FULL SUN PROJECTS

PROJECT CITIZEN GARDENER

2026 GUIDE FOR GROWING & DONATING FOOD IN MONMOUTH COUNTY

OUR MISSION:

GROWING WITH GRATITUDE

“Start where you are.

Use what you have.

Do what you can.”

-Arthur Ashe

Thank you for expressing interest in **Project Citizen Gardener.** We welcome **home gardeners of all ages and experience levels** who wish to grow fresh produce to help combat food insecurity in Monmouth County. **While the rise of food costs have skyrocketed,** so have the numbers of people that visit local pantries and food banks each week. **Fresh produce is highly sought after, expensive, and difficult to source for these organizations.** That’s why we need your help!

This guide will provide you with the basics for **growing** your own food and detail the necessary steps to start **donating** produce for your community. **Your generous efforts will not only make you feel good, but they’ll also have a big impact on our local organizations and the people they support.**

Hunger in New Jersey

As of 2018, 774,860 people live in food-insecure households in New Jersey.

Source: Map the Meal Gap, Feeding America and Community Food Bank of New Jersey, 2020

More than 1.2 million NJ residents are projected to be food insecure in 2020, with 431,000 newly food insecure this year.

Source: Community Food Bank of New Jersey, COVID-19's Impact on Food Insecurity in New Jersey Report, September 2020

The number of New Jerseyans estimated to become food-insecure will increase by 56% higher than the national average, and more than 10% higher than New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

Source: Community Food Bank of New Jersey, COVID-19's Impact on Food Insecurity in New Jersey Report, September 2020

In 2018, more than 1.2 million (38.5%) of New Jersey households were unable to afford basic necessities such as food, housing, transportation, healthcare, and taxes.

Source: Community Food Bank of New Jersey, October 2018

In 2014, 77 percent of emergency food clients in New Jersey reported having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel (up from 40 percent in 2006); 70 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage (up from 39 percent in 2006); and 73 percent had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care (up from 31 percent in 2006).

Source: Community Food Bank of New Jersey hunger survey, September 2014

(1) Source: https://rah.rutgers.edu/about-us/hunger-in-new-jersey/

STEP 1: GROWING VEGETABLES

Growing food in your own backyard is a rewarding experience on many levels. Your participation with **Project Citizen Gardener** not only produces personal satisfaction and self sufficiency, but also helps to feed individuals and families who need it most. Like most things in life, gardening is an activity that gets easier with time, dedication, and practice - **so don't give up!**

This first step will describe what you'll need to start a garden, some vegetable varieties that are food bank favorites, as well as some tips and things to look out for when growing food for the first time.

GETTING STARTED:

PLANTS & SEEDS: Can be purchased at a garden center or online. We recommend choosing **organic/ non-GMO plants & seeds** if they're available. Please read on to learn about common growable varieties for our area.

GROWING SPACE: Whether you have an established garden with raised beds & fencing (critical for deer) or containers in your yard, **almost anything can be fabricated for growing vegetables**. Do some research and get creative!

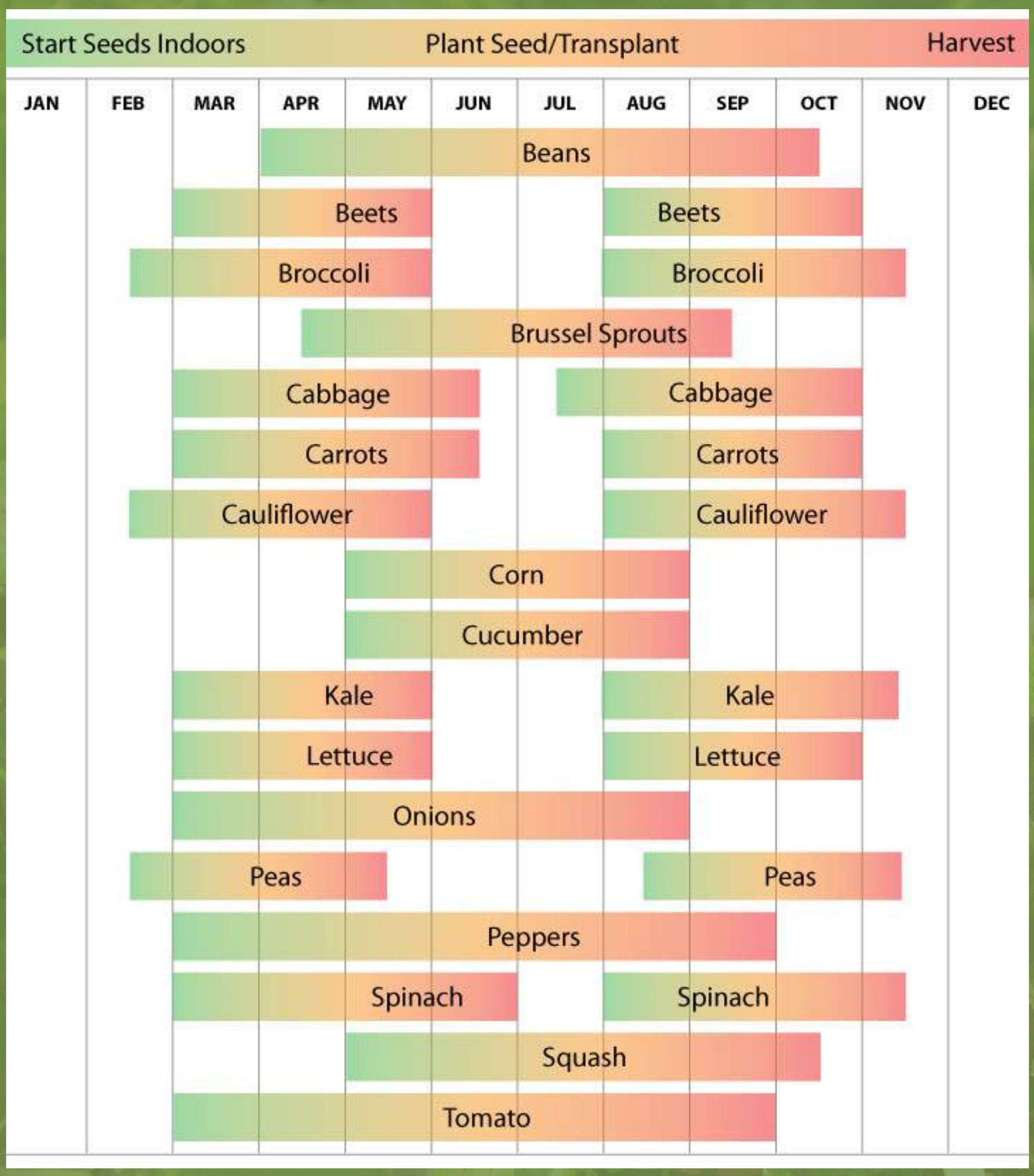
GOOD SOIL: Having excellent soil quality is the first step to successful gardening. **Coast of Maine Compost Blend** is one of the best bagged soil products to amend/ boost soil nutrients for healthy plants. It can be found at select plant and garden centers like **Rysers in Little Silver** and **Dearborn Market in Holmdel**. If you're in **Monmouth County** and are looking for excellent soil in bulk, **Molzon's in Lincroft** carries and delivers **mushroom compost** by the yard. It's used in a lot of local community gardens and is the perfect medium for growing superior vegetables.

WATER and SUNLIGHT: Having ample water and sunlight are critical for plants to thrive. Every plant has different requirements so make sure to do research on plant needs so you know what to expect.

Veggies & Varieties: Familiar Favorites

- Collard Greens
- Swiss Chard
- Kale:
  - Lacinato
  - Curly
- Cabbage:
  - Red/Green
  - Napa
- Lettuces:
  - Romaine
  - Butterhead
  - Iceberg
- Arugula
- Spinach
- Radicchio
- Bok Choy
- Mustard Greens
- Parsley
- Basil
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Carrots
- Beets
- Radishes:
  - Watermelon
  - Daikon
- Peas
- Green Beans
- Fennel
- Scallions
- Leeks
- Okra
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant:
  - Japanese
  - Black Beauty
- Tomatoes:
  - Cherry
  - Slicer
  - Beefsteak
  - Heirloom
- Tomatillos
- Peppers:
  - Jalapeno
  - Poblano
  - Bell
  - Shishito
- Summer Squash:
  - Zucchini
  - Yellow
- Winter Squash
  - Butternut
  - Acorn
- Melons:
  - Watermelon
  - Cantaloupes
  - Honeydew

Eastern Monmouth County (Zone 7b) Vegetable Growing Timeline



(2) Source: https://www.ufseeds.com/zone-7-planting-calendar.html

TOOLS AND TIPS:

- Most vegetables, especially greens, are best **started from SEED**. Carefully follow the directions on the packet -- It's easier than you think!
- **PLANT NATIVE FLOWERS** for bees & other beneficial pollinators. They'll help invite predator insects that will protect your veggies from pests!
- Using organic pesticides like **BT and NEEM OIL** will save your plants from caterpillars and other pests - Try to spray plants at least once a week for maintenance.
- **WEEDS** come with the territory. Try stay on top of them before they get out of hand and your plants begin to suffer.

STEP 2: PREPARING PRODUCE

If you've made it to this step, congratulations! You've successfully grown your own food. Vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, summer squash, and eggplant are pretty much ready to go once they're picked. However other veggies, like carrots and lettuce, need a little more preparation before they're ready to donate.

WASHING VEGGIES:

Do your best to wash off any loose dirt, bugs, and debris from your harvest - Some organizations won't accept unwashed produce.

GREENS: Once thoroughly washed, greens remain fresher and store more easily on our shelves if the bottom of stems or base of plant is put in bag or container with a small amount of water. This also applies to fennel & beets!

ROOTS: Carrots, beets, and radishes require some scrubbing to fully remove dirt. Using a scrub brush will make it easier - having your friends or family to help wash is helpful too! Most organizations appreciate the removal of carrot tops for the purpose of space in the pantry.

PACKAGING: Use whatever you have on hand to package fresh produce. If you are reusing an old box, bag, or container, just make sure it is clean and sanitary. Some examples of things to package food are: used fruit containers, cardboard boxes, and supermarket produce bags.

Step 3: Drop Off

NOTE: Please contact pantries & food banks before drop off!

Hours and locations are subject to change.

Cleaned and washed produce can be delivered to any of the following food banks and pantries in Monmouth County:

ABERDEEN:

Matawan United Methodist Pantry

- **Address:** 478 Atlantic Ave. Aberdeen. (Corner of Church St.)
- **Phone Number:** 732-566-2996
- **Hours:** Open Thurs. 10-11:30am and 2nd & 4th Tues 6:30-7:30pm

St. Joseph Church Pantry

- **Address:** 42 Wooley St. Aberdeen.
- **Phone Number:** 732-290-1878
- **Hours:** 1st Thursdays 9am-1pm.

ALLENTOWN:

Allentown Food Pantry:

- **Address:** 20 High St. Allentown. (Presbyterian Ch.urch)
- **Phone Number:** 609-259-7289
- **Hours:** Mon., Wed & Friday 10 am -2 pm

ASBURY PARK:

Bethel Food Pantry

- **Address:** 119 Atkins Ave. Asbury Park. (near Springwood)
- **Phone Number:** 732-776-6068
- **Hours:** Wed. & Fri. 10:00 - 11:30 am

Faith Baptist Tabernacle Pantry

- **Address:** 1209 Bangs Ave Asbury Park. (across from school)
- **Phone Number:** 732-988-1816
- **Hours:** 9-11AM on 2nd & 4th Saturday of month

First United Methodist

- **Address:** A.P. Pantry 906 Grand Ave Asbury Park. (corner of First Ave)
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-2693
- **Hours:** 1st & 3rd Thursdays 10 - 12 pm

Jewish Family Services Pantry

- **Address:** 705 Summerfield Ave. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-774-6886
- **Hours**: Fridays 12-1 pm

ASBURY CONTINUED:

La Senda Pantry

- **Address:** 700 Grand Ave. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-988-7741
- **Hours:** 1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesday of Month 4-6 pm

Lutheran Church of Atonement Pantry

- **Address**: First Ave. & Heck St. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-776-5727
- **Hours:** 2nd & 4th Wednesday of month - 10:30 -12:30.

Salvation Army Pantry Asbury Park

- **Address:** 605 Asbury Ave. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-8698
- **Hours:** Mondays and Fridays 9-11 AM

Second Baptist Church Pantry

- **Address:** 124 Atkins Ave Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-774-5347
- **Hours:** 2nd and Last Saturdays 12-2:30

St. Peter Claver Pantry

- **Address:** 1419 Springwood Ave. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-4157
- **Hours:** Thursdays 10-1 PM

Trinity Episcopal Church Last Resort Pantry

- **Address:** 503 Asbury Ave. Asbury Park (Corner of Grand)
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-5084
- **Hours:** Tues. Wed. Fri. 11am-1pm; Tues 6pm

Victory Tabernacle of Prayer Pantry

- **Address:** 1325 Asbury Ave. Asbury Park
- **Phone Number:** 732-455-5836
- **Hours:** 2nd & 4th Wednesday 10 am -1 pm

BELFORD:

Friends Feeding Families

- **Address:** 180 Church Street, Belford
- **Phone Number:** 732-639-0106
- **Hours:** Tuesdays 6pm-7pm & 1st & 3rd Sat. 10am-11am

(3) Source: https://fulfillnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Monmouth-County-Pantries-amp-S.-Kitchens-11.20.17.pdf

BELMAR:

Food Pantry

- **Address:** 503 7th Ave. Belmar
- **Phone Number:** 732-280-6100
- **Hours:** Mon. & Thurs. 10-12

BRADLEY BEACH:

Bradley Food Pantry

- **Address:** 605 4th Ave Bradley Beach (next to St. James Church)
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-0161
- **Hours:** Mon-Fri 10-11:30AM; Thursdays 6-7PM

CLIFFWOOD BEACH:

Providence Baptist Pantry

- **Address:** 49 Kennedy Ave. Cliffwood Beach
- **Phone Number:** 732-566-4430
- **Hours:** 3rd Sat. 8 - 12 pm

CREAM RIDGE:

Emley's Hill Good Samaritan Pantry

- **Address:** 69 Emley's Hill Road Cream Ridge
- **Phone Number:** 609-259-7465
- **Hours:** Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

EATONTOWN:

Eatontown Food Coop

- **Address:** 15 Meridian Dr. Eatontown (off Industrial)
- **Phone Number:** 732-610-8588
- **Hours:** Every other Wed.12-3 (9/7, 9/21, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16)

St. Dorothea's Pantry

- **Address:** 240 Broad St. Eatontown (Route 71)
- **Phone Number:** 732-542-0148 x6
- **Hours:** 2nd & 4th Wed. 5-7PM & 2nd & 4th Sat. 9-11AM

FARMINGDALE:

Joshua House Ministries Food Pantry

- **Address:** 42 Main St. Farmingdale
- **Phone Number:** 732-751-0715
- **Hours:** Mon. 10-12/Wed. 1-3

The Mews Pantry

- **Address:** 2 Liron Lane Farmingdale
- **Phone Number:** 732-919-6227
- **Hours:** Wednesdays 3:30 - 5:00 PM

FREEHOLD:

New Hope Pantry

- **Address:** 28 First Street Freehold (corner of Center)
- **Phone Number:** 732-780-9210
- **Hours:** 3rd Th 10AM-1PM & following Sat 9AM-1PM

Open Door Pantry

- **Address:** 39 Throckmorton St. Freehold
- **Phone Number**: 732-780-1089
- **Hours:** Mon-Fri 10-1:45

HAZLET:

St. John's Pantry

- **Address:** 2000 Florence Ave Hazlet
- **Phone Number:** 732-264-1236
- **Hours:** Thursdays 5:30-7:30 pm

HIGHLANDS:

OLPH Pantry (Our Lady of Perpetual Help)

- **Address:** 159 Miller Street Highlands
- **Phone Number:** 732-872-1290
- **Hours:** Sunday 11 am-12:45 pm & Monday 5:30-7:30 pm

HOLMDEL:

St. Benedict's Emergency Pantry

- **Address:** 165 Bethany Rd. Holmdel (entrance on Hillcrest, located in house left of school)
- **Phone Number**: 732-264-4712 x 34
- **Hours:** Tues.-Fri 10-1 & Tues. 6-9PM

HOWELL:

Christ Church Pantry

- **Address:** 71 Oak Glen Rd. Howell
- **Phone Number:** 732-938-7500
- **Hours:** 2nd Saturday 8:30-12:30 and by appt.

Howell Food Pantry

- **Address:** 449 Adelphia Rd. Howell (Rt. 524)
- **Phone Number:** 732-938-2368
- **Hours:** Usually 4th Mon 4-7pm and following Thurs. 11-1

Howell Mobile at St. Veronica's

- **Address:** 4215 Route 9 Howell
- **Phone Number:** 732-918-2600
- **Hours:** 2nd Tuesday 10 - 11am

KEANSBURG:

Project Paul

- **Address:** 211 Carr Ave. Keansburg
- **Phone Number:** 732-787-4887
- **Hours:** M, W, F 9:45-11:45 AM & 12:45-2:45 PM

St. Mark's CCR Pantry

- **Address:** 247 Carr Ave. Keansburg
- **Phone Number:** 732-787-3520
- **Hours:** Mon-Sat 9-11

KEYPORT:

Keyport Ministerium Food Pantry

- **Address:** 42 Elizabeth Street Keyport
- **Phone Number**: 732-888-1986
- **Hours:** Tues & Thurs. 9:30-11:30AM

LONG BRANCH:

Christ the King Pantry

Address: 408 Prospect St. Long Branch (Broadway to Willow)
Phone Number: 732-222-3216
Hours: Wednesdays 4-6 PM

(4) Source: https://fulfillnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Monmouth-County-Pantries-amp-S.-Kitchens-11.20.17.pdf

LONG BRANCH CONTINUED:

First Baptist Pantry

- **Address:** 499 Bath Ave Long Branch (Use Emmons St. Entrance)
- **Phone Number:** 732-229-1453
- **Hours:** 4th Thursday 12-4pm

St. Brigid's Pantry at St. James Church

- **Address:** 300 Broadway Long Branch
- **Phone Number:** 732-222-1411
- **Hours:** Mon & Wed 1:00pm - 3:00pm

St. Luke's United Methodist Pantry

- **Address:** 535 Broadway Long Branch (corner of Washington St.)
- **Phone Number:** 732-222-1341
- **Hours:** Fridays 3-5 PM

St. Michael's Food Pantry

- **Address:** 800 Ocean Ave. Long Branch
- **Phone Number:** 732-483-0360 x13
- **Hours:** 3rd Saturday of month 2:00pm-5:00pm

WEST LONG BRANCH:

Reformation Food Pantry

- **Address:** 992 Broadway West Long Branch (Corner of Locust)
- **Phone Number:** 732-759-4285
- **Hours:** Tues. 7-8:30pm & Sat. 8:30-10am

MANALAPAN:

Samaritan Center Food Pantry

- **Address:** 211 Route 522 Manalapan (In Public Works Complex)
- **Phone Number:** 732-446-1142
- **Hours:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-11:15, Saturdays 9:00-10:45 ****Please call ahead**

MANASQUAN:

Hope Community Church Pantry

- **Address: 23** Taylor Ave. Manasquan
- **Phone Number:** 732-223-4115
- **Hours:** Sundays 1-2 and by appt.

Manasquan Food Pantry

- **Address:** 16 Virginia Ave. Manasquan (1st Presbyterian)
- **Phone Number:** 732-223-0898
- **Hours:** Mon, Tues 10-1 Thurs, Fri 1-4 **Please call ahead

MARLBORO:

Monmouth Worship Center Pantry

- **Address:** 37 Vanderburg Rd Marlboro
- **Phone Number:** 732-332-9600
- **Hours:** Sundays 12:30-1:30 and by appt.

MATAWAN:

Matawan United Methodist Pantry

- **Address:** 478 Atlantic Ave Aberdeen
- **Phone Number:** 732-566-2996
- **Hours:** Thurs. 10-11:30am & 2nd & 4th Tues. 6:30-7:30pm

Matawan Food Pantry

- **Address:** 201 Broad St. Matawan
- **Phone Number:** 732-566-2663
- **Hours:** Last Sat. of the month 8am -12:00pm

MIDDLETOWN:

Calico Cat Pantry

- **Address:** 96 King's Hwy. Middletown
- **Phone Number:** 732-671-8775
- **Hours:** Wed 9:30AM-12, 1PM-2:30 (& 3rd Saturday 9 - 11 for working families

NEPTUNE:

FPC Food Outreach

- **Address:** 142 Oxonia Ave. Neptune (off Asbury Ave.)
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-8174
- **Hours:** 1st & 3rd M 5-7PM, W 12-2 & Sat.12-2

Fulfill NJ

- **Address:** 3300 NJ-66 Neptune Township
- **Phone Number:** 732-918-2600
- **Hours:** Monday-Friday 8-4:30

Greater Emanuel Food Pantry

- **Address:** 423 Drummond Ave Neptune
- **Phone Number:** 732-774-1963
- **Hours:** 2nd Tues. 12-2 pm monthly, Call first to register

Mt. Olivet - Heaven's Grocery

- **Address**: 1707 Washington Ave Neptune
- **Phone Number:** 732-775-4333
- **Hours**: First Wednesday 3-5 pm and Second Sunday 1-3 pm

RED BANK:

Lunch Break

- **Address:** 121 Dr. James Parker Blvd Red Bank
- **Phone Number:** 732-747-1910
- **Hours**: Mon-Fri 9:00am-2:30pm; Tuesdays 4pm-6 pm; Saturdays 9am-12pm

Salvation Army Food Pantry Red Bank

- **Address:** 180 Newman Springs Road Red Bank
- **Phone Number:** 732-747-1626
- **Hours**: First Wednesday of the month 9:30-11:30 & 1-2:30 pm and other Wednesdays by appt.

St. Anthony's Food Pantry

- **Address:** 121 Bridge Ave. Red Bank (Parish Center)
- **Phone Number:** 732-747-0813 x10
- **Hours:** Mon &Tues. 6-7:00 PM

TINTON FALLS:

Glad Tidings Pantry

- **Address:** 4012 Asbury Ave. Tinton Falls
- **Phone Number:** 732-922-9189
- **Hours:** 2nd Saturday of the month 9AM-11AM & 3rd Monday of the month 6PM-8PM

UNION BEACH:

Faith Chapel

- **Address:** 1015 Union Ave. Union Beach
- **Phone Number:** 732-264-5248
- **Hours:** 3rd Saturday of the month 9 am-1 pm

WALL:

Grace Bible - Abundant Grace Pantry

- **Address:** 4041 Squankum Allenwood Rd. Wall (Allenwood)
- **Phone Number:** 732-938-3111
- **Hours:** Wed. 3:00-6:00 PM; Sat. 9AM to noon

(5) Source: https://fulfillnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Monmouth-County-Pantries-amp-S.-Kitchens-11.20.17.pdf

Thank you for helping make a difference to those who need it most.

This grow guide was created by:
Gabbie at fullsunprojects@gmail.com
Find us on **Instagram: @fullsunprojects**

Special thanks to **Bonnie Featherstone-Johnson** for her endless dedication to helping her community and for being my partner in creating this initiative.

Shout out to one of our local food banks that we love and support: **Lunch Break**
Find them on **Instagram: @lunchbreak**

SOURCES

1. **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station: Rutgers Against Hunger** - Hunger in New Jersey
https://rah.rutgers.edu/about-us/hunger-in-new-jersey/

2. **Urban Farmer** - Zone 7 Vegetable Planting Calendar Guide
https://www.ufseeds.com/zone-7-planting-calendar.html

3, 4, & 5. **Fulfill** - Monmouth County Food Banks and Soup Kitchens PDF
https://fulfillnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Monmouth-County-Pantries-amp-S.-Kitchens-11.20.17.pdf