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Pandemic Led to a Boom in Vegetable Gardens, But Survey Finds Few Gardeners Know How to Donate Their Extra Harvest

Bonnie Plants and AmpleHarvest.org announce continued partnership of Grow More. Feed More. initiative to encourage home gardeners to grow a little extra to fight food insecurity

Union Springs, Alabama (May 4, 2021) — A new national survey by Bonnie Plants finds that while just half of home gardeners use all the food they grow, only 10 percent know how to connect with an organization to donate their extra fruits and vegetables.

Food insecurity has more than doubled since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, more than 20 million Americans planted a vegetable garden for the first time as people explored new hobbies at home.

“Many people don’t realize that you can donate the extra food from your garden directly to local food pantries,” said Mike Sutterer, Bonnie Plants President and CEO. “Most gardeners end up with extra zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes that they don’t know what to do with, and if all of these gardeners donated just a bag or two of vegetables, we could make a significant impact on food insecurity nationwide.”

The survey also found:

- 56 percent of gardeners give unused food from their garden to friends and family.
- 12 percent of gardeners donate unused food from their garden to a local food pantry.
- 12 percent of gardeners say food they grow in their garden goes to waste before they can use it.

Bonnie Plants has once again partnered with AmpleHarvest.org, a nonprofit that connects gardeners with over 9,000 partner food pantries based on their ZIP code. The organization has connected with each featured food pantry to guarantee they accept fresh produce from local gardeners. Through their *Grow More. Feed More.* initiative, they are encouraging home gardeners to plant a little extra this season and donate their surplus to help feed their neighbors and support their communities.

“While the economic hardships brought on by COVID-19 certainly exacerbated the problem, food insecurity in this country isn’t going away after the pandemic ends,” Sutterer said. “Our goal is to make donating their surplus harvest a ritual for millions of gardeners across the country.”

That’s now the case for Travis Hammonds, who recently used AmpleHarvest.org to connect with the East Alabama Food Bank.

“The thing about gardening is that it always gives back more than you put in, and we can only give away so many squash to our friends and family,” Hammonds said. “Connecting with a food bank close by was great because, no matter how much we grow, it will never go to waste. A vegetable that we harvest today will be feeding a family in our community tomorrow.”

Hammonds tends his garden with his children whenever possible and they make trips to the East Alabama Food Bank as a family when making donations. He says the lessons his kids learn through growing their own food and seeing the positive impact of their harvest in their community are invaluable.

“Teaching my kids about gardening helps them learn a lot about life and how there are times to plant, harvest and give back,” Hammonds said. “Through AmpleHarvest.org, that concept has grown even further because, in addition to bringing some vegetables to our neighbor down the street, the food we grow now helps people in our area who are going through hard times and may be struggling to put food on the table, and that’s something that’s truly gratifying to share with my children.”

Sutterer says gardeners are uniquely positioned to help, and as a company, Bonnie Plants is leading by example.

“As vegetable growers, we have a unique opportunity to give back,” Sutterer said. “Fighting food insecurity has always been a priority for us that goes back to our founders, Bonnie and Livingston Paulk, who set aside acreage of vegetable production way back in 1918 to feed those who needed it in the local area.”

[Bonnieplants.com](https://bonnieplants.com) will also donate five percent of their online plant sales through July to AmpleHarvest.org to address the continued need. For more information about the *Grow More. Feed More.* initiative, please visit: bonnieplants.com/gardening/grow-more-feed-more/

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About Bonnie Plants

Headquartered in Union Springs, Alabama, Bonnie Plants is the largest and only national supplier and producer of vegetable and herb plants in the United States. Bonnie grows 300 varieties of quality vegetable and herb plants for home gardeners across the country, with 70+ growing stations, serving the 48 contiguous states. Established in 1918 by Livingston and Bonnie Paulk, the company has remained in touch with its roots for more than 100 years.

Bonnie Plants are available at garden retailers throughout the United States. For more information, please visit bonnieplants.com.

About AmpleHarvest.org

AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is diminishing hunger and food waste in America by educating and enabling the nation's 42 million gardeners to donate their garden surplus to local food pantries nationwide. For more information, visit AmpleHarvest.org or call AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880).