

# Favored Produce to Donate

## For Food Pantries

When gardeners have excess produce during a growing season they tend to preserve for later and give to friends and family. Another option is to donate the excess to your local food pantry. Ohio ranks third in the nation for families that are considered food insecure with 7.5% of Ohio households having very low food security. Donating to a local food pantry is an easy way to help those in need in your community. Clients of food pantries want in season produce which provides nutritional benefits to their whole family.

### Making your donation count

Once the growing season begins check with your pantries to make sure they are equipped to store refrigerated items. Some pantries do not have this capability. Also check to know when and what times you may drop produce off. Produce is best of picked and donated in the same day.

### Preferred Produce

Ohio Food Pantries will take any donations that you donate when it comes to fresh produce. However, some produce items are favored by the clientele than others. The following items are seen as easy to store, prepare and can be used in several ways for meals.

Crop	When Picking	Ohio Days Till Harvest	Harvest Tips	Cleaning
Tomato	Red tomatoes of all shapes, sizes and varieties.	70-90 days when planted from transplants.	Harvest every 2-3 days. Slightly ripen tomatoes will finish ripening off the vine (slowly).	Wash to remove the dirt
Zucchini	A usable zucchini of 4-8 inches long and 3-5 inches in diameter.	50-70 days	Harvesting every 2-3 days.	Wash to remove the dirt



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Lettuce	Well developed compact plants with firm, crisp, medium-sized heads.	45-60 days	Lettuce is best when it is picked at 4 -6 inches long.	Wash to remove the dirt
Cucumber	Slicing cucumbers of 6-8 inches long, pickling cucumbers 3-4 inches long, others 10 -12 inches long	55-65 days	Warm weather causes bitterness.	Wash to remove the dirt
Sweet Corn	Silk has turned brown, dark leaves, kernels will be filled with milk, ear fully developed.	70-105 days	At maturity sweetcorn is the freshest and has the best flavor. Do not husky and leave in the sun.	No cleaning needed.
Greenbeans	Tender pods	50-70 days	Harvest when the pods are approximately the size of a pencil in length and diameter.	Wipe off any dirt. Do not wash.
Broccoli	Center head at least 4 inches in diameter and buds are closed.	50-65 days when planted from transplants.	Harvest the main flower head first, then the sides. Pick all flowerets before they turn yellow.	Wash to remove the dirt
Peppers	Firm, thick- fleshed with deep colors.	60-90 days when planted from transplants.	Best picked when 2-3 inches in diameter.	Wipe off dirt.
Onions	At least 2 inches in diameter.	90-100 days when planted from sets (bulbs).	Harvest when the tops dry and fall over.	Wipe off dirt.
Melons Watermelon	Evenly formed and free of decay. Mature but not over-ripe. Bright green appearance, yellow ground spot. Mature but not overripe.	75-100 days 80-100 days	Harvest when the melon detaches from the stem easily. Harvest when the underside of the melon turns yellow/ white.	Wipe off any dirt.