

**FRIENDSHIP FARMS & FARE**  
FARM REPORT & NEWSLETTER  
MARCH 10, 2014 - 23RD FARM & CSA REPORT

**REPORT**

**46 degrees at 2:30 AM, March 8, 2014**

**Historical Average (3/7): 75 HIGH, 57 LOW—Weather Underground:**

<http://www.wunderground.com/>

The historical average continues to creep upward. The current average is now five degrees higher than the average lowest average high (70), and six degrees higher than the lowest average low (51). The average will continue to increase through the rest of the winter months (about one degree a week), into the spring and summer. It will reach the highest average high in early June (90 degrees) and remain there until early September.

**Revision of Report, Missive, and Share List for 2013-2014**

We have temporarily assigned the weekly Farm Report to the archives. The full report will be available there each week until further notice.

From time to time we may have a special report or interlude on the Report Page, and you will find a link to the full Farm Report on that page each week.

Available share items will continue to be posted each week in the usual location on the site.

We have discontinued the Market Report for the time being.

**Clock Report**

Set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday or Sunday morning. We return to Daylight Savings Time at 2:00 AM on March 9.

**Weather Report**

Temperatures continue to bounce around. This past week was a bit above normal, with Friday bringing a cold front, and today (3/8) being well below normal.

**Garden Overview**

Broccoli is now past peak, which means we are harvesting many heads every week. Tomatoes have been composted. Triple heart and winter density lettuces are doing very well. End of season kale and broccoli has been planted. Work on new beds in the south garden continues. Sweet potatoes have been ordered, and early season okra has been seeded (and sprouted). Daily loquat harvest is increasing, with the bright fruit increasingly sweeter.

Grape vines beginning to leaf. All six vines are leafing.

**Spring/Summer Plantings**

This spring we'll make a commitment to growing bell peppers, cucumbers, and peach tomatoes. We'll continue to harvest all winter crops that are productive. Most likely these will include arugula, collards, leaf lettuces, possibly kale, and (of course) broccoli.

For summer, we'll go with okra (which we seeded last week), and sweet potatoes. Most herbs will be productive through the summer, and we'll have sweet potato leaves by June at the latest. Eggplant interest was lighter than expected, but we'll still sow a nice sampling of seeds and devote at least 200 sq feet to this warm weather favorite. Again, if you are interested in eggplant, please

let us know. We are going to give them a try again this year, and we'll be more ambitious if there is expressed interest.

### **Okra**

Our first of the season okra seeds have sprouted, with about 80% germination for all four varieties: Star of David, Hill Country Red, Silver Queen, and Red Burgundy. All seeds are from last year's crop. They are also listed in Seed Savers, and available at a modest price to anyone.

Due to the rain and cooler temperatures, we started the seeds inside in the garden studio, on heat mats and under our grow lights. We prefer to start seeds in the natural environment, but an exception was warranted in this case.

### **Cauliflower**

First tiny heads have appeared on the cauliflower. It seems like a long wait, but was about 90 days. That is a little bit longer than is typical for this variety, but not by much. If the heads mature nicely, we'll have cauliflower in a couple of weeks. Stay tuned!

### **Cucumbers**

The Japanese cucumbers we started two weeks ago are leafing out. We have planted seedlings in two sites in the New South Garden and in test strip we are trying on the main estate. We've also started Longfellows, with about 80% germination.

### **Loquats Ripening**

The loquat fruit continues to ripen, with increasing numbers each week, and each new harvest sweeter than the last. Squirrels continue to enjoy fruit from the old tree in the south grove, so the harvest there is down. The tree on the north property shows no signs of squirrel visitation.

Loquats are a wonderful (and largely unrecognized) harbinger of spring. Their first fruits appear in the depth of winter, and as the days lengthen and gradually warm, their bounty increases.

Watch for The Florida Loquat Festival on April 5 in New Port Richey. That is an ambitious title for what will be a small inaugural event, but it is time (and past time) to begin getting some notice for this important member of our local Florida food system.

### **Broccoli**

Our first planting of broccoli is well past peak. Last week we harvested 14 heads. Our a one-week record is 18, set two weeks ago. So far this season, we've harvested over 90 heads. Requests from shares are running strong, which is great.

No one should hesitate to order broccoli right now. We are very pleased with the quality and quantity of our Calabrese 3F Gulf Coast Broccoli. It is one of the specialties of the farm.

As always, we'll include all parts of the plant – stems, leaves, and head. We are also adding in second-growth heads and some of the smaller heads. All parts are edible – delicious, really. Chop or slice the stems, juice up in a blender, sauté or stir-fry, add to soups or stews. The stems can be chopped or grated to make cole slaw.

The leaves may be an acquired taste for some, but many folks enjoy them just as they would any other dark leafy vegetable – their taste resembles collards. Give them a try, you might be pleasantly surprised with their flavor.

Some of the broccoli has started to flower, and some heads in the shares will have flowers. You will probably notice no difference in the taste – at most a very faint sweetness. Those abundant little green globes that make up the broccoli crown are actually flower buds – when they bloom they make beautiful yellow bouquets.

Over the course of the season we let quite a few heads flower and seed for the sake of our companion bees.

European (Domestic/Honey) bees are in decline worldwide due to GMOs and neonicotinoids used in commercial agriculture, and found in most commercial foods. We are committed to doing all we can to enhance their survival, and at this time of the year that means letting a large number of broccoli heads flower since the bees are especially attracted to those specific flowers. Every year, we count 100s of bees in the garden when the broccoli is blooming. We hope this is the case this year. This past week, we observed more bees than we have recently, but still well below usual numbers.

### **Arugula**

Arugula is past peak, but there is still plenty on hand. We can offer ample quantities to all shares. We encourage you to try it steamed or in a stir fry. Try it mixed in with other winter greens. Of course, it is great in fresh green salads.

Most the plants are now flowering, which the bees love. We'll let ten or so go to seeds for next year's garden.

We have begun composting some plants, making room for the spring and summer crops.

### **Tomatoes**

We have removed all the winter tomatoes. There are several young volunteer plants in various parts of the gardens that are both flowering and not showing signs of septoria. One particular variety is apparently some sort of accidental hybrid. It looks vaguely like an Opalka tomato, but only vaguely. A small tomato, the fruit grows in clusters like a cherry or grape tomato, of which we have planted none. They have a remarkable flavor. We'll see how these and the other volunteers do.

At bit later, after this current cool spell passes, we'll seed some peach tomatoes (which we did well with last spring).

### **Citrus Season Concludes**

All accessible citrus has been harvested. There are a few grapefruit left in the old grove, but they are just too high to harvest safely, even with our extension pickers. Many of the trees have new leaves and several have blossoms, which yield some of the sweetest scents of all flowering plants. We will continue to nourish the young citrus trees with ground and foliar fertilizer once a month. Most likely we will take the lives of at least two of the old grapefruit trees from the Old South Grove and one of the old orange trees from the North Garden. Those old grapefruit trees may be older than most of us.

### **Sweet Potato Leaves**

When the warmer weather returns, the old SP vines will quickly regenerate. We have placed our order for SP slips for Spring planting and the Summer growing season. We ordered 200 plants this year (100 Beauregards and 100 Georgia Jets), our most ambitious planting commitment ever.

### **Cadle's Cove Farm (a 3F Friendship Farm)**

Cadle's Cove Farm is still in recess. It is very cold in the CCF region.

## **Habanero Peppers**

The Habaneros are still producing and available for shares. Be advised, **these peppers are very very hot**. They are so hot, that handling them after slicing can burn your fingers – as some of us have learned.

Although no one is requesting this one-of-a-kind peppers, we are going keep them on the list. There is a certain cheerfulness to be found in these healthy little shrubs with their bright orange fruit.

**If anyone has a relationship with a restaurant whose chefs want to use a local organic searing-hot pepper, we'll be happy to supply for a reasonable contribution -- \$1.00 per pepper.**

## **Grape Vines: Leaf Buds**

All vines have leafed, and most appear very vigorous.

**Eggs:** We have increased the cost of the eggs to \$5.00 (\$4.00 per share). Our supplier has now gone to a certified non-GMO scratch for his chickens, which is significantly more expensive than the uncertified scratch. As you know, we work with a humane farmer, practicing compassionate farming methods. Even better, now the eggs will be free of GMOs – at least we can affirm they are being produced by chickens that are consuming non-GMO scratch.

**Herbs:** We have a large quantity of cilantro, which appears to love the cold. Parsley and oregano are very robust. Consult the share list for available items.

**Honey:** Sorry to say, we have no honey. Hopefully our friend the beekeeper will have more soon. The loss of half his hives was a serious set back for him and for us – and most of all the bees, whose loss we grieve.

**Tampa deliveries will be by appointment this week. We'll work out details on transmission when we receive your order.** West Pasco deliveries will be determined on the basis of share request and distance.

Anyone in the New Port Richey area can stop by on Sunday between 2:00 and 3:00 PM. Please call before coming by – 849-1626.

**For this week, here is what we have (FCFS, as always):**

## **THE SHARE**

**March 10, 2014 (23)**

**\* larger quantity available if desired**

**FCFS = limited supplies, early submissions given preference**

**Tampa Transmissions TBA**

## **Vegetables**

**Arugula\***

**Broccoli, stem, leaves and head**

**Collards (small quantity) FCFS**

**Kale (small quantity – a few leaves)**

**Lettuce – assorted leaf lettuces (sm. bags, full heads if available)**

**(Winter Density, Triple Heart)  
Peppers – Habanero\* – very hot**

**Fruit –  
Loquats – small share, if desired**

**Fungus (Mushrooms)**

**Nuts**

**Roots**

**Herbs (\* larger quantity available if desired)**

**Basil – not this cycle**

**Chives**

**Cilantro\***

**Dill – (small quantity)**

**Mint – Citrus (Orange) Mint (small quantity)**

**Oregano**

**Parsley**

**Purslane – (small quantity)**

**Rosemary\***

**Smilax (Cat Briar) (none at present)**

**Tarragon\***

**Thyme – (small quantity)**

**Seasonings**

**Bay Leaves – fresh leaves**

**Medicinal**

**Aloe\***

## **COMPANION FAUNA Winter report**

**Bat update:** The bats journey forth on their evening hunts on warmer nights, unless there is rain. Last sighting was this past Sunday (3/4) at 6:26.

**Robins:** A few local (over-winter) robins were observed in the neighborhood and at the farm this week. There are surely some large over-winter flocks in the area, but none were observed.

We are still expecting to see significant numbers. The northern migration has usually begun by now, and we should be seeing large flocks very soon. Look for them yourself; they will generally be flying north in the higher sky. Here in New Port Richey, most flocks fly in a northeasterly direction.

The flocks may be delaying their northern journeys due to the unusually cold winter in the north, however, most avian migrations are promoted by the solar calendar not temperature.

As of now, it is clear that they are either running very late, have taken a new route north, or something unexpected happened.

It is likely that our immediate area (New Port Richey) is a moderate southern migratory flyway, and a major northern flyway. Each year the southern flocks of Fall and early Winter are smaller than the northern flocks of late Winter and Spring.

Here is neat animated map on Robin migration patterns:

[http://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/galleries/2012/robin\\_first\\_an\\_spring2012.html](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/galleries/2012/robin_first_an_spring2012.html)

Hopefully robins will continue their migrations. Other migratory creatures are facing daunting challenges. Most notable right now are the Monarch Butterflies. See this ABC story on the plight of the migratory Monarchs due in part to "the displacement of the milkweed the species feeds on by genetically modified crops" -- <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/monarch-butterflies-drop-migration-disappear-22283257>

**Crows:** Crows in several flocks and small groups overhead and in the vicinity of First Farm.

**Great Horned Owl:** No sight or sound of the local owl.

**Opossum:** Opossum not observed.

**Big Brown Bat:** The brown bat was not seen this week.

**Swifts:** No swifts observed. No sounds in the swift lodge. They have likely left us for the season.

**Tree Frogs:** No frogs this week, although a few songs were heard.

**Leopard Frogs:** The Leopard frog was last seen on Thursday (3/6), perched on the edge of her pond.

**Greenhouse Frogs:** No greenhouse frogs.

**Southern Toad:** No toads

**Woodlouse** – None observed.

**Nocturnal Garden Spider** – Many observed.

**Bees:** Quite a few at broccoli bouquets, but still fewer than usual for the broccoli flower season. Several at spring flowers – especially the Common Beggar's-tick (Hairy Beggar's-tick) *Biden alba*. Here is the UF extension article on the Beggar-tick. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fwo05>

See Sidebar on the Beggar's-tick in last week's missive. We encourage tolerating this wild flower for the sake of the bees.

**Sweet bees:** None

**"Asian Tramp Snail."** None.

**Cats:** Mr. Goldie now a regular in the garden. \ Kit-Kit Bissy has become an indoor cat – lucky cat!

## **3F Stories, Events, and Policy Updates**

### **Planting & Harvest Notes**

**Seeds:** No seeding this week. Too cold, and the growing station in salon is full

**Garden Starts:** Japanese cucumbers.

**Harvest Notes:** assorted herbs, arugula, grapefruit, broccoli, various lettuces, tomatoes, collards.

**Vermipost:** no harvest

**Bat Guano:** 1 pound.

### **The Florida Loquat Festival: Celebrating Florida's Urban Fruit**

**April 5, 2014 – 11:00 – 2:00**

#### **Market Off Main, New Port Richey**

The Loquat Festival is now officially scheduled. Join us on April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Market Off Main in New Port Richey. Be advised, the name of the event is very ambitious, and perhaps suggests something much larger than will actually be the case. There won't be a midway or Ferris wheels.

There will be loquat fruit, some educational lectures and literature on cultivating the trees and eating the fruit, (hopefully) some loquat compotes and other treats made with the fruit, trees for sale, and music.

If you'd like to assist with the event, please let us know.

It is time (and well past time) that this hearty, healthy, delicious, and **abundant** fruit receive full recognition for the contribution it can make to the diet of Floridians – especially urbanites. As far as we can tell there are no Loquat Festivals anywhere in Florida – and actually in the entire USA. With your help, Friendship Farms and Fare together with Ecology Florida and the Market Off Main in New Port Richey will launch the first one – April 5, 2014. In meantime, add loquats to your CSA Share request.

### **Soil Test Results**

Results of our annual soil test have been received from the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida. The test measures for phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, and includes recommendations for additions of soil amenities to improve crop yield. Amenities are lime, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium. Soils from the Old North and New South gardens all registered high in phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. This is typical for First Farm gardens. No additional amenities were recommended (except for a little nitrogen in the south garden).

### **Friendship Farms and Fare Pursues Non-GMO and USDA Organic Certification**

As a matter of policy, Friendship Farms and Fare opposes the use of GMOs in food. We are exploring Non-GMO certification for our First Farm in New Port Richey, and possibly Tarry Lane Kitchens. We have the application in hand, and will be submitting it in the near future. Of course, we have never used GMO seeds or products containing GMOs, so you can rest assured that even without the certification, everything we share is free of GMOs.

We have also taken the initial steps to secure USDA Organic certification. The cost for USDA assessment (with no guarantee of approval) will be between \$950 and \$1300 depending on how much of the 3F project we desire to have assessed. As with our non-GMO commitment, we are fully committed to organic farming.

### **First Farm to Initiate Community Garden Project at New South Garden**

We are nearing the completion of preparation work for the community garden project. After consultation with local supporters and friends, we'll draw up final plans for commencement of the project.

If you are interested in acquiring a plot in the 3F community garden, please let us know. Fees and support expectation are yet to be determined, but all 3F shares will have the opportunity to participate for reduced rates.

We have installed sample community garden beds. Each is (108 sq feet) 12 x 9 or 18 x 6.

### **Farm and Fare Tours (Local Urban Gardens and Organic Kitchen)**

If you would like to schedule a tour local urban gardens in New Port Richey and/or the 3F Kitchen (Tarry Lane Tasting Station), please let us know, and we can make arrangements. Our tours are experiential, informational, educational, and fun. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Typically, and depending on the season, participants visit several urban farms, learn about organic farming in an urban environment using permaculture philosophies and practices, observe and learn about urban wildlife and helpful plants, enjoy samples of live produce, and share in the preparation of the vegan cuisine. Tours are structured on the basis of participants' interests and background. We can also arrange focused learning sessions at the Gardens and/or the Kitchens.

Please note that an appropriate contribution for the tours and learning sessions will be suggested when tours are scheduled.

There are four categories of tours:

- \* Urban Farming, Gardening and Soil development
- \* Urban wildlife and helpful plants (note if you desire a bat observation, which requires special scheduling)
- \* Vegan, Organic food preparation
- \* General (including two or more categories)

Please note that an appropriate contribution for the tours and learning sessions will be suggested when tours are scheduled.

### **Next Workday – March 15**

If you are interested in joining others for a workday on March 15, please let us know. This is less than a week away, so please let us know right away if you'll be joining us

We'll be extending the west bed in the South Garden, clearing debris from the old grove in the South Garden and preparing beds there, and most likely doing some Spring seeding and planting.

### **3F: A Florida Friendly Farm**

The 3 F gardens are certified as a "Florida Friendly" environment – a certification we have held for over a decade.

Florida Friendly recognition is given to environments (typically residential yards) that support and enhance natural ecosystems. Certification is given in three categories (bronze, silver, and gold) based on a point system rating various features of the property and practices followed by the property owner. We received a high score but only a silver rating because of some changes in the program of which we were unaware.

Attention is given to features such as water-retention, native and drought tolerant plants, diversity in plant species, responsible irrigation systems, and amenities for native pollinators. Positive practices include minimal use of fertilizers (with organic preferred) and little or no use of poisons, groundcovers rather than turf, composting, and rainwater collection systems.

We encourage all our members and friends to pursue Florida Friendly designation for their properties. It is a wonderful way to learn more about Florida's natural ecology and what you can do to create a healthy environment right where you live. It is also a great way to go green.

Folks who wonder what they can do to be more environmentally responsible are encouraged to review the Florida Friendly checklist. If you can change even one thing about your yard or your landscape practices to bring it into agreement with the guidelines, you will have made a difference. Even if you do not apply for the designation, reviewing the criteria will be an enriching educational experience. Putting the guidelines into practice will make a definite difference. Here is the website for the program:

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/recognitions.htm>

### **Seed Dealer License Ecology Florida/Friendship Farms & Fare S009451**

3 F is now a licensed Seed Dealer. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services issues these licenses, which are required to sell seeds to the public. Through our friendship with Ecology Florida, we applied for the license as a subsidiary of Ecology Florida – a federally sanctioned Not For Profit organization. Want to buy some seeds? To explore the Ecology Florida project, see: <http://www.ecologyflorida.org/>

**3F Produce for non-shareholders (if available):** As always, non-CSA Members may request produce from the share list for \$5 per item. If requested items remain after shares have been distributed, they may be acquired by non-members. Just reply to this email if you desire anything on the list. We suggest non-shareholders start an account to cover costs of items.

**Website Link:** Please visit our website < <http://www.ffffsite.org> > for weekly newsletters, share details, recipes, educational texts and videos, special 3F Films, and community growing information. You will also have access to the new agrarian literary journal, *Bloom*.

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## Other News and Reports

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### COMMERICAL PRODUCE REPORT

**Our Commercial Produce News Report is currently in repose. We will resume when time and talent allow. If anyone would like to volunteer to collect market prices, please let us know.**

### OTHER PRODUCTS FOR THE CSA FAMILY

**Non-Members may order shares for \$10 per week.** For this nominal amount, the contributor is entitled to request any items they desire from the weekly Share. Although we will assist with transmissions, it is the responsibility of the contributor to make arrangements for pick up of the share.

**Diatomaceous Earth:** We now have access to a diatomaceous earth, a real “up-and-comer” in the organic farming community. It is also getting good press in healthy living communities -- even among many “foodies.” If you know about this mineral, and would like to acquire it from your CSA, just let us know.

**EGGS.** Prices are \$5.00 a dozen (\$4.00 for shares), and \$3.00 a half-dozen (\$2.50 for shares). These prices are competitive with prices for organic eggs at commercial grocers. As required by our policies, our supplier is local, follows organic principles, practices compassionate husbandry, and allows chickens free range. If you would like to be included on the egg list, please start an account (\$20 suggested), and make requests accordingly.

**Eggs** are from humanely treated chickens, and fed non-GMO feed.

**Honey:** Honey is in hiatus for now.

**Seeds:** If you would like organic vegetable seeds for your garden, we will order them for you. Seed packs are \$4.00 each, 2 for \$7.00, and 5 for \$14.00.

**Seedlings:** We are also happy to start plants for you. Just give us the word on the plants you want us to start, and we'll do the rest. Starter plants in cells are \$1.50 per plant (\$1, for shares), \$5.00 (\$4) for four, \$8.00 (\$7.00) for nine. When available, small plants are \$3.00 (\$2.40) each, and medium plants are \$5.00 (\$4).

**Let us know if you want to acquire seeds or starts.**

**We have cucumbers starts.**

**Trees:** Young Loquat trees are available in small (half-gallon) and medium (gallon) pots - \$5.00 (\$4.00 for shareholders). \$10.00 (\$8.00) for two-gallon pots.

**Vermipost and Worms:** For folks interested in organic gardening, we have the best all-natural soil amenities you can find: Vermipost and Worms! Vermipost is compost that has been broken down and enriched by Red Worms. We also have the worms themselves. **Vermipost** is available

in 32 oz containers for \$2.50 each (\$2.00 for shareholders), with discounts for orders of five or more. Vermipost containers will most likely have some worms in the mix. We recommend mixing the vermipost 1 to 1 with regular soil, and 1 to 3 or 4 with organic soil. Remember, if you use synthetic chemicals (such as fertilizers or pesticides), the vermipost will be compromised. Pesticides will kill the worms and synthetic fertilizers will kill the worms or drive them away.

**Worms** are available in 32 oz containers for \$7.50 (\$6 for shareholders). We cannot specify the exact number of worms in a container, but there should be 30-50. By the way, if you are developing an organic garden, always look for the OMRI seal of approval on fertilizers, soils, and insect deterrents.

**Seeds:** Shareholders are entitled to seeds from our seed bank – three types of okra and our famous Calabrese broccoli. Our seeds are organic and derived from heirloom stock. They are listed with Seed Savers Exchange, and also available at the New Port Richey Library Seed Exchange. Let us know if you are interested – additional packages of seeds for \$4.00 (\$3.20) a packet (of 30). We cannot guarantee germination, but in our tests germination rates are close to 100%.

Florida Central West Coast acclimated Okra Seeds offered by 3F are: Silver Queen, Star of David, Red Burgundy, and Hill Country Red.

## **Local Markets and Growers' Sites Open to the Public Endorsed by Friendship Farms & Fare**

**Market Off Main:** We encourage members of the TBN G&G CSA to patronize the Market Off Main in New Port Richey, and other local produce markets. They often have organics, usually have local produce, are locally owned, and are now a distributor of Cow Pots. Here is their website: <http://www.marketoffmain.com/>

**Tasty Tuesdays:** Visit the New Port Richey Library Tuesday (10:00 AM – 1:00 PM) for a good selection of locally grown organic vegetables. [New Port Richey Public Library, 5939 Main St, New Port Richey, FL](#)

**Suncoast Co-Op Market:** On Saturday mornings, visit the Suncoast Co-Op locally-grown organic produce. See the Market in New Port Richey at the West Pasco Habitat for Humanity: Saturdays Noon- 2pm 4131 Madison Street New Port Richey, FL 34652.

**Freedom House Farms:** Open to visitors on Saturday afternoons. Featuring freshly harvested produce available for purchase. 5642 Virginia Ave., New Port Richey

**First Farm:** Receptive to visitors on Sunday afternoons. Featuring seeds, seedlings, Loquat trees, and select produce in season. Call for appointment afternoons or evenings: (727) 849-1626. New Port Richey.

**To Return to our website,** go to: < <http://www.ffffsite.org> >

**Friendship Farms & Fare  
An Urban Farm Community, CSA, and Organic Wholefoods Kitchen**

**Friendship Farms & Fare Community**

**Cadle's Cove Farm**

**Freedom House Farm  
Friendship Farms & Fare: First Farm  
Seeds of Love Organic Farm  
Tarry Lane Tasting Station**

**March 10, 2014 – 23rd report for the 2013-2014 Garden Year**

**###**