



Friendship Farms & Fare

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

3F Farm Report & Newsletter

February 29, 2016 – 22nd 2015-2016 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

57 degrees at 2:00 AM, February 26, 2016

Historic Norm (for 2/29) 74HIGH, 56 LOW Weather Underground: <http://www.wunderground.com/>

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

First Spring Seedings At Gardens Seeds Available for Your Gardens

That's right! We've started our first batch of seeds for our spring (and summer) garden.

The okra we seeded last week has germinated – except for the Red Burgundy. Rouge Lance was close to 100% germination, and Hill Country Red was nearly 80%. The others were between 50 and 70%. None of the Red Burgundy sprouted. The lower germination rates were directly related to the cold and wet conditions. We'll re-seed all the cells that did not germinate, and we'll expect to see close to 100% germination.

We've also planted eggplant and arugula. The cold and damp conditions will likely inhibit germination, but we'll watch and report.

If you would like seeds for okra, please send us a request. We'd be delighted to receive a contribution of \$3 for a seed pack, so please think about that. We have the five okras noted above as well as arugula. These are all seeds saved from the 3F gardens and farms, some for over the course of 10 seasons/generations. They are acclimated to the Springs Coast Watershed, and the central Gulf Coast, generally.

We also have a wide variety of heirloom organic seeds from Seed Savers Exchange. Let us know what you would like and we'll accommodate your interests.

Winter Crops Thriving

We had another large harvest last week. We are again encouraging everyone in the CSA to request shares this week. We should have enough collards, kale, and broccoli for all shares. Any shareholders who desire to come by the farm can pick up double shares of collards – just call in advance so we can be sure someone is at the farm.

The primary winter crops (collards, kale, and broccoli) are thriving. Swiss chard is also finally making an appearance. The cooler and wetter weather is accelerating the plants' growth and development. The south garden is particularly lush, with beautiful large-leafed plants stretching from Illinois Ave to the natural sector at the south end of the garden.

Broccoli Prolific

This is our best broccoli season in years. We are over 120 heads harvested, so far, and we may have that much or more still developing. Some of the secondary heads are as big as primary heads.

We are harvesting quickly, and collecting double and triple shares. Even so, some of the broccoli is flowering – which is great for the bees, but maybe surprising to folks familiar only with commercial broccoli. Like other plants, broccoli flowers when the plant is mature, and ours is no exception. Remember, the flowers add a touch of sweetness to the distinctive broccoli taste.

Florida Loquat Festival March 26 9:00 – 2:00 Frances Avenue Park New Port Richey

Mark Your Calendars

We are pleased to announce the date and location of this year's Florida Loquat Festival. Mark your calendars and make arrangements now to join loquat fans from around the state in New Port Richey on March 26, 2016.

If you are interested in learning more about loquats (from seed to harvest, and planting to canning), the 2016 Florida Loquat Festival is for you. As always, this is a Loquat exclusive event. Only loquats and loquat-related products will be available. Lectures, demonstrations, and educational sessions will be dedicated solely to loquats.

We have our good friends from Green Plan Tree Farm joining us, bringing a wide selection of loquat trees ready for planting. Black Cat Growers will again be offering wonderful loquat preserves, and maybe some surprises. Jim Kovaleski from Freedom House Farms will share expertise and insight on the contribution of loquats to sustainable Florida homesteading – Jim might also have some of his famous loquat cookies.

The poetry salon at the festival should be even more substantial than last year.

**Donations are most appreciated. Volunteers are most welcome.
We are especially welcoming of volunteer harvesters**

If you are interested in loquats, this is the place to be. We are the only loquat festival in the state, and probably the only one in the nation. Mark your calendars (electronic and traditional), tell your friends and family. Most of all, join us on March 26 for this one-of-a-kind celebration and learning festival. The Loquat Festival will be March 26 this year. Make your plans now. Click here for the January edition of the *Florida Loquat News*:

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2016/01/florida-loquat-news-14-january/>

Grand Gardens Taking Off

Promotional T-Shirts Available Order Now

Together with Nature Coast Real Food Project, and various other organizations and individuals, we are developing Grand Gardens, a major community garden in a food impoverished ("low access") area. Grand Gardens is located near 3F's first farm on Illinois Ave, but it is much larger. It occupies a one-half acre lot in downtown New Port Richey, donated by Gary Gann and Steven DeMatos of Creative Institute of Dental Arts.

Grand Gardens Promotional T-Shirt
Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large
Suggested donation \$15

The beautiful logo for Grand Gardens was created by a 6th grade art student at Gulf Middle School, Park Mylott. The City Council of New Port Richey chose Mylott's image from a group of three finalists, selected from over 20 submissions from GMS art students. Gulf Middle School is our middle school partner in the project.

As a fund-raiser and promotional collectable object, we are offering a T-Shirt as a premium for contributions to the project. The T-Shirt has the Grand Gardens logo on the front and supporting organizations on the back. We are affirming a minimum donation of \$15 for each shirt, and receptive to greater contributions to support the project – which will allow us to make the shirt available to Gulf Middle School students who might not otherwise be able to afford the shirt.

Contributions of over \$15 (our cost) will receive formal acknowledgement of contribution for purposes of tax deductions, if requested – with actual value being \$10.

Make checks to Friendship Farms & Fare PO Box 596 • New Port Richey, Florida 34656-0596 or go to the Ecology Florida website <http://www.ecologyflorida.org/> and click on the donate button.

If you want us to mail you a shirt, please give your size, and mailing address and add a little extra contribution for postage.

Folks interested in acquiring a plot at Grand Gardens can contact us through the 3F site. If you would like to participate, contact Travis Morehead, or stop by Grand Gardens on one of the designated work days: <http://eastmadison.org/community-garden-calendar/>

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

Loquat Harvest In Recess Look For Fruit in Two Weeks

The loquat harvest at our groves will be in recess again this week. We are holding at about 20 pounds so far. We have harvested all the early fruit, and will pause briefly for the later fruit to mature. The cold has slowed down the ripening.

Usually the heavy harvests begin in mid-March, so we still have a couple of weeks. The erratic weather is definitely a wildcard this year. We were too hot in the late fall then too cold in the early winter – and too suddenly cold.

There will be harvest teams in West Pasco on Sunday, and if there is enough harvest to share, we will do so. Feel free to put in a request, and if the harvest teams come back with an abundance, we'll meet the request. We will definitely work to satisfy requests from last week that we could not fill.

Also, don't forget the Florida Loquat Festival, - March 26. See details earlier in the Farm Report.

Arugula Thriving

Arugula is another big winner. It continues to produce abundantly. The plants are thriving. All are healthy and strong. Shares can request extra quantities if desired. This arugula is from our own seeds, saved for three generations.

Collard greens Abundant

Collards are continuing to produce beyond all previous records. We can easily fill 2-gallon bags for all shares – and more if you want to come by the gardens. For folks who get deliveries, we can do a "collards only" bag for you. This would amount to two 2-gallon bags, totaling several pounds. There would not be much room for anything else, but you'd have a lot of collard greens.

You may not know it, but collard greens are a wonderful source of vitamins and minerals, and according to George Mateljan, collards are among the world's healthiest foods. Here is a detailed account of the benefits of collards, including data on nutrients and minerals: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=138>

Collards, Nutritional Note (compared with Kale) One cup of chopped collards supplies 27% of daily calcium, 300% of the vitamin A, almost 60% of the C, and 21% of the fiber. By comparison, kale (often called a super food), comes in with 9% of the calcium, over 300% of vitamin A, 90% of the C, and 10% of the daily fiber. So, collards stack up pretty well against one of our trendiest foods.

Kale Doing Better

Kale is doing much better. Modest (medium) offerings can be included in all shares, if requested.

2016 Organic Seeds Now Available Rose's Bistro in New Port Richey University of South Florida in Tampa

Seeds from Seed Savers Exchange for the 2016 season are now available through Friendship Farms & Fare and our kiosk sites in New Port Richey and the University of South Florida. We are pleased to support the work Seed Savers, which is dedicated to preserving heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables. Unless we use our own saved seeds or ones from other local gardeners, we use SSE seeds exclusively. Here is a link to Seed Savers Exchange: <http://www.seedsavers.org/>

Here is a link to Rose's Bistro: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMarketOffMain>
And here is one to USF's Botanical Gardens: <http://gardens.usf.edu/>

Fresh Honey Harvest From Daddy's Bees

For those interested in local honey, Robert has just completed a summer harvest, and we have plenty of bottles on hand. 8 oz. bottles for \$7.00 (\$5.50 for shares).

Please do not purchase or use insecticides with neonicotinoids. Here are 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

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2013/12/feature-make-meadows-not-lawns-for-honey-bee-colony-health/>

WEATHER

Warm Midweek Cooler To Start and End

According to NASA and NOAA, 2015 was the hottest year in recorded history – replacing 2014 as the hottest year on record (since records have been kept, 1880)

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/science/earth/2015-hottest-year-global-warming.html?_r=0

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

We have passed the coldest period of the year, and average temperatures are now increasing. Historically, the average high temperature is now 72 degrees, two degrees higher than our lowest average high of the year [70]), and eighteen degrees lower than our highest average [90]). Our average low is now 54 degrees, twenty-two degrees lower than our highest average low of the year (76), and three degrees higher than our lowest average low [51].

Here is NOAA on the human causes of climate change and global warming.

<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/pd/climate/factsheets/howhuman.pdf>

Last Week (2/19-2/25): As forecast, last week saw above normal temperatures until Thursday, when a cool front came through, bringing below normal temperatures.

This Week (2/26-3/3): After a cool start, the coming week will see temperatures above normal until Thursday, when cooler weather will return.

We are nearing the end of the coldest period of winter. There may yet be some cold days and nights, but the period of coldest weather has passed. Expect more rain due to El Nino.

Garden Overview

As suggested in earlier sections of the report, harvests continue to be very good -- the best in many years. The crops continue to respond very positively to the cooler temperatures and rain.

We harvested more winter vegetables last week, sharing with neighbors and all shareholders. The loquats are coming in, and we've harvested all the ripe ones in our grove. The majority of the fruit is still on the trees., with ripening slowed by the cold.

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/>).

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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 in pretty good shape, but still no cilantro. We have good quantities of basil, tarragon, and oregano. Consult the share list for other herbs, and other available items.

The Share
February 22, 2016 (21)
* larger quantity available if desired

Vegetables

Arugula*

Broccoli

Collards*

Kale

Lettuce – in recess

Peppers – Sweet Bell (possible)

Peppers – Habanero (burning hot)

Peppers – Scotch Bonnet (burning hot)

Spinach – Okinawa (not a true spinach) – in recess

Sweet Potato Leaves – in recess (cold)

Fruit -

Loquats – in recess - cold

Grapefruit – done – unless softies desired for juicing

Herbs (* larger quantity available if desired)

Basil – Italian (in recess)

Basil – globe (in recess)

Basil – Red Basil (in recess)

Chives (in recess)

Cranberry Hibiscus *

Cilantro

Culantro (tastes like a strong cilantro) – light

Mint

Oregano

Parsley *

Purslane (small quantities)

Rosemary*

Tarragon

Medicinal

Aloe

Cottage Foods & Samples

Eggs: In extended recess. When we again have a reliable local, organic producer, we will add eggs back to the list.

Honey: Local West Pasco honey from Daddy's Bees is available in 8 oz. bottles for \$7.00 (\$5.50 for shares). Daddy's Bees just harvested their summer honey. Ready for shares, if desired.

Red Panax Ginseng (liquid, tonic) 3.5 oz bottles (10 bottle box) \$6.50 (\$5.00, shares)

COMPANION FAUNA

Winter Report

Animal companions are fewer and less active

Honey Bees: Prolific, at flowering broccoli.

We are featuring the honey bees, which are one of the harbingers of spring for us. They love the nectar of the broccoli flowers – seemingly above all other flowers. We have a lot of flowering broccoli now, and we always let quite a bit flower and then produce seedpods. Once the lovely little flowers appear, the bees are not far behind. Most years, they appear in abundance. We are delighted to see them this year in numbers we have not seen in quite some time.

“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

Leopard Frogs: First songs of the leopard heard early in the week. After the cold front passed the pond was again quiet.

Here is good site for information on Leopard Frogs

http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/frogstoads/rana_utricularia.php

Robins: Occasional flocks in New Port Richey. All are smaller than usual.

Robins are one of our beloved and much anticipated winter visitors. We have observed fewer robins this year than ever before. This is their migration period, and we are in a major flyway for this powerful medium-sized bird. Usually we see thousands in great waves that pass overhead for as long as an hour. Not so much this year. We've observed one significant wave that lasted about 10 minutes. Last week was the first significant flock in our immediate area.

Swifts: No swifts.

Tree Frogs: Several small frogs early in the week

Bald Eagle: None this week

Raccoon: None this week

Opossum: None this week

Citrus Rat (also called Roof Rat): None this week. These visitors have been with us for years. It appears that they have left the dwelling.

Here is the IFAS report on these rats ("the worst rodent pest in the state of Florida and most abundant"):

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/uw/uw12000.pdf>

Florida Ringneck Snake: None at 3F Farm.

Florida Green Grasshopper: None at 3F Farm.

Mediterranean Gecko: None this week.

<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/reptiles/mediterranean-gecko/>

Owl: No owls or calls this week.

Greenhouse Frog: None this week. The greenhouse frog is the only North American frog that lays its eggs on land.

Eastern Blue Bird: No blue birds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WlYEmuUhKI>

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Eastern_Bluebird/id

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/eastern-bluebird>

Southern Toad: None this week.

Sweet bees: None this week

Pileated Woodpecker: None this week.

Here is a good site for the Pileated :

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/pileated>

<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>

Florida Black Snake: None

Bumble Bees: None

Hawk: None.

Earth Worms: None.

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>

"Nocturnal Garden Spider" – Still plenty – like stars in the ground.

"Asian Tramp Snail." None this week.

Woodlouse – None. Usually not seen at this time of year, the warm weather has brought the little louses back to life.

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

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

Cats: Neighborhood cat, Frankie, appears regularly. Lady Gray also now a regular, but not seen in several days

Planting & Harvest Notes **Winter Seeding and Garden Starts Continue**

Seedings: Eggplant and Arugula

Garden Starts: none

Harvest Notes: broccoli, collards, kale, swiss chard, lettuce, tomatoes, bell peppers, habanero and scotch bonnet peppers, all herbs that were mature

Vermipost: 10 pounew

3F Stories, Events, and Policy Updates

Programs and Plans

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.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 deductible.

2016 Seeds Have Arrived **3F, Ecology Florida, Rose's Bistro, and USF Offer Seed Savers Exchange Seeds**

Through a cooperative arrangement with Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida, Rose's Bistro, in New Port Richey, and the Botanical Gardens of at the University of South Florida offer a wide range of organic, heirloom, non-GMO seeds exclusively from Seed Savers Exchange.

This is a trend-setting achievement for the Bistro and the Botanical Gardens, and another verification of Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida's leadership in ecological stewardship, sustainability, and resiliency. These two locations are the only location on the West Coast of Florida offering these high quality packaged seeds.

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

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

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/>

USF Botanical Gardens

<http://gardens.usf.edu/>

Rose's Bistro

<https://www.facebook.com/TheMarketOffMain>

Next Workday

TBA

We will be constructing a new bed in the South Garden this winter. We are looking to do this on a Saturday in February. Most likely date, February 20th. Let us know if you can join us.

2015-2016 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.

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.

2015-2016 Renewal

Seed Dealer License & Registration

Friendship Farms & Fare

S009451

We are also a licensed Seed Dealer License for 2015-2016.

3F 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 July every year. Through our friendship with Ecology Florida, we apply 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/>

Grand Gardens Project

Together with East Madison Growers and other organic agriculture organizations we are developing a new community garden plot on Grand Blvd. in New Port Richey. If you would like to participate, contact Travis Morehead, or stop by Grand Gardens on one of the designated work days: <http://eastmadison.org/community-garden-calendar/>

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

See earlier part of the letter for full report and opportunity to order shirts.

Folks interested in acquiring a plot can contact us through the 3F site.

Farm Tours (Local Urban Gardens)

If you would like to schedule a tour of 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 will spend an hour or so in two or more gardens, learn about organic farming in an urban environment using permaculture philosophies and practices, observe and learn about urban wildlife and helpful plants, and enjoy samples of live produce. 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, Permaculture and Soil development
- * Urban wildlife and helpful plants
- * Seasonal produce, from seed to harvest
- * 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 – typically, \$100.

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:

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 items for \$10.00 each, 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 \$10 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 Eggs are in recess for the time being.

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 \$2.00 per plant (\$1, for shares), \$3.00 for 2, \$5.00 (\$4) for four, \$8.00 (\$6.00) 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 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 Broccoli seeds are offered by 3F: \$3.00 for 30.

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

Rose's Bistro Off Main: We encourage folks to patronize Rose's Bistro in New Port Richey, and other local produce markets. The Bistro often has organics, usually has local produce, is locally owned, and is a distributor of Seed Savers Exchange Heirloom Organic Seeds. Here is the facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMarketOffMain>

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

Good Chance Farm

Hart's Family Farm

Seeds of Love Organic Farm

Tarry Lane Tasting Station

February 29, 2016–22nd report for the 2015-2016 Garden Year

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

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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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