pick it before it drops.
- 🍇 Lighten the load on your fruit trees. Some years can be especially bountiful and tree branches can buckle under the weight of too much fruit. Keep your fruit

trees strong and healthy by reducing the stress of too much fruit.

- 🍷 Reduce the chance of disease in your fruit trees. Ripe fruit may attract fungus, worms or disease that may overwinter in your trees and cause damage to future fruit crops.



Leave it for the Birds

Some fruit trees hold on to their fruit throughout the winter and provide a great food source for birds. Sharing with birds is a great reason not to pick all the fruit off a tree.

Enjoy the harvest!