

#anti-waste

#collection

#the poor

**TURN SURPLUS PRODUCE FROM MARKET GARDENS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS INTO CANNED GOODS, WHICH ARE THEN DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE TO THOSE IN NEED.**

Structure : Clichés



Najac (Aveyron)

Occitanie

At the offices of the association Les Lieux Communs, which runs a community space in the town of Najac in western Aveyron, volunteers gather every Monday during the summer to process surplus produce from market gardeners and community gardens. The preserves are then distributed free of charge to those most in need.

Every Monday, from July to November—*“right after the chestnut harvest”*—volunteers can the fruits and vegetables to distribute them to the most disadvantaged residents.

Behind this anti-waste initiative lies a fight against food insecurity, which is gaining ground in rural areas.

### **From the garden to the pot, local solidarity**

A volunteer lifts the steaming sterilizer, dish towels in hand, and removes the jars of *“plain”* zucchini. The recipes are chosen collectively based on what’s available. Ratatouille, radish pickles, tomato coulis, apple compotes... The jars promote access to quality food and food self-sufficiency. Part of the produce goes to the volunteers; the rest is placed on a *“donation shelf”* in the town center. This open access allows people to help themselves anonymously, without

having to explain themselves.

All the food is organic and comes from surpluses from family gardens and two local market gardeners. *“If farmers don’t have chickens or pigs, they’ll throw away their surplus.* These unsold items are often downgraded or wilted and require sorting and repurposing to be consumed. In exchange for the donations, the association’s members lend a hand with the harvests. A barter of services that satisfies everyone. *“That’s what we call mutual aid and solidarity.”* This year, a farmer even planted a row of green beans for the cannery.

### **Working together, passing on knowledge, building connections**

To buy small supplies like rubber washers and spices, the collective relies on a donation jar left out in plain sight. Volunteers also drop in a symbolic 1 euro during each workshop. Last year, 94 euros were raised. The cannery receives support from local elected officials. The town hall provides the community hall and covers the cost of gas and electricity. The community of municipalities also compensates the group for lacto-fermentation workshops organized during events of the Territorial Food Project (PAT) of the Ouest Aveyron Community intermunicipal body.

Combating waste, precariousness, and the loss of knowledge, these handmade jars tell of other ways to inhabit a territory, to help one another, and to view food as a common good.

### **Liens**

<https://reporterre.net/Dans-ce-village-on-transforme-le-surplus-des-maraichers-en-conserves-gratuites>

<https://leslieuxcommuns.fr/>