

**GARDEN & TASTINGS**  
CSA REPORT & NEWSLETTER  
JULY 29, 2013 – 44<sup>TH</sup> CSA REPORT

*For shareholders and authorized guests only.*

**Report to official shareholders in the TBN Gardens & Groves, CSA. Also sent to select non-shareholders by special request. Do not forward or send out for general distribution – please respect this request.**

Notify us of items desired (see list, below), and we will report on availability, and pickup days and times. For the most part, New Port Richey pickups will be weekday evenings and weekends, and Tampa pickups will be weekdays, late mornings and afternoons. Distribution is first-come-first-served (FCFS), until supplies run out, with one week off after each acquisition (or until those who did not order in the previous week have had an opportunity to order). Items requested by more than one shareholder will be divided in equal portions to the extent allowed by stock on hand. Images are referenced in the **fuchsia-colored** text.

You will find your weekly newsletters, share details, and community growing information at the [website](#).

Current shares will continue to receive the email newsletter and share report for the rest of the season. Over time, we will transition to the website as the primary source for information and reports on shares.

Current shareholders may request a free Share app for smart phone or ipad. The app will allow you to review the weekly share and place your share request.

### **REPORT**

**79 degrees at 2:30 AM July 27, 2013**

**Historical Average: 90 HIGH, 76 LOW – Weather Underground- <http://www.wunderground.com/> (the historical average will remain the same well into August)**

### **8 Weeks Until New Garden Year**

The 2012-2013 Garden Year is drawing to a close. Coming up will be the grand finale of the Garden Year: The Sweet Potato harvest. Last year we topped 100 pounds, and if all goes well, we should have that much or more this year. The only concern is the heavy rain this past month, which has saturated the ground. Fortunately, the SP beds drain well, which should facilitate the final maturation of the spuds. We'll do our first sample digging in a week or so.

Please let us know if you plan to renew or apply for a new share for the coming year (October 2013 through end of September 2014). See information later in this document for new and renewing shares.

### **Eggplant Special**

We should again have eggplants for shares this week. Deliveries will be Wednesday or later for the eggplant. These outstanding fruit are courtesy of Cadle's Cove Farm, with whom we have developed a friendship. Cadle's Cove is an organic farm, and we have been sampling their produce regularly for several months. We think you will agree that it is of the highest quality.

Eggplant is among the few high yielding Florida summer vegetables. We have okra and sweet potato leaves pretty well covered, and thanks to our friends at Cadle's Cove, we now have eggplant. Shares who ordered and did not receive eggplant last week will be first on the list this week. After that, it will be first come first serve.

### **Rain & the Dog Days**

So far, the Dog Days of summer (mid-July to mid-August) have been wet-dog days here at the garden. As most shareholders know, the rains continued this week. We are well above normal, with over 15 inches for July. The rain does cool the earth and air a bit, and without it, high temperatures will always be in the low 90s, and lows around 80. As of this writing, we just dropped below 80.

Our regular summer crops appear untroubled by the high temperatures, but the bell peppers are struggling. The habanero peppers are so plentiful the branches of the little plants droop from their weight. Marigolds are also thriving. Among the herbs, tarragon, chives, and citrus mint are prolific. So, order those in your share, if you like.

### **Sweet Potato Leaves**

Last week, we had a little challenge with sweet potato leaves wilting and browning up in the Tampa shares. The challenge appears to have been rectified, and this week's orders should be fine. The plants are thriving now, and we have enough leaves to fill all shares.

We probably have a few more weeks of SP leaves in abundance. After that, the volume of high quality leaves will decline due to maturation of the vines and the harvest of these southern delights.

### **Habanero Peppers**

The volume of production for this extra hot pepper continues to be exceptional. We've had few takers, and there are plenty for all who want to try. 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.

### **Okra**

Okra is slowing a bit, but still producing well. Some of the mature plants are gigantic. We'll fill all shares in ¼ pound increments.

Last year, we produced a little less than 15 pounds for the season, and we had so few takers that we shared a fair amount with a local organic farm collective. This year, we have produced nearly 25 pounds, and distributed every single pod. We are delighted with the increased popularity, which we attribute to the recipes we have been posting on the site.

Okra will be around for about one more month, but quantities will soon begin to drop off. Thus far we've been able to meet all shares with at least a ¼ pound each week. In the event we cannot offer everyone at least a ¼ pound, we'll use the FCFS method, and put those skipped one week first on the list for the following week.

Various okra recipes are posted on the site, and we welcome any others that you have. Look for the recipes section at <http://www.fffsite.org>

We have begun harvesting the larger pods to collect seeds for next year's season. See images of a gigantic **Star of David** okra and a **Hill Country Red** of almost equal size. The Star of David is Israeli heirloom and the largest of all the okra we grow – with the largest pods we have ever seen. The Hill Country Red, which grows nearly as large, is a Texas heirloom. Also, just as note, the gigantic okra pods we have been featuring on the site are for seed collection only. They will not be included in shares.

**Eggs:** The hens at our supplier's farm have slowed down a bit with the heat. We will work to fill all requests. If you are in the egg program and desire eggs this week, let us know.

**Herbs:** Consult the share list for available items.

Tampa deliveries will be Monday or Wednesday this week – Wednesday for the eggplant. 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**  
**July 29 , 2013 (44)**  
**(\* larger quantity available if desired)**

**Vegetables**

Eggplant (Cadle's Cove) – FCFS (first call for those who requested last week and did not receive)

Peppers – none at present

**Peppers – Habanero\*** – very hot

Sweet Potato Leaves (using new packing system)

Okra – 1/4 pound – 1/2 pound upon request

**Fruit**

No fruit

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

Basil -- Traditional Basil

Basil -- Mrs. Burns' Lemon Basil (small quantities)

Basil – Globe (Greek) Basil (this wilts and browns up quickly at this time of year)

Basil – Cinnamon (small quantities)

Chives\*

Cilantro (none at present)

Culantro – (none at present)

Mint -- Citrus (Orange) Mint\*

Oregano (medium quantity)

Parsley (none at present)

Purslane (medium quantities)

Rosemary\*

Smilax (Cat Briar) (small quantity)

Tarragon

Thyme

### **Seasonings**

Bay Leaves – fresh leaves

### **Medicinal**

Aloe\*

### **Complementary Sample(s) from Farm & Fare**

- AUGUST Sample: Something special is on its way

## **Nature News**

**Bat update:** The colony was very active this past week. When ever there was a break in the rains in the evening, the entire colony erupted from the lodge – apparently anxious to make up for missed hunting time during the rainouts.

Late at night, when walking about in the garden, bat congregate over head when pointing the flashlight straight up into the night sky, creating a column of light. First into the column are insects. Some are quite small, mosquitoes, gnats, flies, but larger moths are also attracted. It does not take long before the bats begin swooping through the column of light, snatching their prey from the otherwise still and heavy air. Our bats are not large, but they are enormous by comparison with the insects one has been straining to see. The suddenness of their appearance is startling and their speed through the light is stunning. Some come within a foot of the flashlight.

There is a reminder in all of this of the great chain of being, and also of seeing schools of mullet at night in the shallow waters of Tampa Bay many years ago. The schools were huge and every fish illuminated in its darting journey by luminescent organisms in the bay. Below the mullet one would often see larger swimming forms, their course also traced in luminescence. As with the sudden swoop of the bats in the night sky of our garden, those larger forms at times would race through the mullet school with a dazzling burst of speed. In those moments the waters all around would blaze with light from the mullet, now prey to the larger fish, fleeing in a frenzy to farther reaches of the bay.

**Big Brown Bat:** Our visitor was not seen this week.

**Swifts:** The swifts remain busy. There are more in the evening skies than ever seen before. Also, for the first time in memory, we observed bats and swifts out and about simultaneously. It seemed the entire population of both colonies (bird and bat) were all in the sky at the same time on Thursday evening – some nearly bumping into each other. From a distance the two creatures appear very similar, and it was difficult at times to tell them apart in the crepuscular skies. It was rare and more memorable spectacle.

**Lubbers:** No lubbers observed.

**Tree Frogs:** Ther were four new egg clusters, and quite a lot of nighttime activity. They are now in all parts of the garden at night. Nearly all cisterns are crowded with tadpoles, and numerous young frogs are appearing daily.

**Cicada:** No cicada this week. There will probably no more until next year.

**Leopard Frogs:** Only saw the female Leopard this week, but we saw her every day. She is very large. The amplexus of last week may have gotten the better of her little consort.

[http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife\\_info/frogstoads/rana\\_utricularia.php](http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/frogstoads/rana_utricularia.php)

**Red Tailed Hawk:** No sign of the hawk this week.

**Opossum:** Opossums not observed.

**Southern Toad:** Three small southern toads were observed this past week. All appeared when clearing underbrush from areas where it had grown thick. They were clearly perturbed at being disturbed. In the past we have used a power tool to remove the brush, but we have abandoned that method because of potential injury and actual terror caused to the toads. The toads thrive in underbrush, high grass, and thick mulch. This is a reminder that no matter how compassionate and conscientious the farmer, there is an adverse impact on fauna when humans impose their will on Nature. Even removing the brush by hand causes alarm in the toads and frantic efforts to find safety away from the human intrusion.

For some, the story of these toads comes to mind every summer morning when nearby mowers start up all around our garden sanctuary. Also coming to mind are the lubbers, the anoles, the frogs, the snakes, and the smaller creatures who share our world.

**Owl:** The owl was not heard this week.

**Bees:** No bees sighted again. We did receive two reports of bees in our vicinity. This is good news, and hopefully an indication that they will again return to our garden.

This is the first summer in memory when bees have not appeared. Where once they were abundant, floating in and out among the many flowing plants of the Florida summer, there have been none at all since spring. The real test will come next spring with the broccoli flowers. How they love those tiny yellow buds. We will look for them then, if not sooner. They are important for pollination of the broccoli, but they are beloved as friends and gardening companions.

Here is a reprint of earlier comments on the disappearance of the bees:

The disappearance of our bees was likely caused by neonicotinoids, which are now being marketed (chiefly by Bayer) as home and garden insecticides. The “neoniks” seem to be major culprits in CCD, and the EU has banned them. Not so here. The daunting challenge is the commodification of this type of poison and its serious penetration of the home poison market due to Bayer's aggressive marketing.

Where once bees actually were doing better in urban environments, away from the big AG operations and their addiction to poisons and chemical-based food production, now even these sanctuaries are being contaminated by this virulent poison — a neurotoxin. The Bayer poisons are packaged in bright blue bottles, and you will find them in major home improvement chain stores, and most smaller stores as well. Where is Rachel Carson?

Here are two good sites related to neonicotinoids:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/10119237/Neonicotinoids-harm-birds-and-soil.html>

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

## G&G Stories and Events

### Notice for 2013-2014 Shares

Our CSA garden year begins in October, and covers the entire year. We are in the renewal period now, and most shares have affirmed a desire to renew.

New shares for 2013-2014 are offered for \$250 – about \$5.00 per week. Current shares may renew at the same amount as last year, although additional contributions will be gratefully received. Auxiliary costs will likely increase as well, especially on eggs and honey.

Please do notify us of your plans for the next garden year as soon as possible. If you plan to renew, we can hold your share until the last week of September, but renewal before then will be helpful. The sooner you renew the easier it will be for us to finalize our plans. At present, we have a waiting list for new shares, so if you are not going to renew, letting us know soon will be helpful – especially for those who desire to join.

### Water Connection

July 12, 2013

The New South Garden is now connected to the New Port Richey water system. We will install irrigation lines shortly. We will extend a line back to the old south grove, and have two or three bibs, to expand gardening operations on the mini-farm. This is a nice complement to receiving designation of the South Garden as a Community Garden on June 12 – see story in the archives. If you would like a plot in the community garden, just let us know. As a shareholder, the fee for your plot will be covered.

### Next Chapter in the our Gardens & Groves and Tarry Lane Kitchens

The steering committee of the gardens and kitchens have been making plans to improve and enrich the joint project, including the CSA. We will soon have a new identity, most likely sometime in September. Watch the website for news of all the improvements, and our new identity. Of course, there will be no changes in the fine produce and prepared foods you have been enjoying for the past few years, only a better operation, expanded opportunities for participation, and a more meaningful contribution to healthy living and a sustainable culture. In all likelihood we will have greater diversity in our product offerings.

**Loquat Festival Next Year:** Our CSA community and volunteers have begun initial planning for the area's first Loquat Festival. If you'd like to be part of the planning team, please let us know. The tentative date for the festival is March 29, 2014. 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. With your help, G&G will launch the first one – March 29, 2014. In meantime, add loquats to your CSA Share request.

**Summer cycle closing:** We are nearing the end of the summer growing season. We are certainly past peak. Production of the high-summer crops will continue through mid-August, but it now beginning to slow. We'll continue to plant some okra because it has quick maturity cycle, but many composted plants will be replaced with marigolds for soil enrichment.

**Fall on the horizon:** Preparations for the Fall growing season will begin in August. Starting in the first full week of August, summer plants will be composted, fall crops will be seeded, and beds will be regenerated. The growing seasons have changed due to climate change, so our major plantings will begin in late August and extend through the end September.

**NEXT G&G Workday August 24 – Note, this is a change of date from the one given previously.** Please let us know if you would like to join us for a workday on August 24. We'll be harvesting sweet potatoes, composing okra, expanding and regenerating beds, seed collecting, and seeding broccoli and perhaps some other fall crops.

**G&G 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, and community growing information.

**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 Tarry Lane Kitchens, please let us know, and we can make arrangements. Tours are experiential, informational, educational, and fun. Typically, participants visit several urban farms, learn about and organic farming in an urban environment using permaculture philosophies and practices, 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.

**Planting (Seeds):** Seed testing of 2012-2013 seeds: Okra, broccoli, habanero peppers, poblano peppers, cubanelle peppers, cilantro, arugula. The broccoli has already sprouted, with the 2011 and 2013 seeds at nearly 100% germination. We are also testing the 2010 seeds for reference, and none have sprouted – too old. The arugula is also at close to 100% germination.

**Planting (Garden Starts):** okra and marigolds

**Harvest Notes:** Habanero Peppers, Bell Peppers, assorted okra, sweet potato leaves, assorted herbs, tomatoes, onions.

**Vermipost:** No harvest this week

## Other News and Reports

### **New Port Richey Library Seed Exchange and Community Garden Program - August 20, 11 AM**

If you are in the New Port Richey area on August 20, stop by the Public Library at 11:00 for the official opening of the New Port Richey Library Seed Exchange and a presentation on the city's Community Garden Program. Members of your CSA Family have been active supporters of both programs, and our urban farm has been designated as a Community Garden.

Watch this part of the site for further information on the program, and mark your calendars for this special event.

To mark the opening of the NPR Library Seed Exchange, we donating a collection of our high-yield heirloom vegetable seeds. We fully support and celebrate the good work of the New Port Richey

Library and the City's Environmental Committee in initiating this outstanding project. Here is what we are sharing with the exchange:

Silver Queen Okra 100+ seeds  
Hill Country Red Okra 100+ seeds  
Star of David 100+ seeds  
FF&F Gulf Coast Calabrese Broccoli 200+ seeds

## **Commercial Produce News Report**

**July 25, 2013:**

This column reports on seasonal Florida produce and other popular produce items as they appear at local corporate grocery stores. The report includes the source of the produce, the cost, and estimated food miles. Readers will note the seasonal Florida produce is available from local growers (including our CSA), the actual fruits and vegetables are often being shipped great distances to reach the corporate grocery stores in our area. If we are growing the vegetables, and we find it in stores, we'll include it on this list. We'll also include seasonal crops not being grown at our farm.

**Please send us reports on any seasonal items you find at markets where you shop, and include the source and cost. We'll research the food miles.**

**Items in red are available through the CSA or other local growers.**

**OR = organic.**

### **Market Report**

#### **Major Market**

July 25, 2013

Eggplant, \$1.79 lb - Thomasville, GA (est. to Tampa: 271 land, 219 air)

Blackberries, 12 oz, \$4.99 - Mexico, Michoacan (est. to Tampa: 2,009 land, 1,347 air)

Okra, \$3.49 lb, USA (no location given, probably Florida) (est. 150 miles)

Peanuts (green), \$2.99 lb, USA (no location given, probably Florida) (est. 150 miles)

Mangos, 10/\$10 - Mexico (Coast Tropical) (est to Tampa: 1,435 land, 1,112 air)

Bell Peppers, OR, \$2.99 each - Sarasota (Global Organics) (to Tampa, 61 miles land, 42 air)

Dill, Thyme, Basil, 1oz (\$1.99) - Miami (Rock Garden South)(to Tampa, 280 miles land, 203 air)

Mint, Oregano, Tarragon, 1oz (\$1.99) - Miami (Rock Garden South)(to Tampa, 280 miles land, 203 air)

Onions (Vidalia), \$3.99/3lbs - Reidsville, GA (Shuman Produce) (to Tampa, 324 miles land, 286 air)

Onions (Vidalia), \$3.99/3lbs - Lyons, GA (Herndon Family Farms) (to Tampa, 337 miles land, 293 air)

- note: onions are being harvested in Florida, but they are not "Vidalias"

Broccoli, OR, \$3.99 head -- Salinas CA (Salinas to Tampa: 2826 land, 2352 air)

Cauliflower, OR, \$4.99 head - San Juan Bautista (to Tampa, 2,840 miles land, 2,348 air)

#### **From earlier in July**

Blueberries, OR, \$2.99 ½ pint - Hammonton, NJ, Little Buck Organics (to Tampa: 1,065 land, 919 air)

- some Florida growers are still producing blueberries but not in commercial quantities

Strawberries, 16 oz., \$3.99 - Watsonville, CA (Surfside) (to Tampa: 2850 land, 2352 air)

Oranges, Valencia, OR, 4 lbs. \$4.99. - Rainbow, CA (Rainbow Valley) (to Tampa: 2,486 land, 2,088 air)

**Peaches, \$2.99 lb - California (est. to Tampa: 2850 land, 2352 air)**

Nectarines, \$2.99 lb - California (est. to Tampa: 2850 land, 2352 air)

Ruby Red Grapefruit, \$5.00/5lbs - Sherman Oaks, CA (Sunkist) (to Tampa: 2540 land, 2164 air)

## OTHER PRODUCTS FOR THE CSA FAMILY

**Non-Members may order items on the list for \$5 per item.** Items remaining after shares have been distributed, may be acquired by non-members for \$5.00 per item.

**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 \$4.50 a dozen (\$3.60 for shares), and \$2.50 a half-dozen (\$2.00 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.

**Honey:** \$6 (\$5 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.

**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 cow pot cells are \$1.00 per plant, \$5.00 (\$4) for a six pack, \$9.00 (\$7.00) for two six packs. 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 okra, peanut, and marigold starts.

**Cow Pots:** Twelve packs of “cow pots” starter cells now available -- \$5.00 (\$4). These organic cells are made from cured and compressed cow manure and supply young plants with a natural fertilizer. In our tests, we found the cow pots superior to other “natural” cells on the market in promoting root growth and plant development. They are also a sustainable product (so long as we have cows), as opposed to the other “natural” cells that typically are made from peat, which is mined in bogs and wetland ecosystems in the north, usually destroying the bogs and ecosystems in the process. We are also supplying cow pots in retail display boxes to local retailers.

**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. Let us know if you are interested. Additional packages of seeds for \$4.00 (\$3.20) a packet (of 30).

We also now have local-sourced, Gulf-coast acclimated Okra Seeds – Silver Queen, Star of David, Hill Country Red.

**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.

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

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