



SMALL POTATOES GLEANING PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions - for Volunteers

What do I need to be a gleaning volunteer? No prior experience is needed to be a volunteer, just excitement to get your hands in the dirt (or in the trees) and work in a group to get the task done! You will need a working email and transportation to the gleaning location. During a glean you should be prepared to bend, lift, carry crates, and use fine motor skills. We do our best to utilize our truck lift-gate, but it is physical work!

What does the sign-up process look like? We do not have a regular schedule for gleans - so instead, every time we schedule a glean we post it on our website, on our [gleaning opportunities page](#) and send an email announcing the glean. On our website you will be able to see all the gleans we have scheduled, details about what we are harvesting, where it is, what day and time, any special considerations, and the sign up button! Once you are signed up, you will receive an email repeating that same information and giving you driving and parking directions.

What does a typical glean look like? Every glean is going to be different depending on the location, crop, and volunteers. You will always be given instructions at the start of the glean, so don't worry if it's something you have never done. Some examples of what a glean could look like are: cutting and bunching greens, digging up and washing carrots, picking berries into buckets or picking apples using ladders. We generally collect everything in our black crates and then stack them on pallets in our Box truck (except for corn - which we toss into the back of our dump-truck). However, just because you do something one way doesn't mean we will do that again the next time, gleaning has to be flexible! There will also always be a gleaning staff member present at all gleans!

When does gleaning take place? We are a seasonal program, so we run from April until the end of October. Usually, gleaning does not really start until June. Gleans typically last 2hrs and can be scheduled Tuesday through Saturday

What should I wear? Gleaning takes place in all kinds of weather, so come with layers and options! We recommend close-toed shoes, long sleeves, long pants, and a sunhat or sunglasses to keep you protected from whatever weather and crops we may be working with. We are in Washington – so it's always a good idea to have rain gear.

What should I Bring? Water, snacks, sunscreen, any medications you may need (if you have allergies to any kind of plants or insect bites, please let the project coordinator know and bring any medication you may need in case of an allergic reaction. We are often far away from medical service, so this is very important!). We will provide all necessary tools for the glean. Also bring a bag or container for any produce you want to take home.

Can I bring my kids? In most cases yes! We love to work with kids and help get them excited about giving back to their community, connecting with local food, and getting their hands dirty! If for some reason kids are not allowed at a particular glean, it will be posted with the glean announcement. All kids must be under the supervision of a parent or guardian during the glean.

May I bring friends along who want to help? Sure! When you sign up for a glean there is an area where you designate how many people are coming – so you can include your friend in that number. Or encourage your friend to sign up for the glean themselves on our website. If neither of those options work, send an email or text to the gleaning coordinator to check if it's alright to bring another person. Usually the answer is yes, but sometimes if a glean is small or full we might not have space.

Will I get a break during the two-hour glean? Absolutely! Volunteers are encouraged to work at their own pace and take breaks whenever they need to. We often won't have structured group breaks, but there will be many opportunities to take a seat in the shade, drink water, or take a snack break.

May I take produce home with me? Yes, you are more than welcome to take home some of the produce you worked hard to glean! We just ask you to only take what you and your household may need and to be thoughtful of the farm/donors who are letting us harvest their crops! Please bring a bag or container to transport your produce in.

Am I covered by insurance if I have an accident while gleaning? Yes, Bellingham Food Bank has liability insurance that covers all volunteers who are registered for the event once they arrive at a glean. We take safety very seriously, and we hope you do as well.

Is it ok for me to bring my pet? Unfortunately, no. If you need to bring your pet along, please leave them in your car. You are, of course, welcome to check on them throughout the glean.

Is the farm or orchard we are gleaning organic? Sometimes! We glean at organic, no-spray, naturally grown, conventional, etc. farms and orchards. There are many different certifications or methods in farming! We will let you know what type of farm it is when the glean is posted.

I signed up for a glean and now I can't go – help! Just send an email, text, or call the gleaning coordinator asap to let us know! We understand life happens!

I don't have a car or transportation – can I still glean? We unfortunately can't transport volunteers and many of our gleans are out in the county. However, we do glean in many different locations, so it is likely a glean will come up that is walkable, bikeable, or on a bus-line.

Thank you for being a part of this project! We couldn't do any of this work without you.

Questions?

Contact our Gleaning Coordinator

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<https://www.bellinghamfoodbank.org/glean>



Our farm truck,
named Chili, at a
strawberry glean!