

Skookum Gleaners (formerly The Powell River Fruit Tree Project) harvests and cares for our regional food supply by connecting those who have excess produce on their properties with those who have the time and energy to harvest it and those who are in real need of nutritious fruit and processed fruit.

The harvest is usually shared three ways, with 1/3 of the bounty going to the pickers, 1/3 to the owners, and 1/3 to those in need in the community.

This year we have bought a cider press and intend to do more preserving and processing, so that we keep more of the harvest than ever... and for longer!

We need help! If you have excess fruit, nuts, or other produce – or if you would like to help pick fruit or nuts, please contact us today!

Skookum Gleaners is a project of



www: skookumfood.ca/gleaners
email: gleaners@skookumfood.ca
phone: (604) 485-4366

Please consider becoming a member of Skookum:
skookumfood.ca/join

This year, let's share the harvest!
Help us save fruit from
going to waste
(or to bears)!



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A project of Skookum Food Provisioners' Cooperative.

A short guide to picking fruit

Picking fruit can be a rewarding activity. There is a sense of awe at the bounty of the earth and great satisfaction in seeing the boxes filling as the work progresses. Here are some suggestions for how to pick safely, producing the highest quality fruit and without damaging the trees.

Safety considerations

It is important to realize that picking takes considerable effort, so the first safety tip is always to make sure that you have enough time and energy for the job at hand. *We do not recommend unsupervised children on picks.*

Use boxes that are small enough to lift safely when you fill them. A standard 19-liter Handipak fruit box will weigh between 20 and 30 pounds when full. Use the legs to lift. Do not twist the spine while carrying a load.

Don't climb trees. It is too easy to damage the trees and yourself.

All about ladders

- The best picking ladders have a third leg for support, but you can use a straight ladder if you place it carefully against the trunk or large branches.
- Hold the ladder by its rungs; place the bottom of the ladder firmly on the ground, and raise it to a vertical position; turn the ladder sideways and ease it into the tree.
- Place a straight ladder so that if a limb breaks the ladder will fall into the tree, not away from it.
- Place the ladder in a nearly upright position; the picker won't have to hang onto it, and so they will have both hands free to pick.
- When you're climbing up the ladder, hold the picking basket to one side so you don't bang it about, and it won't knock you off balance.
- Place ladders so that the tree limbs can move up as you remove the weight of the fruit.
- Place the supporting leg(s) of a stepladder under the tree canopy.
- Listen to your intuition. Reposition the ladder if you feel uncomfortable.

Check for power lines near the tree before you start picking. If the tree touches a power line, assume it can become energized and don't pick it.

Follow the 10-foot rule: keep yourself and any tools or ladders at least 10 feet away from power lines.

How to pick

Start by picking from the bottom of the tree; then use the ladder to reach the higher branches.

Pick everything within reach as you move up the ladder, and finish one area before moving on.

Climb the ladder until you're even with the fruit on the tree; try not to pick over your head. It's too easy to lose your balance.

Move around the tree step-by-step.

When your containers are full, gently pour the fruit from the picking baskets into the boxes.

Most fruit grows on small branches known as spurs. Avoid breaking these off, because that's where next year's fruit will grow.

Pick fruit by gently holding it in the hand and lifting it slightly, which will cause it to break free from the spur with the stem attached. Avoid just pulling it off since this can break off the spur. (NOTE: apples and most other fruit keep better with the stem attached.)

What to do after you're finished picking

Once you have picked the tree over for good quality fruit, you may have to shake it to remove the rest of the fruit, especially on a large, poorly pruned tree.

Avoid swaying the tree: the best technique is to grasp a branch about 4 inches in diameter and create a rapid horizontal motion.

Clean up all the falls, including fruit, branches and leaves. Some of the fruit is usable if processed promptly but bruised or damaged fruit does not keep well. **Remember: be bear aware!**

And also please remember...

Skookum Gleaners needs the support of fruit tree owners to continue operating -- respect people's property and clean up all fallen fruit, leaves and branches. Encourage tree owners to donate to our cause by giving them an info packet supplied by Skookum Gleaners.