



Harvesting with a group of like-minded people is a great way to connect to edible greenery, do some physical work and build an understanding of the importance of our beautiful and biodiverse ecosystems.

How to organise a community fruit harvesting event

PREPARATION

Planning and carrying out a fruit harvesting event requires a considerable amount of time, so it would be wise to ask yourself a few questions first: Why do you want to do a harvesting event? Do you have too many fruit trees in your garden, or has somebody else offered their orchard? Do you want to organise a team event? Do you want to produce juice for friends?

Give yourself enough time to prepare and organise, to set dates with service providers, to coordinate the participants and to delegate and clarify the responsibilities for tasks.

Make sure your event is properly communicated to the public online and offline.

MATERIALS

You'll need ladders, storage containers (i.e. bags, boxes) and if necessary, wheelbarrows. For a bigger harvest you should order a container that can then be transported to a local juice presser nearby. Caution: the container must be licensed for food transport!

Canvases should also be provided to put under the fruit trees. When shaking the tree, most of the fruits fall on the canvas and can easily be collected. You can use special poles or hooks to gently rock single branches. For fruit that needs to last longer that should not fall on the ground, you can use harvesting poles.



Start planning 2 months in advance. Use a calendar to check what is ready to harvest in your region



Work with local food growers, landowners, interested residents, and community food groups



Events like this increase citizen confidence when foraging and help build community

INFRASTRUCTURE

Set up a "social area" to cook, sit, eat and chat. A marquee provides protection against sun and rain, whilst benches, camping chairs or picnic blankets create a cosy atmosphere. Consider arranging a portable toilet.





LOCATION

Do you have your eye set on a certain site or are you still searching for a location for a harvesting event? In case of the latter, consult a foraging map (e.g. mundraub.org or fallingfruit.org) where you will find public orchards and other publicly available foraging spots. It is essential to find out who the land belongs to, if you have permission to be there, and of course, whether the trees or bushes still exist!

Check accessibility. Is it possible to get there by public transport and bike, or do you need a car? Organising transport for the participants could be a sensible option. We recommend mowing the grass before the event.

CATERING

Pre-prepared soups or bread with cheese and spreads are easy options. It is also nice if participants can bring salads, or can prepare some on the day using what you have harvested (i.e. making a beetroot and apple salad). Homemade cakes as well as hot drinks (providing you have access to a camping stove) boost everyone's morale on the day.



WHAT TO DO WITH THE HARVEST?

Do you want to produce juice or pick fruit to eat or cook at home? How many kilograms - or maybe tons - are you expecting? Estimating the amount of harvest will give you an idea of how many people you need. If you plan to make juice ask yourself if a hand press or a mobile fruit press (they require water and high voltage current) will suffice, or if you have to allow extra time for the transport to a local juice presser.

As a rule of thumb, you can harvest 100 kilograms of fruit per tree on average, when harvesting apples or pears. One kilogram of apples is equivalent to 0.7 litres of juice. Taking this into account, you can estimate the final quantity of juice. Fallen apples and pears shouldn't be stored as they tend to go mouldy fast - instead, you should make juice from them. If you want to press juice on-site, bring some empty bottles with you.

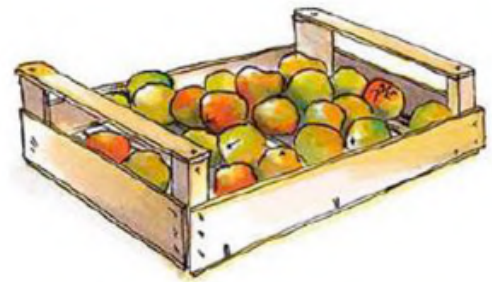
AFTER THE HARVEST

If you have a container that needs to be transported to the juice presser, make sure to arrange a convenient pick-up time. If you transport the harvest yourself, make sure to secure the boxes. Pick up or delivery of the pressed juice should be arranged with the juice presser. Take care of payment, too. Take down tents, pavilions, mobile kitchen and mobile toilet. Make to sure to leave the site clean. Talk to the landowner about tree care measures in winter. Was it a relatively low harvest and is it possibly due to low pollination? A beekeeper, who can set up some beehives next springtime, might live nearby. Could there even be some space for one or two more trees? Is the owner open to planting more trees with your help? Use social media and blogs to tell your followers about the event. Write a thank you email and share experiences and pictures with participants and people that were not able to come.





EVENT SCHEDULE



9am

Preparing site for the event:

- Prepare your harvesting tools
- Set up a cooking area, eating area, relaxation area, etc
- Be on-site ready for the delivery of your portable toilet (if using), and the container for transporting apples
- Pick up the harvesting team

10am

Welcoming participants:

- Present the project and goal of the event
- Make a schedule (with lunch + other breaks included), and hang somewhere everyone can see
- Get indemnification agreement and photo + video consent
- Advise on the treatment of trees and quality of fruit needed - no mouldy apples should be used for juice, as this can effect the whole batch

12pm

Lunch break!

- Make sure to allow enough time for food preparation

1pm

Harvest

- Harvesting fruit and, if applicable, juice pressing on site and bottling.
- Filling containers with fruit to take



4pm

Closing

- Thank all your participants, and explain the next steps - such as how people can pick up the juice, who gets it, and when
- Say goodbye!
- Collect your materials, as well as any waste from the day. Leave the site as you found it
- Wait for your portable toilet to be collected





Packing List

ORGANISATION BOX

- Folder for receipts, forms, name tags
- Paper + pens
- Contact list (toilet, container, landowner)
- First-aid kit
- Antihistamine for bee/wasp allergies
- Tweezers + tick tweezers

HARVESTING MATERIAL

- Tape
- Harvesting poles + hooks
- Ladders
- Manual fruit press
- Bags
- Gloves
- Canvas



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Benches, camping chairs, picnic blankets
- Gazebo
- Water Cans
- Tent, sleeping bag, camping mat
- Rubbish bags

KITCHEN MATERIAL

- Gas cooker with gas
- Food, snacks, drinks
- Cutlery, bowls, cups, chopping boards
- Plastic tub for washing up, teatowels
- Benches, camping chairs, picnic blankets

