Friendship Farms & Fare

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

Farm Report & Newsletter

December 15, 2014 – 11TH 2014-2015 FARM & CSA Report

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

REPORT

42 degrees at 3:00 AM, December 13, 2014

Historic Average (for 12/12): 73 HIGH, 55 LOW–Weather Underground: http://www.wunderground.com/
The historical average high temperature is now 73 degrees (three degrees higher than the lowest average high [70], and seventeen degrees lower than the highest average high [90]). Our average low is now 55 degrees (four degrees higher than the lowest average low [51] and twenty-one degrees lower than the highest average low [76]). The average high and average low are in their annual decline, nearing their nadir, and will continue through the fall until beginning a gradual assent in the early winter (late January).

Note: For the past few years, our summer and fall highs and lows have typically run a bit higher than historic averages. Thus far this year, the trend has continued. The higher temperatures stress even hot-weather summer crops. Our development of seed stock from plants grown in these above normal temperatures may result in plants more tolerant of the increasingly harsh climate.

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

(we ran this story last week, but it such exciting news, we thought it worth featuring again)

On December 6, Seed Savers Exchange listed 3F loquat seeds on the *Yearbook* website. They will be included in the hard copy of the 2015 *Yearbook*, due out early in the new year. These are the only loquat seeds listed in the SSE *Yearbook*, and this is the first time loquat seeds have been listed in the SSE *Yearbook*.

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.fffsite.org/#!contact/cl4l Here is a link to the November issue: http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2014/11/florida-loquat-festival-news-3/

Remember, 3F and Ecology Florida host the annual Florida Loquat Festival. Join us April 4, 2015 for the next celebration of Florida's Urban Fruit.

We are also excited to report that the young trees that flowered for the first time this year (at 2½ years of age), now have fruit on them. The parent tree has a lot of "fruitlings," and the youngsters now have their own offspring. By their third birthday (this spring), we'll be looking for the first harvest from the young trees. Remember, literature reports loquats grown from seed do not produce fruit for 8-10 years (as reported by Perdue University, among others).

This past week, there were considerably fewer bees at the loquat trees. This may well be because of the cold.

Weekly Weather Report
Moderating Conditions Ahead After Last Week's Cold

Last Week (12/6-12/12): Temperatures were well below normal this past week. Averages for this time of year are low to mid-70s for highs (72-75) and mid-50s for lows (55-57). Only on Friday and Saturday (12/6 and 7) were temperatures in that range. Otherwise, they were well below normal.

The highest high for last week was 79 (12/6) and the lowest high was 60 (12/12). The highest low was 65 (12/6) and lowest low was 46 (12/10), although we twice reached 47. It is colder right now, as of this composition (12/13 2:30 AM), than it has been all week – 42 degrees.

This Week (12/13-12/19): Temperatures will moderate this week, with little chance of rain. A weak front is forecast to pass through around mid-week. Look for slightly warmer temperatures in the coming week.

Looking Ahead: Despite the strange weather so far this fall, we are in the driest part of the year. Historic norms indicate cool and dry conditions.

Average temperatures will continue to drop through most of January month. We are now well into freeze season, and freezes are possible in any given week. The Polar Vortex will heighten the possibility of freezes. We are approaching the coldest period of the year, which occurs in early January. Averages are not good guides, and we are currently running close to historical averages, but with rather dramatic fluctuations.

Garden Overview
Fall Plantings and Harvests
(additional details and assessments follows)

Winter greens are flourishing, and most of the beds are planted. We have good to large quantities of arugula, collards, kale, and swiss chard. Eggplant is still hanging on, with some small fruit on the shrubs. Eggplant will be FCFS. Romaine is coming along slowly, and smallish shares are available.

See the Share Report for all items.

We picked up the pace on garden starts this week, and seeded a tray of arugula, which germinated at 100%. The arugula was up in two days.

We've finished planting the South Knoll – broccoli, romaine, and tomatoes. We did our first planting in the new central bed in the South Garden, which is near the blackberry grove for those who know the layout.

Kales and collards are maturing nicely. Swiss chard is accelerating. As expected, the famous Calabrese is doing well, and we are finally catching up on our schedule. Arugula is thriving.

We are still looking for more swiss chard to plant, and it looks like we'll just have to wait for our own seedlings to mature ready for the garden.

Tomatoes in the South Knoll are coming along nicely. We just have to avoid a freeze.

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

Broccoli

Thanks to those who are following the broccoli saga. It is such a joy to share this adventure with others. Here is the latest update:

We have **199** seedlings and young plants in the gardens, which reflects our planting **60** seedlings this week – mostly in the new central bed of the South Garden and the South Knoll. We have started over 300 seeds, with 100% germination – remarkable. These are our famous (3F) Calabrese broccoli seeds.

We'll plant more this week; we have plenty of seedlings, now, probably moving to the new South East Bed, which is near the blackberry shurbs. We were initially aiming plant 200 broccolis this year – but may up it to 300, at least 250. Last year, we had 144.

- **If you are starting a garden, please check with us first for seeds and seedlings.** Our broccoli seeds are from the Calabrese family, and we've been harvesting these seeds since 2008. They are listed with Seed Savers Exchange. We offer them (and all our seeds) for sale at $3.00 for a packet (with a minimum of 30 seeds).

All our seeds are from our own harvests of heirloom varieties that have become locally acclimated. They are heavy producers with extended seasons. They typically out perform any commercially produced and packaged seeds. Also, by acquiring seeds from us (or other responsible local growers), you are keeping resources in the community. All 3F income goes directly back into the farms. Friendship Farms & Fare operates as a not-for-profit business under the charter of Ecology Florida, a 501 C3 corporation.

Kale

Kale continues to do well. We will have shares available this week. Depending on requests, shares may be considerable. 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. We may yet have to go back to the gallon size shares, but for now it looks like everyone can get two gallon bags.

Kale orders include leaves from all our varieties– Superior, Scarlet, Lacinato, Siberian, Red Russian, Halbhoher Gruner Krauser, and Dwarf Blue). The strongest of the kales is the German Kale (Halbhoher Gruner Krauser), followed by the Superior, and then Lacinato. We have an entire bed of the Halbhoher in the south garden.

Swiss Chard

The swiss chard is accelerating. We've been sampling while we harvest, and found all varieties especially rich and full bodied – delicious. We'll have enough for small shares for all who desire.

Last week we seeded more of the out of date, Gold Silverbeet. All germinated.

We are looking for more SC seedlings. Ours are still too young to plant in the garden.

Arugula

Arugula continues to thrive. There is enough for full shares for all. We seed more of our own 3F arugula this week, and had 100% germination.

Collards

All collards are thriving. This is their season. Georgia Southern Collards are trendsetters for the fall garden, and the Vates are coming on strong now.

Spinach

In the absence of the more swiss chard for one of the new beds, we planted the young American spinach. The plants may be a bit too young for the garden, but they appear healthy and strong.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers are not a typical fall crop, but we've had success before, so we are trying again this year. These are a Japanese variety, Suyo. We also sprouted some Longfellows. We planted 12 seedlings in the blackberry grove to train on the blackberry trellises.

Tomatoes

We are going with a good producer from previous seasons – the Wapsipinicon. This is a peach tomato, with ancestry going back to 1890. We planted four in the South Knoll this week. These are a bit larger than cherry tomatoes, and yellow to almost white. They have a wonderful flavor. We are going with the Wapsipinicons because they have proven to be the most resistant to blight and septoria. So far, those we planted are thriving. Now, if we can avoid a freeze!

Blackberries
Ouachita Family

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

Habanero Peppers

Habanero peppers continue to thrive. We have four habanero shrubs, and always have dozens of fruit ready to harvest.

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.

Bell Peppers

Bell peppers will not be available this week. We again missed our start date again! We will try to start peppers this week

Eggplant

We are not listing eggplant. We've pulled a few of the plants, and others are showing signs of decline. A few still have small fruit, but it looks like the long season is finally coming to an end.

Purslane

Purslane is thriving. There is plenty available.

Viticulture (Grape) News

Vines are dormant.

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

(reported earlier in Farm Report)

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We are also excited to report that the young trees that flowered for the first time this year (at 2½ years of age), now have fruit on them. The parent tree has a lot of "fruitlings," and the youngsters now have their own offspring offerings. By their third birthday (this spring), we'll be looking for the first harvest from the young trees. Remember, literature reports that loquats grown from seed do not produce fruit for 8-10 years (as reported by Perdue University, among others).

This past week, we again observed large numbers of bees at the loquat trees. This is heartening.

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. Beginning with this report, we are offering the following Black Cat organic jams: Peach, Cherry, Blueberry, Strawberry, and (yes!) Loquat. The Cat will also offer a Fruit Spread. Shares can acquire these for $5.00, for a ½ 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 Now Available
Suncoast Acres Poultry Farm

We have found a local fowl and egg farm, and acquired our first share of eggs. Initial reports on the eggs are positive, and we are making arrangements with the farm for a regular supply. All indications are that the farm family we have met looks after their animals with interest and care.

The farm is called "Suncoast Acres Poultry Farm," in Spring Hill, just south of the Hernando County line. This is also the home of "Mandy's Monster Farm," which raises Flemish Giant rabbits. So, be advised, the family raises chickens, ducks, turkeys, and (of course) rabbits for human consumption. In addition to chicken eggs, they also have duck and turkey eggs.

Due to an accident involving Mandy and family, we'll be getting our eggs from other sources, temporarily.

If you would like to sample duck or turkey eggs, let us know.

Chicken eggs 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 a local farm (Suncoast Acres Poultry Farm) keeps resources in our community, supports local farming, and directly benefits a local farm family.

Let us know if you would like to tour Suncoast Acres Poultry Farm. We are planning to take a tour, and would welcome any shareholders who would like to join the tour.

Honey: Local honey is again 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: Tarragon is thriving, along with rosemary. Basils will be in recess for at least a week. Consult the share list for other herbs, and other available items.

Tampa deliveries will be Wednesday this week. West Pasco deliveries will be determined on the basis of share request and distance, no later than Tuesday morning.

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.fffsite.org/#!contact/cl4l

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

THE SHARE
December 15, 2014 (11)
*** larger quantity available if desired**
FCFS = limited supplies, early submissions given preference
Tampa Transmissions TBA

Vegetables
Arugula
Collards
~~**Hibiscus Leaves, Cranberry – small quantities (samples)**~~
http://www.livestrong.com/article/346372-nutrition-information-on-cranberry-hibiscus/
Kale
Lettuce – Romaine (small quantities)
Peppers – Habanero* – very hot
"Spinach" – Okinawa
http://edibleplantproject.org/okinawaspinach/
Swiss Chard

Fruit -
Kumquat – Nagami * (tart) (abundant)
Kumquat – Meiwa (sweet) (small quantities, "sample size")
Lemon – Meyer

~~**Fungus/Mushrooms**~~

Nuts – pecans (TBA)

Herbs (* larger quantity available if desired)
Basils in recess

~~**Basil – Lemon**~~
~~**Basil – Cinnamon**~~
~~**Basil – Italian**~~
~~**Basil – Globe**~~
~~**Basil – medley (mix of all basils)**~~
Chives
Cilantro
Oregano
Parsley
Purslane
Rosemary*
Tarragon*
Thyme

Cottage Foods & Samples

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). Samples upon request. Available jams:
Peach
Cherry
Blueberry
Strawberry
Loquat (yes, from local loquats!)
Mixed Fruit Spread

COMPANION FAUNA
Hibernal Report

Many of our animal companions are now hibernating or drastically reducing their activities

Bat update: No bats at the lodge this week. None overhead at twilight.

Honey Bees: Very few bees this week, possibly due to cold. There were some at the loquat trees, but very few.

"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/Are-Neonicotinoids-Killing-Bees_Xerces-Society1.pdf

Hawk (either Red-Tailed or Cooper's Hawk): No hawk.

Raccoon: No raccoons.

Southern Toad: None

Greenhouse Frog: None.

Leopard Frogs: None observed.

Florida Black Snake: None observed

Florida Ringneck Snake: None this week. Here is a site on the Southern Ringneck Snake from the Florida Museum of Natural History and the University of Florida:
https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/herpetology/fl-guide/Diadophisppunctatus.htm

Earth Worms: None this week.

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 on leaves of one vine. Here is a link to a site with information on the Skeletonizers:
http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/fruit/grapeleaf_skeletonizer.htm

Swifts: None observed, and the lodge is quiet.

Tree Frogs: One observed, pressed against the protective frame of the south bay window – no breeding, no singing, no tadpoles.

Nocturnal Garden Spider – Some in both gardens.

Sweet bees: None observed.

"Asian Tramp Snail." The snails are uncommon now, but a few do turn up.

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): One discovered in Ray's laundry shed. The creature was captured and humanely euthanized.

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/frogstoads/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

Woodlouse – Very few. These are warm weather creatures.

Opossum: None observed.

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

Cats: Neighborhood cat, Frankie, appears regularly. She is occasionally joined by Lady Gray.

3F Stories, Events, and Policy Updates

Programs and Plans
Our 5th Year

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 12 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). Later this year, in cooperation with local markets, we will begin offering an extensive line of Seed Savers organic seeds.

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.fffsite.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 deductable.

Planting & Harvest Notes
Fall Seeding and Garden Starts

Seedings: Arugula, 3F Famous Robust, 54.

Garden Starts: Collards; Broccoli; Kale; Spinach; Cucumbers

Harvest Notes: herbs, arugula, eggplant, collards, kale, swiss chard

Vermipost: none

Bat Guano: no harvest (no bats)

November 29 – 1:00 PM

3F to team with Ecology Florida and Market Off Main To bring Seed Savers Exchange Seeds to 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. The seed display and sales area was presented to the public on "Small Business Saturday," November 29, with a dedication event at 1:00 PM.

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. Some of the seed packs will be Early Jersey Cabbage, Dragon Carrots, Georgia Southern Collards, Genovese Basil, Lacinato Kale, and over 50 other heirloom, organic vegetable seeds – including some from local farms and gardens.

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 fall workday, we'll have a lot to do. Please send your best Saturday(s) in December.

Nursery Certification and Registration

Friendship Farms & Fare

48015239

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

In accord with state regulations, our nursery was inspected in April. Mr. Daniel Merced from the Florida Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant & Apiary Inspection conducted the review.

Mr. Merced gave the nursery a very positive evaluation, and recommended the 3F Nursery for certification and registration. We have now received the official documentation. While with us, Mr. Merced also inspected our groves, and offered extremely helpful insights into citrus growing, and the conditions of our trees. Interestingly, Merced discovered Asian Citrus Psyllids on every citrus tree in our grove – that's the transporter of Citrus Greening. More interesting, perhaps, he detected no Greening in any of the young trees planted in the New South Grove in January, 2013. Your Farmer (now technically and officially a "Nurseryman") learned a great deal about identifying specific challenges citrus trees may face and treatments for these challenges.

Our successful pursuit of certification and registration is another step in the development of the Friendship Farms and Fare sustainable urban agriculture project. As most of you know, we are already 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 deductable.

2014-2015 Renewal

Seed Dealer License & Registration
Friendship Farms & Fare
S009451

3 F is a licensed Seed Dealer. We just renewed our license with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which issues these licenses that 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/

The Florida Loquat Festival: Celebrating Florida's Urban Fruit
Tentative Date Set for 2015 Festival
April 4, 2015
Market Off Main
New Port Richey

We've set a tentative date of April 4 for the 2015 Festival. Mark your calendars (in pencil for now), and we'll get back with confirmation in next month's issue. In the meantime, please spread the word about Loquats and the event.

We starting preliminary work on the festival, and are happy to share our initial plans and visions.

First, we've had requests from a number of folks to share their loquat wares. So, if you are interested in sharing loquats, or loquat products and wares, please contact us. This is a "Loquat Exclusive" event, so everything being shared (for sale, contribution, or gift) must be a loquat or loquat-derived product. Space is limited, and proposals will be reviewed. Sharing will be contingent on proper paperwork (including disclaimers on foods), fees if any, available space, and commitment to the Festival.

Second, if you have a loquat tree that volunteers can harvest for the festival, please let us know your location (and phone number); we'll make arrangements for the harvest in season.

Third, our plans to have a loquat poetry contest may have to wait another year. We are still looking for leadership for the contest. By the way, what rhymes with Loquat (besides Kumquat)?

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 still 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.

Community Garden Project at New South Garden

We are ready to receive applications for our community garden project. Folks interested in acquiring a plot can contact us through the 3F site.

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

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

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 (note if you desire a bat observation, which requires special scheduling)
* 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 a 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:

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 a local farm (Suncoast Acres Poultry Farm) 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 Fall.

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 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).

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 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.fffsite.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

December 15, 2014 – 11th 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.
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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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