

**" One for the mouse,
One for the crow,
One to rot,
And one to grow. "**



Who else grew up hearing some version of that old rhyme during planting season?

Turns out, there's wisdom in it—growing a little extra on purpose can help feed our neighbors, or even our whole neighborhood. That's the idea behind *Plant-A-Row*: whatever you're already growing in your garden, just plant a little more to donate.

The program started in 1995 when Jeff Lowenfels, a columnist for the Garden Writers Association (now GardenComm), asked his readers to plant an extra row of veggies to donate to a local soup kitchen.. Since then, American gardeners have donated over **20 million pounds** of produce—enough for more than **80 million meals** to their local food banks, soup kitchens, or service organizations.

Want to join in? It's easy.

Step 1: Find a local food bank or pantry that accepts fresh produce.

Websites like foodfinder.us and ampleharvest.org can help you locate a pantry near you. There are multiple food banks with collection sites across the lower peninsula (see attached map).

Pro tip: Don't wait until you're knee-deep in zucchini. Reach out during your garden planning phase to confirm they accept fresh produce and ask about their drop-off days and times. Then jot that info on your fridge or in your garden journal so it's ready when harvest time hits.

Step 2: Plant and grow.

It's not too late to jump in! You can still plant delicious fall crops like beets and winter squash—pumpkins are always a hit. And don't forget leafy superfoods like kale, spinach, and collards.

Step 3: Harvest and deliver.

Try to drop off your produce as close to harvest time as possible to keep it fresh. A lightweight Styrofoam cooler works great for collecting and transporting your bounty without it wilting in the summer heat.



Food Bank Council of Michigan Distribution Map

Each member food bank has a geographic service region in which they provide food resources to communities. Based on their region, some member food banks have supporting distribution warehouses. The member food banks and their supporting warehouse are able to take large donations of food. The local emergency food providers (agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, and shelters) then “shop” the regional food bank or warehouse to acquire food to meet the needs of their own community programs and services.

