GROWING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY THROUGH GLEANING
Session: B, Breakout Room #9
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On a planet with finite resources and an exponentially increasing population, food security is a growing issue. Within Seattle, a troubling amount of citizens face food insecurity and inequalities regarding healthy food access. Paradoxically, high volumes of food are wasted across the globe each year. Urban gleaning is an innovative solution for addressing food insecurity, food waste management, and has a multitude of positive environmental impacts. My project seeks to determine how volunteering at a gleaning organization compares to other outdoor activities in terms of connecting with nature. Nature connectedness is defined as the extent of which individuals consider nature as part of their identity. An increased connection with nature has been shown to make people more inclined to protect the environment and also has numerous health benefits. Currently, little literature on the impact participating in gleaning has on nature experience exists. Thus, I constructed a survey for measuring connection to nature while interning with City Fruit, a non-profit gleaning organization. The survey was provided to two sample groups: City Fruit volunteers and individuals visiting Seattle parks. The results concluded that volunteering for a gleaning organization (CNS=4.27) allows individuals to connect with nature on a higher level compared to other activities (CNS=3.79). Therefore, promoting gleaning has the capability to make individuals more passionate about environmental concerns, while simultaneously reducing food insecurity/wastage. This can contribute to addressing overarching goals related to food waste and climate change, such as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 12 and 13.