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## Moraga Pear Harvest Precedes Festival

Cathy Dausman



Volunteers pack pears Photo Cathy Dausman

It's pear picking time again in Moraga as volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 234, local National Charity League members and area residents gathered recently to collect firm, green pears from trees, and box the harvest for the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano. The harvest is in its 14th year. Food Drive Coordinator Joan Tomasini said volunteers picked 7,791 pounds of pears this year.

Volunteers remove still- green pears from trees with long handled fruit pickers on loan from the Moraga Park Foundation. The pears are refrigerated at the food bank for about a week before distribution. No pears go to waste-ripe, dropped or bruised fruit is set aside for use as animal feed. Food grade pears are boxed and loaded on pallets. Each box weighs about 35 pounds; each pallet holds 30 boxes.

"It's the right temperature" this year for picking, noted MPF's Karen Reed, who remembers it being uncomfortably hot for the volunteers last year. She said although some trees are small, they could be 100 years old. Moraga was once one of the largest pear producing areas in the United States. If you missed the work party, you can still celebrate all things pear at the Moraga Pear & Wine Festival September 29 at the Moraga Commons. Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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