



## FRIENDSHIP FARMS & FARE

*Friendship Farms & Fare affirms and advances agrarian ideals to reestablish a sustainable culture*

### FARM REPORT & NEWSLETTER

APRIL 6, 2015 – 27TH 2014-2015 FARM & CSA REPORT

Friendship Farms & Fare is a division of Ecology Florida, a not-for-profit corporation.

Contributions to Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida are tax deductible.

If you would like to support our work, please consider sharing a donation.

PO Box 596 • New Port Richey, Florida 34656-0596

<http://www.ffffsite.org/>

## FARM REPORT

**65 degrees at 2:00 AM, April 4, 2015**

**Historic Average (for 3/27): 78 HIGH, 60 LOW—Weather Underground: <http://www.wunderground.com/>**

**See the complete weekly weather report later in the Farm Report**

### **Loquats in the 3F Grove Harvest Continues 99 lbs total**

This past week, we harvested **11** more pounds, and included small quantities in many shares. Be sure to order if you'd like some this week. Quantities will be substantial, if desired.

Total harvest this season: **99** lbs (LY 75 lbs)

The season is passing, and some trees no longer have fruit. Others will have fruit for at least another month.

One of the many benefits of the loquat is its long fruiting season, with fruit maturing over a four-month period. We'll harvest our first fruits in January and keep harvesting through April. We still have free fruit on one of our trees.

If you would like to order a tree for your own yard, garden, or food forest, just let us know. We have all sizes from small (1 gallon pots, 1-2 feet \$10-20) to very large (5 gallon pots, 5 feet+ \$50 and up).

## **Seed Savers Seeds Available Through Friendship Farms & Fare**

Please buy your seeds and seedlings from local growers or suppliers committed to organic, heirloom seeds.

3F is pleased to offer the highest quality organic, heirloom seeds to the community. You may order several locally-acclimated seeds from our own collection as well as Seed Savers seeds from us. Seed Savers seeds are the only ones we use at Friendship Farms, unless we use our own 3F seeds saved from previous years.

If you'd like to order Seed Savers seeds from us, find the seeds you desire online, let us know the type(s) and quantities, and we'll order them for you. <http://www.seedsavers.org/onlinestore/>

Cost: \$4.00 per packet (\$3.00 for shares). We'll include them in your share or mail them to you, if you give us your address.

Please buy your seeds and seedlings from local growers or suppliers committed to organic, heirloom seeds.

See this story on the damage caused by "big box stores":

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/smart-growth-working-families/harms-big-box-retail>

See also, 10 reasons to support local commerce:

<http://ilsr.org/why-support-locally-owned-businesses/>

## **Time to Start Spring Seedlings and A 3F Editorial on Seeds**

We are again reminding readers that it is time to start seeds for spring planting. We have run this report and editorial for the past few issues, and we'll run it here and for a few more.

Here at the farm, we have started bell peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Not far behind will be eggplant and okra. We will continue to plant arugula and cilantro, and we'll see how long the collards last into the spring. We are loosely following the Bible for Florida Farmers, James M. Stephens, *Vegetable Gardening in Florida*, but also taking into consideration our local weather conditions, higher temperatures, and our experience with specific plant families and varieties within families.

We'll be using our own saved seeds for okra, arugula, and cilantro. Our other seeds will be ordered from Seed Savers Exchange <http://www.seedsavers.org/> or purchased locally from the Seed Savers kiosk at Market Off Main in New Port Richey <http://www.marketoffmain.com/>. Market Off Main has a very nice supply of spring seeds, including a good selection of tomato, pepper, okra, eggplant, various beans, and cucumber seeds. All are heirloom, organic seeds.

**We recommend acquiring seeds from plants grown in your region, ideally from the growers who actually grew the plants and saved the seeds (like us!).** Those seeds will be acclimated to the local environment, which means their parent plants have been exposed to the weather and growing conditions of your area (heat, cold, rain, humidity, duration of night and light, and so on). Seeds from a vendor in some other state do not have parents that were exposed our weather, soil, and seasonal cycles.

The forebears of local seeds have also most likely been exposed to predatory insects, and probably any number of diseases, pathogens, predatory microorganisms, even pecking birds and nibbling animals. Those local seeds are from plants that have survived, thrived, and flowered in the very conditions in which you will be planting them. In many cases the parents have survived challenges, such as those noted here, and they may pass along their survival features to their offspring – those locally sourced seeds. So, acquire your seeds from seed savers in your region whenever you can.

**If local seeds are not available, we recommend seeds from organizations and companies that promote seed saving, distribute organic seeds (preferably heirloom seeds), and are dedicated to protection and enhancement of natural genetic diversity, preservation of heirloom seeds (with lineages of 50 years or more), and absolutely prohibit genetically modified seeds.** Besides Seed Savers Exchange, which we recommend first, there are a number of other excellent seed suppliers who are responsible ecological and economic stewards. These include: Johnny's Selected Seeds, Wild Garden Seed, High Mowing, Peace Seedlings, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, and Seeds of Change.

We'll be happy to supply you with seeds for your spring garden. Just let us know which varieties you would like, and we'll have them available for you at Market Off Main, here at the Farm, or by mail to your home -- \$3.00 a packet.

### **East Madison Growers and Friendship Farms & Fare Team Up: New Community Garden Planned in East Madison Neighborhood**

3F has teamed up with friends and supporters to develop a new community garden in the East Madison neighborhood of New Port Richey.

The property owner has committed to having East Madison Growers and 3F use a vacant lot for a community garden. There is still some paper work that needs to be reviewed and signed, but the project looks to be solid. We'll have more about this exciting new development in the future Farm Reports.

### **Broccoli: Past Peak 309 heads harvested, so far Composting begins Prized plants flagged for seed saving**

We topped out at **228** broccoli planted this season.

We are now past peak on the broccoli. We'll still have enough for shares for several weeks, but the height of the season has passed.

We harvested **12** heads last week, for a total of **309** heads so far this season. Last year, our harvest totaled **164**. As the season continues, readers will notice that the total number of heads will far exceed the number of plants planted. This is because Calabrese (our famous heirloom!) produces secondary and sometimes tertiary heads.

There are very few good-sized heads left, but a fair number of florets, mostly secondary and tertiary heads – some quite large. The above normal heat stressed the plants, and most are now flowering. The little cool spell will likely preserve some heads.

We've begun composting the spent plants and flagged several for seed saving.

## **Weekly Weather Report Back to Above Normal Heat Look for 90s by late week**

**65 degrees at 2:00 AM, April 4, 2015**

**Historic Average (for 4/3): 78 HIGH, 60 LOW—Weather Underground: <http://www.wunderground.com/>**

Historically, the average high temperature is now 79 degrees (nine degrees higher than the lowest average low [70] of the year), and eleven degrees lower than the highest average high [90]). Our average low is now 61 degrees, which is ten degrees higher than lowest average low [51], and fifteen degrees lower than the highest average low [76]).

The average low and high are increasing at about a degree a week. They will peak in early June for highs and late June for lows, and remain constant (at 90/76) until early September, when the annual decline begins. This means for three months the average high will be 90 degrees, and the average low will be 76. It will also be humid during those months.

**Note:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that 2014 was the hottest year on record (since records have been kept, 1880). Ocean and land temperatures were at their all time highs. This has also been the warmest winter on record in the Arctic.

This is no great surprise to us. 2014 seemed hotter than usual here at the farms, and the past few years, our highs and lows have typically run a bit higher than historic averages. Last year the trend continued, and so far this year, it is still continuing. Although humans may enjoy unseasonably warm weather, above normal temperatures stress the winter crops, which flourish in cool to cold temperatures.

**Last Week (3/27-4/3):** After a brief cool spell at the start of the week, with below normal temperatures on Saturday and Sunday, we surged back to above normal temperatures (and into the 80s) again by Tuesday. We stayed above normal for the rest of the week, and will reach 86 on Friday (4/3).

TV weather reporters continue to claim these temperatures are "not unusual for this time of year." For clarity, most of March was above normal, with several days 10 degrees or more above normal.

**This Week (4/4 – 4/10)** Here comes summer, in early spring. We'll be in the upper 80s all week (except for a day or so of mid-80s early in the week. It is true that we might reach the low 90s by the weekend. This week is the week when the historic average reaches 80 degrees.

**Looking Ahead:** We are now in the midst of the dry season, and the above normal heat is really impacting our gardens. We should not expect much rain for at least another month. Average daily rainfall also is creeping upward (like the temperatures). Historic norms indicate cool and dry conditions through April, although we are not running true to form on this. Dry conditions will require more frequent irrigation. The rainy season is still about two months away – mid-June.

Average temperatures are gradually rising. By the end of April averages will be in the mid-80s for highs and mid-60s for lows. Note: We are already reaching these temperatures, and exceeding them.

Averages are not good guides, and we are currently running above historical averages, but with rather dramatic fluctuations. We reached or exceeded 80 degrees four times in January, but not once in February. Already in March we've reached or exceeded 80 degrees 23 times.

Rainfall has also been high so far this year, with nearly 11 inches collected at the farms. Nearby, Tampa, averages a little more than 8 inches through March.

**Garden Overview**  
**Spring Plantings Begin**  
(additional details and assessments follows)

The winter growing season has come to an end – accelerated by the excessive heat and lack of rain or cloud cover. We are composing winter plants quickly now, and trying to accelerate our seeding project. Even the summer seedlings do not like the high 80s (and now, 90s) we are getting.

We've planted cucumbers and okra, both are doing well. We should receive our sweet potato slips this week or next. If anyone who is reading this, would like to help with the SP plantings, just let us know.

We still have large quantities of collards, and kale. Swiss chard, arugula, and broccoli are just about spent.

See the Share Report for all items.

For all plantings, we use seeds from our collection or heirloom seeds from Seed Savers Exchange (<http://www.seedsavers.org/>).

**2014 Grapefruit Seedlings from Bartlett's Forgotten Grove flower and fruit**  
**2015 Seeds Germinate**

Some may remember the account of our planting seeds from Bartlett's Forgotten Grove, and how excited we were to see them germinate. Those seedlings are now a little more than a year old, and all are healthy little plants. They have thrilled us again by producing flowers and fruitlings. Yes! Amazing but true. In their first year of life, about half the seedlings each produced a flower, which matured into a fruitling. This is very exciting.

Seeds from this year's harvest have all germinated.

The ancient trees in that wonderful forgotten grove appear to be quite fertile, and we will honor them by caring for their offspring as though they were our own.

**Okra Seedlings**

We've planted our first okra seedlings in the south garden – several of each variety: Silver Queen, Hill Country Red, Star of David, Red Burgundy. All are doing well. Seedlings were crippled by the little cold spell we had. We seeded more okra this week, and most has already sprouted.

**Cucumbers**

The cucumbers are thriving. The most successful are the Japanese Climbing. We have planted Double Yields, Armenians, and Japanese Climbing. They are growing in the front garden, and the New South garden, next to the blackberries.

### **Tomatoes and Peppers**

We started tomato and pepper seeds. The tomatoes have sprouted but not the peppers. Not sure why the peppers are dormant. Tomatoes that are up are Arkansas Traveler (one of our favorites) and Mexico Midgets. Tropics have sprouted. None are particularly robust. We'll plant other varieties soon.

### **Kale**

Kale continues to thrive, but it is past peak. We have ample shares of kale for all shareholders. Our weekly kale harvests are about twice the size as last year – e.g. last year we used one gallon packing bags and this year we are using two gallon bags, and packing them rather densely.

### **Swiss Chard**

Swiss chard is well past peak. There may not be enough for shares this week, but feel free to give it a try in your share request.

### **Arugula**

Arugula is passed peak. Nearly all plants are flowering vigorously. There is enough for very small samples for all shares.

### **Collards**

The collards continue to amaze! They appear as hardy now as they did in the middle of winter. Please stop by for extra large shares of our three varieties, Georgia Southern, Georgia, and Vates, are large, lush, and ready for harvest.

### **Blackberries Ouachita Family**

All blackberry vines are healthy, producing new leaves, and abundant blossoms. These are Ouachita Blackberries shared lovingly by Christine Grovenstein of Seeds of Love Organic Farm.

### **Habanero Peppers**

Habaneros are coming back very nicely now, and now blossoming.

### **Eggplant**

After the freeze, we cut back all eggplant to new growth areas, which are now flourishing – and producing flowers! Exciting times for the eggplant colony.

### **Purslane**

Purslane is starting to spout, and there beautiful small plants throughout the garden.

### **Viticulture (Grape) News**

Vines are putting out first leaves.

## **Jamming with the Cat: Black Cat Growers Offers Jams To 3F Family**

As reported last week, we are delighted to announce that Black Cat Growers has joined the 3F family. Black Cat is a small local grower, cottage food producer, and designer of edible landscapes. Some of you may remember the wonderful assistance of Black Cat Growers shared during our Loquat Festival last year.

Our work with Black may well evolve over time, and for now we are happy to list their line of outstanding local organic jams. Shares can acquire these for \$5.00, for a 1/2 pint container, which includes their CSA discount.

If you would like a sample of any of the jams, let us know in your share request this week. If you would like to order some for holiday gifts and parties, now is the time to order.

### **Hart's Family Hot Sauce Ready for the Willing**

Ray (of Hart's Family Gardens) has brewed this season's first batch of habanero pepper sauce. We sampled it, and found it quite tasty, but HOT. Use in moderation. The sauce is made with various peppers (chiefly habaneros) organic vodka, and apple cider vinegar. That's it! It is all organic, with only local peppers. It may be too hot for some palate. All peppers are from Hart's Family Gardens or Friendship Farms & Fare.

If you would like to try a bottle, just let us know. A donation of \$5.00 will be received for a 5oz. bottle.

### **Eggs If Desired**

We can include organic, free-range eggs in your share this week. These are from a new local contact, Juan's farm. These are the eggs the staff at Market Off Main use in their organic egg recipes. Mandy's farm appears to be back in operation, so we may have eggs from there as well.

Last week's eggs were from Mandy's farm.

**Honey:** Local honey is available. We have a fresh harvest available now. Our bee husbander, Robert, has been very successful with recent harvests. We support Robert's work, which is as much about sustaining and regenerating bee populations as it is about honey distribution. Robert's bees live in West Pasco County, near New Port Richey, they pollinate wild flowers, domestic fruit trees, and vegetables. Honey is available in 8 oz. bottles for \$7.00 a bottle, \$5.50 for CSA Shares.

**Herbs:** Herbs are a little weak this week. They do not like the cold, damp conditions. We have good quantities of thyme and dill. Basils will continue in recess. Consult the share list for other herbs, and other available items.

**Tampa deliveries will be Thursday this week.** West Pasco transmissions at the farm will be determined on the basis of share request and distance, with Wednesday being the best day.

Shareholders can call your farmer directly. If you are not a shareholder, and would like to schedule a visit to the gardens or to acquire seeds, seedlings, plants, or produce, please use the address on the website to contact us. <http://www.ffffsite.org/#!contact/cl4l>

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

**THE SHARE**  
**April 6, 2015 (27)**

## Mid-point of Garden Year

\* larger quantity available if desired

FCFS = limited supplies, early submissions given preference  
Tampa Transmissions TBA

### Vegetables

Arugula (small quantities)

Broccoli (small quantities – FCFS)

Collards\*

Hibiscus Leaves, Cranberry—small quantities (samples)

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/346372-nutrition-information-on-cranberry-hibiscus/>

Kale\*

Lettuce – Romaine (small quantities – FCFS)

Peppers – Habanero\*—very hot

"Spinach"—Okinawa (not a true spinach)

<http://edibleplantproject.org/okinawaspinach/>

Swiss Chard (last call)

### Fruit -

Loquat – 3F Specials (small quantities)

Nuts – no pecans this week (TBA)

Herbs (\* larger quantity available if desired)

Basils

Italian (small quantity)

Dill

Chives (small quantity)

Cilantro (late and leggy)

Mint

Oregano

Parsley-

Purslane

Rosemary\*

Tarragon (very fresh, lush)

Thyme

### Cottage Foods & Samples

**Eggs:** Juan's Garden or Mandy's Farm. These are eggs from small organic growers. Fowl are humanely treated and free roaming: \$6.50 (\$5.00 for shares)

**Honey:** Local West Pasco honey from Daddy's Bees is available in 8 oz. bottles for \$7.00 (\$5.50 for shares).

**Hot Sauce:** Hart's Habanero Hot Sauce, made from our 3F Habanero peppers, 5oz. bottle \$6.50 (\$5.00 shares), - Very Hot

**Jams, Jellies, Preserves:** Black Cat Growers featured jams and fruit spread. All organic, with most fruits locally sourced. Half Pints for \$6.50 (\$5.00 shares). Available jams:

Peach

Cherry

Strawberry

Orange Marmalade (bitter orange)

Loquat

**Seedlings** (Start your spring garden with locally grown organic seedlings!)

No seedlings currently available

**COMPANION FAUNA**  
**Spring Report**

Some of our animal companions are beginning to appear, ending their hibernating period and resuming their activities

**Swifts:** Swifts are back – very early this year. The lodge is alive with chittering, peeping, and squeaking.

**Bat update:** Bats appear to have abandoned the lodge – again!

**Southern Toad:** None

**Sweet bees:** None

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Not this week.

As large as this bird is, the Ivory-bill was about twice its size, and the Imperial even larger. Imagine!

Here is a good site for the Pileated :

[http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/pileated\\_woodpecker?gclid=CjoKEQiA4OqnBRDAj9aazvPji9ABEiQANq28oLTa9kUEg7khhIiQxXQSzXno1KGGEkjlUYhQcrnafj8aAnMP8P8HAQ](http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/pileated_woodpecker?gclid=CjoKEQiA4OqnBRDAj9aazvPji9ABEiQANq28oLTa9kUEg7khhIiQxXQSzXno1KGGEkjlUYhQcrnafj8aAnMP8P8HAQ)

And here is a video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpYsdZ8gUU8&index=3&list=PLFMP2eIAO8oQFZ3IyCJhIKXCi914uI8uu>

**Tree Frogs:** Frog songs are heard every night now. None observed.

**Florida Ringneck Snake:** None

**Robins:** None. Seasonal visitors are now departed. Last week or notice.

**Honey Bees:** Fewer bees at broccoli flowers and the bottlebrush tree – dozens not hundreds. They just love the broccoli and the bottlebrush flowers. We are letting a lot of broccoli flower for the sake of the bees –and seed saving. The profusion of bees at the broccoli is quite impressive – and heartening.

*“If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man.”*  
– attributed to Albert Einstein.

Please do not purchase or use insecticides with neonicotinoids. Here are three reliable sources on the neonicotinoids, and the commercial "home and garden" insecticides that contain them.

<http://www.xerces.org/neonicotinoids-and-bees/>

[http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/NeonicsSummary\\_XercesSociety.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/NeonicsSummary_XercesSociety.pdf)

[http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees\\_Xerces-Society1.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees_Xerces-Society1.pdf)

**Bald Eagle:** Not this week.

**Bumble Bees:** none

**Hawk:** none observed

**Raccoon:** No raccoons, and no signs of raccoon activity.

**Greenhouse Frog:** None.

**Opossum:** Young opossum found dead in street near garden. Appropriate treatment performed. Buried in the south grove, which he probably knew quite well.

**Leopard Frogs:** None observed.

**Florida Black Snake:** None observed

**Earth Worms:** Two in south garden when planting cucumbers. One may have been injured during the planting. Even when working cautiously and respectfully, injuries occur.

**Sphinx Moth:** No sphinx this week. Here is Youtube video of a Sphinx Moth feeding at 4 o'clocks, very much like the moth at the 3F farm. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaTfKLO96gE>

**Pygmy Rattlesnake:** No pygmy rattler this week. Here is a good site on the pygmy rattlesnake from the University of Florida: <http://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/pdfs/Pygmy%20Rattlesnake%20Info%20Sheet.pdf>

**Grapeleaf Skeletonizer:** No GS caterpillars observed. Ray and I are alert to these predators. Here is a link to a site with information on the Skeletonizers: [http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/fruit/grapeleaf\\_skeletonizer.htm](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/fruit/grapeleaf_skeletonizer.htm)

**Nocturnal Garden Spider** – Evident but not numerous.

**"Asian Tramp Snail."** Several on winter greens.

**Mediterranean Gecko:** None this week Here is a good site for the Mediterranean Gecko, and Florida fauna in general: <http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/reptiles/mediterranean-gecko/>

**Marine Toad (aka: Brazilian Cane Toad, *Rhinella marina*, Giant Toad):** None this week.

Marine Toads are destructive of ecosystems and poisonous to mammals. They are omnivorous, aggressive, and drive out native and assimilated frogs and toads. A survey of several professional sites found none that recommended killing the frogs, although this has been advocated by several folks in the area.

Here is the Extension Office's website on the Marine Toad (which includes an audio of its call): [http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife\\_info/frogstoats/rhinella\\_marina.php](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/frogstoats/rhinella_marina.php)

Here is a very detailed, professional study of the Marine Toad, also from the Extension Office. This site has instructions for humane euthanizing of the creatures:

[http://www.egovlink.com/public\\_documents300/winterhaven/published\\_documents/Winter%20Haven/Lakes/Backyard%20Wildlife/Animal%20Information/Frogs%20and%20Toads/Marine%20Toads%20UW04600.pdf](http://www.egovlink.com/public_documents300/winterhaven/published_documents/Winter%20Haven/Lakes/Backyard%20Wildlife/Animal%20Information/Frogs%20and%20Toads/Marine%20Toads%20UW04600.pdf)

**Woodlouse** – These warm weather creatures are returning. Several were observed this week.

**Tomato Pinworm:** None observed. The season for these eggplant-loving moth larvae may have passed.

For information on pinworms, see this University of Florida site:

[http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/tomato/tomato\\_pinworm.htm](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/tomato/tomato_pinworm.htm)

**Cats:** Neighborhood cat, Frankie, appears regularly. She is occasionally joined by Lady Gray. Our beloved cat of 20 years, Fuzzy Duchess (Little Doochie) made a peaceful transition on Monday (3/23). Last notice on Doochie. Thanks for your kind thoughts.

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

### **Seed Savers Exchange to list 3F Loquat Seeds Exciting News About Young Trees**

3F loquat seeds are now listed on the Seed Saver's *Yearbook* website. We just found them in the hard copy of the 2015 *Yearbook*. These are the only loquat seeds listed in the SSE *Yearbook*, and this is the first time loquat seeds have been listed there.

Watch for additional coverage in the *Loquat News*. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for Loquat News, please send us your email address, and you'll be included in all future mailings. You can reach us at <http://www.ffsite.org/#!contact/cl4l>

Join us April 4, 2015 for the next celebration of Florida's Urban Fruit.

The young trees we have been reporting on for the past year, produced their first fruit this year. We have harvested about 20 pounds from the largest tree and about 10 pounds from the other two. We will probably harvest another ten pounds from each by the end of the season.

## **Programs and Plans 2015**

Thanks to everyone who has renewed. Your support is empowering and encouraging. If you have any questions, send us a message, and we'll answer or clarify.

We have reached our goal of 13 shares, and thanks to all for sharing in our growing success and learning adventure.

We often receive questions about the Friendship Farms & Fare project. We are happy to send an information brochure with details on our mission and our various programs. Here is a brief sketch of our programs:

We offer heirloom organic **seeds**, including seeds from plants acclimated to local climate and soils. We have a good stock of several types of okra (including the much desired Red Burgundy), robust arugula, and our famous Calabrese Broccoli. Friendship Farms & Fare is a licensed seed dealer in the State of Florida, and a member of Seed Savers Exchange (with several listings in the SSE Yearbook).

**Seed Kiosk** Friendship Farms & Fare also sponsors a sales kiosk featuring organic seeds from Seed Savers Exchange at the Market Off Main, in New Port Richey. We never offer seeds from for-profit commercial seed sellers, and we discourage others from doing so as well. Acquiring your seeds from local seed dealers supports local ecologies and economies, and will usually result in stronger, healthier plants – and seeds for next season!

Organic **seedlings** are available throughout each growing season. We use our own seeds from previous years whenever possible, and otherwise, we use only organic seeds and heirloom varieties when available. We never use seeds from for-profit seed sellers, and we do not offer seedlings grown from such seeds. Friendship Farms & Fare is a licensed nursery in the State of Florida.

A developing area of our mission, is our **fruit tree project**. At present, we offer loquat and avocado trees, with a few native flowering shrubs. We are a state-registered nursery, and among a small number of nurseries in the region offering loquat trees. We also are pleased to host (along with Ecology Florida) the **Florida Loquat Festival**, held each spring in New Port Richey.

Our original project, and still our central focus is a **Community Supported Agriculture** program. This is a small (“boutique”) CSA, featuring organic produce from our gardens and local cottage industry foods. We are 100% organic and have a no-kill policy. Our program is recommended for single persons, couples, or (at most) three-person families.

When quantities are sufficient, we offer produce to the general public through **local markets**, such as Tasty Tuesdays and Market Off Main in New Port Richey. Folks can also make requests through our website. Non-members can request any and all items on the share list for \$20.

Our newest project is a **community garden**, dedicating a portion of the 3F farm for use by others in the community. The community garden is located in New Port Richey, and operates through the City's urban agriculture ordinance. The 3F community garden follows the standard policies of Friendship Farms & Fare. We are 100% organic, non-GMO, and have a no-kill policy. With the exception of the predatory Marine Toad, no animals are harmed on our farm. We follow permaculture principles, and working with and within our natural systems.

If you would like to know more about any of these programs or would like to volunteer to share in our mission, just let us know. Folks interested in the Friendship Farms & Fare project can contact us through our website. <http://www.ffffsite.org/> See the "Let's Talk" section for an email connection.

Contributions to Friendship Farms & Fare are now tax-deductable. If you would like to offer financial support, your contributions will be a wonderful enhancement to our project – and they will be tax deductible.

**Planting & Harvest Notes**  
**Winter Seeding and Garden Starts This Week**

**Seedings: Okra:** Star of David, Hill Country Red, Red Burgundy, Silver Queen. 216 total.

**Garden Starts:** none

**Harvest Notes:** herbs, arugula, collards, kale, swiss chard, loquats, broccoli

**Vermipost:** no harvest

**Bat Guano:** no harvest

### **3F, Ecology Florida, and Market Off Main Offer Seed Savers Exchange Seeds in New Port Richey**

Good gardens require good seeds, and Tampa Bay now has access to the highest quality seeds. These are Seed Savers Exchange heirloom, organic seeds. Your CSA has joined other groups committed to sustainability in sponsoring a Seed Savers Exchange seed kiosk in New Port Richey.

Through a cooperative arrangement with Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida, the Market Off Main, in New Port Richey, now offers a wide range of organic, heirloom, non-GMO seeds exclusively from Seed Savers Exchange.

This is a trend-setting achievement for the Market Off Main, and another verification of New Port Richey's leadership in ecological stewardship, sustainability, and resiliency. Market Off Main in New Port Richey will be the only location on the West Coast of Florida offering these high quality packaged seeds.

Ecology Florida News carried a feature article on the kiosk by your 3F Farmer, which you can read at this link:

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2014/12/on-the-lighter-side-the-story-of-the-seed-kiosk-in-new-port-richey/>

**Ecology Florida advances the harmonious integration of healthy natural, cultural, and economic ecologies to regenerate a sustainable world**

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/>

**The Market Off Main is a meeting place, a community hub, and an entertainment center. It features local produce, a delicatessen, and a cafe.**

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

**Seed Savers Exchange is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and sharing heirloom seeds. Since 1975, our members have been passing on our garden heritage by collecting and distributing thousands of samples of rare garden seeds to other gardeners.**

<http://www.seedsavers.org/>

**Next Workday: TBA**

If you would like to join us for a spring workday, we'll have a lot to do. Please send your best Saturday(s) in April, after April 4.

## **Nursery Certification and Registration Renewed 2015-2016 Nursery Certification and Registration**

**Friendship Farms & Fare**

**48015239**

Our nursery registration has been renewed for 2015-2016.

Friendship Farms & Fare is a registered nursery in the state of Florida. Our registration number is 48015239.

Our successful re-certification and registration renewal is another step in the development of the Friendship Farms and Fare sustainable urban agriculture project. As most of you know, we are also a registered seed seller. The nursery certification is an important expression of our farm's mission and our commitment to responsible community development.

If you would like to support the work of Friendship Farms and Fare and help us cover expenses related to the project, please feel free to share a contribution. Friendship Farms and Fare operates under the umbrella of Ecology Florida, a not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible.

## **2014-2015 Renewal Seed Dealer License & Registration**

**Friendship Farms & Fare**

**S009451**

3 F is a licensed Seed Dealer, through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which issues these licenses that are required to sell seeds to the public. **We renew in June.** 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/>

## **Community Garden Projects**

Have received two new applications for our community garden on Illinois Ave., and we've been contacted by another interested gardener. Folks interested in acquiring a plot can contact us through the 3F site.

Together with East Madison Growers, we are developing another community garden plot on Montana Ave. in New Port Richey.

Shareholders interested in acquiring a plot may participate for reduced rates.

We have installed sample community garden beds. Each is about 100 square feet.

## **Farm Tours (Local Urban Gardens)**

If you would like to schedule a tour local urban gardens in New Port Richey, 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.

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
- \* 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.

### **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 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:

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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

**3F Produce for non-shareholders:** Non-Members may order shares for \$20 per week, or \$50 per month. For this amount, contributors may request any and all 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.

As always, non-CSA Members may request single items from the share list for \$5 per item. A full share for one week (any/all items) is \$20, and \$50 for one month. Annual shares are recommended, at \$300 per year. Five-month shares are \$200.

Just reply using the website contact link if you desire anything on the list. We suggest non-shareholders start an account to cover costs of items.

**EGGS.** Prices are \$6.50 a dozen (\$5.00 for shares), and \$4.00 a half-dozen (\$3.00 for shares). These prices are a bit higher than prices for organic eggs at commercial grocers. Acquiring eggs from local farms keeps resources in our community, supports local farming, and directly benefits a local farm family.

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:** Local West Pasco honey is available in 8 oz. bottles for \$7.00 (\$5.50 for shares).

**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. Just tell us what you'd like. Be sure to send your mailing address. No charge for shipping.

**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 for the Spring and Summer.**

**Trees:** Young Loquat trees are available in small (half-gallon) and medium (gallon) pots - \$10.00 (\$8.00 for shareholders). \$20 (\$18) for two-gallon pots. Larger trees in five-gallon pots are \$50 to \$70, depending on the size of the tree.

**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 samples of seeds from our seed bank – three types of okra, arugula, 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 (\$3.00) a packet (of 30). We cannot guarantee germination, but in our tests germination rates are close to 100%.

Heirloom, organic seeds from Seed Savers Exchange are \$4.00 each (\$3.00 for shares). You may order Seed Savers seeds from us. Find the seeds you desire on line, and let us know, and we'll order them for you. <http://www.seedsavers.org/onlinestore/>

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 – 12:00 noon) for a good selection of locally grown organic vegetables. [New Port Richey Public Library, 5939 Main St, New Port Richey, FL](#)

**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 weekend 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, Seed Saver, Community Garden, and purveyor of seeds, seedlings, fruit trees, and organic cottage-industry foods.

## **Friendship Farms & Fare Community**

**Cadle's Cove Farm**

**Black Cat Growers**

**Freedom House Farm**

**Friendship Farms & Fare: First Farm**

**Hart's Family Farm**

**Seeds of Love Organic Farm**

**Tarry Lane Tasting Station**

**April 6, 2015 – 27<sup>th</sup> report for the 2014-2015 Garden Year**

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Friendship Farms & Fare is a branch of Ecology Florida, a not-for-profit corporation.

Contributions to Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida are tax deductible.

If you would like to support our work, please consider sharing a donation.

PO Box 596 • New Port Richey, Florida 34656-0596

*Friendship Farms & Fare affirms and advances agrarian ideals to reestablish a sustainable culture*



*Ecology Florida advances the harmonious integration of healthy natural, cultural, and economic ecologies to regenerate a sustainable world*

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[www.EcologyFlorida.org](http://www.EcologyFlorida.org)