

Elgin Gleaners Homeowner Information

What is Elgin Gleaners? We are a community group in Elgin St. Thomas that connects underused fruit trees with individuals in need. Many people in Elgin St. Thomas own fruit trees, but do not want or need all the fruit that they produce. At the same time, there are individuals and families in Elgin St. Thomas that struggle to afford fresh fruit. Volunteers pick fruit from trees on interested homeowners' properties and the harvest is split 3 ways: 1/3 is offered to the homeowners, 1/3 is offered to the volunteers, and the remaining 1/3 is donated to community groups (such as the Good Food Box, community meals programs, and school nutrition programs).

Goals for this project:

- Increase access to fresh, local produce for those in need
- Increase feelings of connectedness to the community by donating fruit to those in need
- Increase volunteers' skills and knowledge related to properly picking fruit
- Increase homeowners' skills and knowledge related to caring for their fruit trees
- Reduce food waste

Expectations of homeowners:

- Complete the "Homeowner Fruit Tree Information Sheet"
- Work with the Gleaner Coordinator to determine when the fruit is ready to pick
- Maintain a safe environment on your property to prevent accidents or injuries to volunteers

Benefits of participating

- The satisfaction of contributing fresh fruit for those in need
- 1/3 of the share of fruit picked from your tree without you having to pick it! (You can also ask for a smaller share if you don't want 1/3 of the fruit)

Elgin Gleaners Fruit Tree Maintenance

Properly caring for fruit trees will help increase the amount, quality, and size of fruit produced each year. If you are unable to maintain your fruit trees, Elgin Gleaner volunteers may be able to help out with fruit tree maintenance throughout the summer and fall.

How to properly care for fruit trees:

Proper pruning is needed to stimulate growth of the tree and to help enough light to reach the buds. This will help to produce more fruit. However, too much pruning can decrease the amount of buds that form and delay early fruit production. The ideal time to prune fruit trees is when the trees are dormant, in the winter and early spring. However, proper pruning techniques can be used in the summer months, if pruning during the dormant seasons is not possible. Normal summer pruning should occur in late July or August.

Pruning techniques:

- Prune the trees lightly to create some pockets or gaps. This will help as much light to reach the buds as possible.
- Long leafy parts of the tree should be cut back in August to stimulate tree growth. A good rule of thumb is to cut back branches that are over 1-foot-long without many buds.
- Always know where your hands are when pruning trees to maintain your safety. Hold the top of the branch with one hand and cut at the base of the branch.
- Make sharp, clean cuts to expose a wound of the smallest diameter. The cut should be flush with the branch that is left to grow.
- All branches can have buds pointed in different directions. To help new bud growth away from the centre of the tree, make cuts above buds that are aimed outward.
- Avoid cutting shorter branches that are full of buds. These buds will become next year's fruit.
- Avoid cutting the main upright stem on the top of the tree, called the "leader". This is needed to help the tree grow upwards.
- If you used the pruning shears on a tree that was diseased, do not use them again on another tree before they have been sanitized. This can spread the disease to other trees and kill the trees.

General guidelines:

- Mature fruit trees benefit from a light application of fertilizer (10-10-10) every spring. If you fertilize your lawn that may be all the tree needs for the year.
- A clean yard is the best way to control pests and disease:
 - Every fall, rake up and dispose of your tree's leaves as they can hold pests and diseases
 - Remove and dispose of infected or infested tree material

Thank you for participating with Elgin Gleaners. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Gleaner Coordinator.

Elgin Gleaners Fruit Tree Information Sheet

Please complete the details below about your fruit tree and your property so that we can make sure the harvesting will be a success. Someone will be in contact with you to setup a date and time for picking.

Date: (DD/MM/YYYY)

#	Tree type	Variety	Tree sprayed?*	When is the fruit usually ripe?

*Please indicate what was sprayed on the tree or what is typically sprayed on as a treatment

Do you want a 1/3 share of the fruit? Yes No

Are there any physical/environmental hazards that volunteers should be aware of? (i.e. low hanging wires, sloped yard, holes, etc.):

Do you have any pets that go outside?

Is there anything else that we should be aware of?:

Elgin Gleaners Homeowner Registration Form

Thank you for your interest in Elgin Gleaners!

Name _____
Phone number _____
Email address _____
Address _____

I consent to sharing my contact information with Gleaner Leaders and the Gleaner Coordinator.

Participant name (printed) _____
Participant signature _____

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND RELEASE

Please read the following carefully. Please complete the following to participate in the Elgin Gleaners program. If you have any questions, please have them answered before signing this document.

I, _____ understand that there are some risks and hazards
(PRINT FULL NAME)

involved in participating in this program (e.g. damage to a tree or property). Being aware of this, I (the 'Releasor') WAIVE, RELEASE, AND DISCHARGE Elgin Gleaners, YWCA St. Thomas Elgin, and Elgin St. Thomas Public Health (the "Releasees") from any liability should any damage, loss, or injury occur. The Releasees ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE for any injury, damage, or loss of any kind suffered by a volunteer or homeowner during, or as a result of, participation in any program, activity, or event related to Elgin Gleaners.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT, AND I AM AWARE THAT BY SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT I AM WAIVING CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS WHICH I MAY HAVE AGAINST THE RELEASEE(S).

Participant name (printed) _____
Participant signature _____
Date _____