

Food Scarcity Resources

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It is entirely possible that farmers will feel pressure this coming growing season due to Covid-19. There are mixed stories on the allowance of migrant workers into Canada this season and as such, farmers are either having to pay new employees a minimum wage or have chosen not to farm this year. As a result, fresh and local produce may be more scarce than usual this year. Whether your parish supports its own food bank, another food bank, or none at all, the following is a list of ideas to help support those in need, local farms and nurseries as well as your local economy.

- **Hamilton Victory Gardens** is a wonderful example of how churches and communities can help feed fresh, healthy, nutrient dense foods to those in need. It is possible that you may already have something similar in your community and in that case, don't reinvent the wheel but support them. However, if you don't have anything like this, check out the HVG's website for ideas on how to create a similar program in your hood.
<https://www.hamiltonvictorygardens.org>
- **Local Nurseries** are great to network with, especially at the moment where many are only open for curbside pick-ups. They are only selling a fraction of what they normally would this time of year and would likely be happy to help get fruit and vegetable plants/seeds out to help people in their communities for a small fee or perhaps none at all. For example, William Dam Seeds in Dundas sponsors the HVG and provides them with free seeds from the previous year (that they can't sell). Although a smaller percentage of the seeds are viable, enough plants will germinate to be helpful.
- If starting your own garden is not possible, you may wish to try and get plants/seeds out to those who want to grow their own veggies. Not everyone has a backyard or an ideal sunny location BUT **container gardening** is all the rage and with some plants, all you need is a window ledge. If someone you know has a green thumb and is willing to grow seeds to seedlings for you, all you have to do is distribute. Seeds are relatively affordable, sometimes you can get compost from the city for free, and you can grow a plant in just about anything. Anyone with some experience can likely take on a workshop for container gardening and host it in your church or local meeting spot.
- **Support local farms!** Smaller farms in particular often sell a wide variety of products from produce to dairy to soap (and more). If you already have a relationship with a local farmer, that's an excellent place to start! If you don't, reach out! Many local farms are not able to sell 100% of their products and would most likely be willing to sell you some of their wares at a discount or donate something in return for a receipt. Not only is this helpful for providing food to those in need, it is also helping to reduce food waste and supporting regenerative farming methods that are earth friendly!
- **Distribution** is always a concern, especially among food deserts and communities where fewer people have access to transportation. Consider a delivery method that is convenient for a few eager volunteers or maybe ask your youth groups to help the less mobile members of your community by tending to a small garden for them.

- Finally, **dollar stores!** Anyone on a budget can go and get some materials for growing their own food. Consider buying dollar store gift cards with that purpose in mind or get your own supplies to hand out to people in need in your community.

I hope you find at least one of these ideas helpful for supporting those in need in your community. If you decide to try one, consider including a message of earth friendly hope like:

- And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the human whom he had formed. Gen 2:8
- The LORD God took humankind and put them in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. Gen. 2:15
- As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. Gen. 8:22
- I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13
- Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth. Psalm 57:11
- Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also; I the lord have created it. Isaiah 45:8