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The Harvest Club of Orange County

A volunteer organization in Orange County, Calif., called [The Harvest Club](#), has combined urban gardening, sustainable food production and volunteerism in a fascinating way. Jeff Lebow founded The Harvest Club in 2009 in Huntington Beach, and now the club has more than 450 harvest volunteers and more than 200 registered backyard growers throughout Orange County to harvest fruit and other produce from residents' backyards that would otherwise go to waste. This harvested food is given to local food pantries, churches, after-school programs and service agencies feeding Orange County residents. Since 2009, The Harvest Club has donated more than 94,000 pounds of fresh, nutritious food to neighbors in need (as of September 2013).



Harvest Club volunteers have harvested more than 94,000 pounds of food as of September 2013.

The Harvest Club not only helps provide fresh, healthy food for low-income Orange County residents, they bring neighbors together, promote sustainable uses of urban resources, encourage home food production and minimize food waste.

If you don't have food to donate, don't worry. You can still help. You can make monetary donations so the club can buy clippers, ladders, rakes and other equipment to help with harvesting, and you can volunteer to go to backyards around Orange County and help harvest food. To volunteer as a harvester, just complete a [volunteer registration form](#). Harvesters should keep several weekend hours free (generally between 10am-12pm); wear long sleeves, a hat and glasses, sunscreen and bee protection, and closed-toed shoes; and be prepared to meet new people and have some fun!

There are even more volunteer opportunities in the club. In addition to harvesters, harvest captains lead harvesting events; growers grow the produce in their yards; tree scouts visit a grower's property to determine the health of the plants, taste the food and determine if the grower is available for a harvest event; ambassadors get the word out to the community to recruit new growers and pass out flyers to potential future volunteers; and drivers deliver food to local food banks, churches and after-school programs.

To donate your excess backyard (or balcony) produce (fruits and vegetables of all types, not just fruit from trees), to donate money or to volunteer your time, visit [TheHarvestClub.org](#), call (714) 564-9525 or email info@theharvestclub.org. If you aren't located near Orange County, Calif., see if there is an organization near you that does similar work, and if not, start your own Harvest Club!

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