

## Tips for making produce sharing tables effective

1. Make sharing tables as routinely and frequently accessible as possible, so that, when people make the effort to visit, the tables are available. If possible, make tables available around-the-clock or, if they are indoors, have them available during all of a building's open hours.
2. Place sharing tables in the public eye, with sufficient information that people know what is and is not welcome. (Produce? Plants? Gardening magazines? Pots? Seeds?) See the sample sign to the right.
3. Consider how you will deal with unwanted goods that might be 'shared'. Be aware that untended problems (e.g. vandalism and dumping) attract repeats. Consider ways to increase shared community ownership, including awareness-raising regarding the table's purpose, volunteer involvement, and participatory neighbourhood art to decorate the table.
4. If possible, choose a location where it is easy for a person or group to provide oversight. For example, a willing homeowner might place a table on their lawn facing a publically accessible sidewalk, or a client-oriented organisation or business might place a table on their front doorstep.
5. Identify a volunteer who can keep an eye on the table and who is willing to separate large batches of produce (e.g. a whole box of plums) into smaller batches so that people take a family-sized share.
6. Join existing communities by honouring how people are already using spaces. Make use of well-frequented areas and people flows (e.g. foot traffic) to bring people by the table, but don't block any current use of a social space.
7. Be clear on your purposes. If sharing produce and being inclusive are your top priorities, make sure everyone involved understands this and what it might mean for secondary purposes. Below are examples.
  - a. Is there a koha box attached? Even if you add a koha box, don't make it the focus or you'll get distracted by the possibility that it might be stolen, or by an expectation that people contribute. Instead, let the sharing table be about ways of giving and receiving that don't fit our culture's dominant understanding of exchange.
  - b. Do you want to serve the poor? Don't make poverty an explicit focus or you will create a stigma that reduces uptake. Instead, build community in ways that welcome everyone. Those who are hungry will be included along with everyone else.
  - c. Is the sharing table connected to a community garden of some sort, such as a sharing garden? If some garden plants are set aside for particular purposes, put some educating information around them; accept, however, that not everything will go according to plan. Someone will weed out the puha, or harvest an over-ripe kamo kamo that has been left for seed. Make people the top priority and everyone can learn and try again next season.
8. Publicise the sharing table. Find a way to keep the table and its culture of use in the public eye. For example, post what is available on social media.
9. Consider how you will move produce before it spoils. Connections to other organisations that distribute food can help in the case of a glut. As a last resort, knowing where to find a nearby compost pile can take care of that last rotting apple. Volunteers that are actively maintaining a table can be encouraged to use anything left over, even in quantity (e.g. for preserving).

### Produce Sharing Table

Share fresh veggies, fruit, seeds, & seedlings  
Reduce food waste & connect your community

**Give what you can**

**Take what you need**

Call or text Name at ##### for more info  
Please, no household items. Thank you.