

# Powell River Fruit Tree Project

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## History and Goals

The Powell River Fruit Tree Project (FTP) started in 2004 as a project of the local branch of the Green Party, and was in operation for the summer of 2004, after which the organizer left town, and the project languished for a year. Anne Michaels took over the FTP in 2005 and started building a network of volunteers, equipment, and homeowners.

The main goal of the FTP is to gather as much fruit (and nuts) as possible from local trees, using volunteer labour and resources, and to redirect the gathered food crops to individuals in need as well as the service organizations that serve them, such as the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Salvation Army Church, Food Bank, women's shelter, and so on. Additional goals are: to educate about maintenance of fruit trees; to promote preservation, processing, and drying of fruit harvests for longer storage;

Typically, the volunteers get 1/3 of the gathered food, the homeowner gets 1/3, and then 1/3 is donated to these agencies or individuals. The FTP is therefore an important initiative for getting fresh local nutritious food to segments of the population that might not otherwise be able to afford fresh local fruit. In order to distribute the organization of work parties, we hope to set up neighbourhood-based volunteer groups, and possibly also neighbourhood distribution points.

## Operations

### Fruit/nut trees

We will maintain a database of fruit/nut trees, so that we can plan ahead and organize work parties when the fruit will be ready to pick. We have some records from 2005, but we plan to make a serious effort this year to improve our record-keeping so that we know from one year to the next how to plan ahead for the gleaning season.

### Volunteers

We will maintain a database of volunteers, drawing on contacts already established by the FSP, and will also recruit volunteers through posters, brochures, and personal outreach (e.g., open-air market, display in the mall, etc.).

### Supplies

We need ladders, baskets, work gloves, wheelbarrows, boxes, etc. We will consider approaching local merchants (especially the garden centres) to see if they might be willing to sponsor the FTP by donating supplies. We will need some kind of storage facility, possibly more than one distributed throughout the area, under the control of neighbourhood groups of gleaners.

### Documentation/record-keeping

An initiative like the FTP requires considerable organization and record-keeping, so that the program runs smoothly and can continue in case the organizer(s) decide to bow out. The FTP will maintain a database of homeowners/trees, with as much of the following information as can be gathered:

### Future directions

Eventually, it would be good to see the FTP expand into the following areas:

- Fruit/nut tree maintenance (workshops)
- Join with a local Plant-a-Row/Grow-a-Row program, to ensure that fresh produce of all kinds is not being wasted
- Food processing and preservation, along with workshops
- Integration with other food security efforts, such as the food bank and community kitchens
- Possible distribution through local retail outlets, open-air market, Sunshine Organics

## Resources

Vancouver Fruit Tree Project: [www.vcn.bc.ca](http://www.vcn.bc.ca)

Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project: [www.richmondfruitree.com](http://www.richmondfruitree.com)

Victoria Fruit Tree Project: [www.lifecyclesproject.ca](http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca)

Nelson Fruit Tree Project: <http://earthmatters.ca/fruittree.php>

Sunshine Coast Fruit Tree Project: [http://www.scrd.bc.ca/community\\_bear.htm#fruit](http://www.scrd.bc.ca/community_bear.htm#fruit)

Nanaimo Fruit Tree Gleaning Project: <http://www.nanaimofoodshare.ca/glean.htm>