

WE FOUND IT



# GLEANNING

Do you ever feel like there is an abundance of stuff just going to waste in our society?

First mentioned in the Old Testament, gleaning originally meant collecting leftover crops from fields. This was pictured in Jean Francois Millet's 1857 painting "The Gleaners." Today it has come to mean the collecting of things that others have thrown away. You can see this practiced everyday in almost every single community throughout the world; from cardboard recyclers to alu-

minum can collectors, furniture finders on trash night to those who feed the hungry by collecting surplus food from restaurants and groceries.

Why do good things go to waste? Because surplus is an inherent and necessary part of a capitalist economy. Capitalism considers the throwing away of millions of tons of trash every day "efficiency." Usually more money can be made on "waste management," the collecting of trash and waste, then on the redistribution of edible or re-usable items. In the global south, entire communities have developed that survive collected different forms of excess. In the US, tens of thousands of people live off of collecting paper and metals

to recycle. In addition, large groups live off of what is often termed "dumpster diving," the digging through trash to find food that is still healthy but has been thrown away, often because it has a past expiration date.

For over 20 years, in dozens of cities worldwide, Food Not Bombs has been collecting food that would otherwise be wasted and cooking and serving it for free. The internet has introduced new tools to gleaners, in particular craigslist.org and other networking sites connect hundreds of thousands of people who have leftover or extra items with those that want or need them. For more information on gleaning, see:

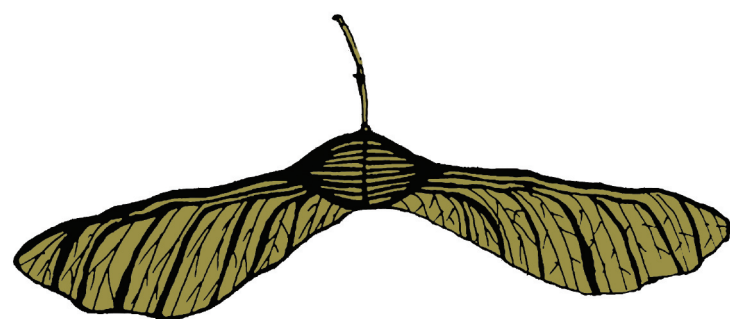
[www.foodnotbombs.net](http://www.foodnotbombs.net)  
[www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)  
[www.dumpsterworld.com](http://www.dumpsterworld.com)  
[www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)



The Samaras Project is a creative exploration of the many alternative economic systems and forms of exchange that exist side by side with capitalism. While capitalism's goal is the accumulation of profits, these other economies aim toward sustainability and fulfilling human needs. The Samaras Project also works closely with the Anti-Advertising Agency.

[www.samarasproject.net](http://www.samarasproject.net)  
[www.antiadvertisingagency.com](http://www.antiadvertisingagency.com)

The above illustration is based on a photograph of a cardboard gleaning truck in San Francisco.  
Source photo: Andrew Schoultz. Illustration: Josh MacPhee



**SAMARASPROJECT.NET**