



FRIENDSHIP FARMS & FARE

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

FARM REPORT & NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 16, 2015 – 20 2014-2015 FARM & CSA REPORT

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

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

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

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

REPORT

44 degrees at 3:30 AM, February 14, 2015

Historic Average (for 2/13): 72 HIGH, 54 LOW—Weather Underground: <http://www.wunderground.com/>

Historically, the average high temperature is now 72 degrees (two degrees higher than the lowest average low [70] of the year), and eighteen degrees lower than the highest average high [90]). Our average low is now 54 degrees, which is three degrees higher than lowest average low [51], and twenty-two degrees lower than the highest average low [76]).

The average low and high have begun their annual ascent, which will peak in early June for highs and late June for lows, and remain constant (at 90/76) until early September, when the annual decline begins. This means for three months the average high will be 90 degrees, and the average low will be 76. It will also be humid during those months.

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

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

Finding the Best Organic Kale **Please check local first**

We found chopped organic kale in 12 oz bags at a corporate grocer for \$4.99. It was shipped in from California. Nice bright packaging with plenty of black and multicolor inks for eye appeal and lettering.

So, we hustled up a few 16 oz bags of our 3F kale, and dropped them off at the Market Off Main, our local fresh produce market. Our kale had full leaves, was unchopped, used 2,300 few food miles, was fresher by at least two days, did not exploit any laborers, and used no industrial farm equipment in the harvestin -- and at \$5.00 for a pound it was cheaper than the stuff shipped across the continent.

We did the same thing with our collards and swiss chard. We found no organic collards or swiss chard at commercial grocers – but there is now plenty at Market Off Main.

The Florida Loquat Festival: Celebrating Florida's Urban Fruit

April 4, 2015

9:00 – 2:00

Market Off Main, New Port Richey

Program Established

Nursery Selected

Mark your calendars for April 4, and join us for this one-of-a-kind event. In the meantime, please spread the word about Loquats and the event.

We should have information cards, and posters available in the next week or so. If you know of locations where a small number of information cards could be left or a poster put up, please let us know. We'll share some with you.

We have established the program for the festival, and to assist your planning for the day's events, here it is:

Program

10:00

Welcome and Introduction, Dell deChant, Ecology Florida

followed by

The Journey of the Loquat (origins and history), Shelby Smith and Brittany Connolly

USF Religious Studies and FARM

10:30

Loquat Cultivation and Permaculture Applications

Jim Kovaleski, Freedom House Farms

11:30

Loquats in the Kitchen, Sue Andreski, Black Cat Growers Kitchen

12:30

Loquats and Culture, Dell deChant, Ecology Florida

12:50

Special Announcement: Local Economy & Local Ecology Project

Travis Morehead, Nature Coast Real Food Project

1:00

Loquat Literary Festival: "O! Loquat!" – Wendy Buffington, Facilitator

We have also selected the featured nursery for the festival – Green Plan Tree Farms in Brooksville. Green Plan does not have webpage, but here is their facebook page:

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

Although we cannot be certain, it appears that Green Plan has the largest loquat grove in this part of the state – perhaps even the largest in the entire state.

Travis from the Nature Coast Real Food Project and a volunteer from Friendship Farms & Fare visited with Green Plan's proprietors (Steve and Joan Marie) last Monday (2/9), and enjoyed a tour of the grove. There are at least 200 trees in the grove, and maybe more. Green Plan will have a large number of loquat seedlings and young trees at the festival. Green Plan will also have several large trees, which are already bearing fruit.

Look for a feature article on this grove in the *Loquat News*.

As for the festival itself, here are some details:

This is a "Loquat Exclusive" event, so everything being shared (for sale, contribution, or gift) will be a loquat or loquat-derived product. We will have seeds, seedlings, young plants, several large plants, fresh fruit, jellies, jams, and pies. No citrus here. We will also have lectures and educational events on planting, cultivating and harvesting; eating, preserving, and recipes; and the history and cultural context of loquats. This year, we will have loquat literary offerings (see below).

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. Getting a "stable" of trees is very important to the festival.

Third: Volunteer opportunities. If you would like to volunteer to assist with the event, please let us know. At present, our interest is in folks who could help with tree-spotting, and assisting with harvesting in advance of the event.

Fourth: This year's festival program includes a session on loquat literature – "O! Loquat!" The program will present *short* literary offerings (poems, narratives, prose poems) about loquats or prominently featuring the fruit or tree. We'll use an open mic format on the day of the event. We're excited about this addition! Here is a link to an announcement on the literary event: <http://newsportrichey.org/2015/01/14/loquat-festival-seeks-literary-reading-submissions/>

Loquats in the 3F Grove Harvest Continues

Compared to Green Plan's giant grove, our grove is quite tiny. We have a dozen trees, all told, five of which are producing this season – up from two last year.

This past week, we harvested two more pounds this week, and included small quantities in many shares. Be sure to order if you'd like some this week. Shares will not be large, but we should have enough for everyone to receive a few. Quantities will increase in the weeks ahead.

These may be a bit tart.

If you have trees, check them now for your own first fruits.

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

As noted previously, in addition to fruit, the trees are now putting forth new growth. Look for radiant virescent leaves, soft and tender to the touch, with sharp tips pointing to the heavens.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If local seeds are not available, we recommend seeds from organizations and companies that promote seed saving, distribute organic seeds (preferably heirloom

seeds), and are dedicated to protection and enhancement of natural genetic diversity, preservation of heirloom seeds (with lineages of 50 years or more), and absolutely prohibit genetically modified seeds. Besides Seed Savers Exchange, which we recommend first, there are a number of other excellent seed suppliers who are responsible ecological and economic stewards. These include: Johnny's Selected Seeds, Wild Garden Seed, High Mowing, Peace Seedlings, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, and Seeds of Change.

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

Broccoli: Accelerating

We are getting close to the peak of broccoli season. We can offer broccoli to all shares this week, and probably each week for the rest of the month. With the long-awaited arrival of cool temperatures, the broccoli has finally taken off, and (better yet) stopped flowering. We harvested nearly 40 heads last week and should harvest at least that many this week.

Wee broccoli later in the report for harvest totals.

Weekly Weather Report Cool Week Ahead

Last Week (2/7-2/13): As expected and reported, temperatures were a bit below normal last week, and lower toward the end of the week. Also as forecast, we had rain on Monday (2/9) ahead of a weak front – 1.15 inches. We have had an unusually wet winter so far, and a very wet February.

Our January rainfall was 2.95 inches, compared with an average of 2.6 (using records for St. Petersburg). February rainfall, so far, is 3.825. The average for February is 2.7 inches. So, already for this winter we've **already** received 6.77 inches, compared with the historical average for the first two months of winter 5.3. Remember, this is the Florida dry season.

The highest high for last week at WU was 73 (2/8). The lowest high was 59 (2/13). The highest low was 57 (2/9) and lowest low was 39 (2/13). Four of seven days were at or below normal for highs and three were below normal for lows. Our average high for this time of the year is 72 and our average low is 54.

This Week (2/14-2/20): The coming week should see temperatures a bit below normal, with warmer days on Monday and Tuesday (2/15-16). Watch for rain on Tuesday ahead of a front. Temperatures will range from low 70s to mid-50s for highs and mid-50s to low 40s for lows – with a forecast low of 39 for Thursday night. Freeze is unlikely, although some sources are suggesting a possibility on Thursday night.

Looking Ahead: We are still in the (supposedly) driest and coldest time of the year. Rainfall averages are creeping upward (like the temperatures). Historic norms indicate cool and dry conditions through February, although we are not running true to form on this. Dry conditions will require more frequent irrigation. The rainy season is still months away.

Average temperatures are gradually rising. By the end of February averages will be in the mid-70s for highs and mid-50s for lows. We are still in freeze season, and freezes are possible any week – usually with plenty of advance notice. Averages are not good guides, and we are currently running above historical averages, but with rather dramatic fluctuations. We reached or exceeded 80 degrees four times in January. February has been cooler. Readers will notice spring flowers appearing, well ahead of schedule. This means the winter vegetables may also flower early and bolt – if the warm weather continues.

Garden Overview **Winter Harvests** (additional details and assessments follows)

If anyone would like to come by the farm, extra large shares are available. Bring bags or boxes. All the winter greens are at peak (and should be through the end of February). We'd love to share as much as possible. Please let us know if you'd like to stop by for an extra large share.

We are getting ready for spring planting, and have extra cucumber seedlings available. We still have some winter seedlings available, and if you'd like to plant some late winter greens, we have a nice collections of collards, broccoli, and swiss chard. We'll share these for contributions to the farm. It is still not too late to plant winter greens, although we are getting close to the end of the planting season for winter vegetables. We won't be planting any more winter vegetables, and do not recommend planting any later than March 1.

We have good to large quantities of broccoli, arugula, collards, kale, and swiss chard. Eggplant is still hanging on, with small fruit on the shrubs. Eggplant will be FCFS.

See the Share Report for all items.

Tomatoes continue to mature nicely.

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

Broccoli

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

We harvested over **39** heads this week, for a total of **91** heads so far this season. As the season continues, readers will notice that the total number of heads will far exceed the number of plants planted. This is because Calabrese (our famous heirloom!) produces secondary and sometimes tertiary heads.

There are probably another 50 good-sized heads in the gardens, and another 50 plants yet to produce any heads. The cooler temperatures are accelerating the development of heads.

Kale

As noted in our feature, we found chopped organic kale in 12 oz bags at a corporate grocer for \$4.99. It was shipped in from California.

So, we hustled up a few 16 oz bags of our kale, and dropped them off at the Market Off Main. Our kale had full leaves, unchopped, used 2,300 few food miles, was fresher by at least two days, did not exploit any laborers, and used no industrial farm equipment -- and at \$5.00 for a pound it was cheaper than the stuff shipped across the continent.

We did the same thing with our collards and swiss chard. We found no organic collards or swiss chard at commercial grocers – but plenty at Market Off Main.

We have ample shares of kale for this week. It has been a real success story for us. 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.

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

Like the other winter greens, all varieties of swiss chard are thriving. We'll have enough for good-sized shares for all who desire.

Swiss Chard picks up debris from the garden in the furrows and wrinkles of its leaves. Please rinse thoroughly. Also, remember, to remove the central stem, which is too bitter for most palates. The stem can be cooked, but should be prepared separately from the leaves. Here is a good site for details on this fine winter vegetable: <http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=16>

Arugula

Arugula is prolific. There is enough for large shares for all.

Collards

Please stop by for extra large shares of this winter favorite. This is their season. Our three varieties, Georgia Southern, Georgia, and Vates, are large, lush, and ready for harvest.

Cucumbers

We been moving our cucumber seedlings in and out of the outside nursery. These are the Double Yields and Armenians we started two weeks ago. They can take the cold, but they do not like it much below 50.

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. We installed additional trellises this week.

Habanero Peppers

Habaneros are dormant. Wait for spring for a good supply.

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.

Eggplant

We are not listing eggplant, but we have small ones for those who might be interested – FCFS. The stronger plants from summer have made it through the winter. We are entering the planting season for eggplant, and our old timers from last summer are still with us. We may not need to plant more this year.

Purslane

Purslane is thriving. There is plenty available. Note: the little black specks are seeds – not dirt.

Viticulture (Grape) News

Vines are dormant.

Black Cat Growers Offers Jams To 3F Family

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

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

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

Hart's Family Hot Sauce Ready for the Willing

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

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

Eggs If Desired

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

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: Tarragon is thriving, along with rosemary. Basils will continue in recess. Consult the share list for other herbs, and other available items.

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

Shareholders can call your farmer directly. If you are not a shareholder, and would like to schedule a visit to the gardens or to acquire seeds, seedlings, plants, or produce, please use the address on the website to contact us. <http://www.ffffsite.org/#!/contact/cl4>

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

THE SHARE

February 16, 2015 (20)

*** larger quantity available if desired**

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

Vegetables

Arugula*

Collards*

Broccoli

Hibiscus Leaves, Cranberry—small quantities (samples)

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

Kale*

Lettuce—Romaine*

Peppers—Habanero*—very hot

"Spinach" – Okinawa (not a true spinach)

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

Swiss Chard*

Fruit -

Kumquat – Nagami * (tart)

Loquat – 3F Specials (first fruits, may be tart – FCFS)

Nuts – no pecans this week (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 *

Mint

Oregano

Parsley-

Purslane

Rosemary*

Tarragon*

Thyme

Cottage Foods & Samples

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

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

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

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

Peach

Cherry

Strawberry

Orange Marmalade (bitter orange)

Seedlings

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

Cucumbers: \$1.50 per plant (\$1, for shares), \$5.00 (\$4) for four, \$8.00 (\$7.00) for nine

COMPANION FAUNA Hibernal Report

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

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

Bald Eagle: Not this week.

Robins: Numerous flocks in New Port Richey. A bit fewer than last week.

Honey Bees: A few bees at the ever-prolific Loquat trees **and** broccoli flowers. We are letting a few broccoli go to flower for the sake of the bees.

"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: One observed overhead at neighbors' home.

Raccoon: No raccoons, but clear signs of raccoon activity in the north garden and in Hart's garden.

Southern Toad: None

Greenhouse Frog: None.

Leopard Frogs: None observed.

Florida Black Snake: None observed

Florida Ringneck Snake: None. 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/Diadophispunctatus.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: None observed.

Nocturnal Garden Spider – Evident but not numerous throughout gardens.

Sweet bees: None.

"Asian Tramp Snail." A few under planters and plates, when lifted and moved.

Mediterranean Gecko: None this week. Here is a good site for the Mediterranean Gecko, and Florida fauna in general:

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

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

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

Here is the Extension Office's website on the Marine Toad (which includes an audio of its call):

http://www.wec.ufl.edu/extension/wildlife_info/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 – None. 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: Beloved companion, Mr. Tag, left the dwelling on Friday (2/13). His absence was not noticed until after sunset. He is not an "outdoor" cat, is de-clawed, and has spent his entire life in human dwellings. He joined our family after this previous human companion perished – many years ago. Our thoughts are with him for safety, and we welcome his return home. If you read this far in the report, you may share a good thought with the cat community and their human friends in this area, and share a thought of "welcome home" with Mr. Tag.

Neighborhood cat, Frankie, appears regularly. Matilda has left with her human companion.

3F Stories, Events, and Policy Updates

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

3F loquat seeds are now listed on the Seed Saver's *Yearbook* website. They will be included in the hard copy of the 2015 *Yearbook*, due out shortly. These are the only loquat seeds listed in the SSE *Yearbook*, and this is the first time loquat seeds have been listed there.

Watch for additional coverage in the *Loquat News*. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for Loquat News, please send us your email address, and you'll be included in all future mailings. You can reach us at <http://www.ffsite.org/#!contact/cl41> 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.

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 13 shares, and thanks to all for sharing in our growing success and learning adventure.

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

We offer heirloom organic **seeds**, including seeds from plants acclimated to local climate and soils. We have a good stock of several types of okra (including the much desired Red Burgundy), robust arugula, and our famous Calabrese Broccoli. Friendship Farms & Fare is a licensed seed dealer in the State of Florida, and a member of Seed Savers Exchange (with several listings in the SSE Yearbook). 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.fff-site.org/> See the "Let's Talk" section for an email connection.

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

Planting & Harvest Notes

Winter Seeding and Garden Starts This Week

Seedings: Cucumbers 90 (Japanese Climbing, 45; Stupice, 45); Peppers, Charleston Belle, 46.

Garden Starts: none

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

Vermipost: no harvest

Bat Guano: no harvest (no bats)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next Workday: TBA

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

2014-2015 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 deductible.

2014-2015 Renewal
Seed Dealer License & Registration
Friendship Farms & Fare
S009451

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

Community Garden 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 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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COMMERCIAL PRODUCE REPORT

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

OTHER PRODUCTS FOR THE CSA FAMILY

3F Produce for non-shareholders: Non-Members may order shares for \$20 per week, or \$50 per month. For this amount, contributors may request any and all items they desire from the weekly Share. Although we will assist with transmissions, it is the responsibility of the contributor to make arrangements for pick up of the share.

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

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

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

As required by our policies, our supplier is local, follows organic principles, practices compassionate husbandry, and allows chickens free range. If you would like to be included on the egg list, please start an account (\$20 suggested), and make requests accordingly. Eggs are from humanely treated chickens, and fed non-GMO feed.

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

Seeds: If you would like organic vegetable seeds for your garden, we will order them for you. Seed packs are \$4.00 each, 2 for \$7.00, and 5 for \$14.00. Just tell us what you'd like. Be sure to send your mailing address. No charge for shipping.

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

medium plants are \$5.00 (\$4).

Let us know if you want to acquire seeds or starts for the Spring and Summer.

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

Vermipost and Worms: For folks interested in organic gardening, we have the best all-natural soil amenities you can find: Vermipost and Worms! Vermipost is compost that has been broken down and enriched by Red Worms. We also have the worms themselves. **Vermipost** is available in 32 oz containers for \$2.50 each (\$2.00 for shareholders), with discounts for orders of five or more. Vermipost containers will most likely have some worms in the mix. We recommend mixing the vermipost 1 to 1 with regular soil, and 1 to 3 or 4 with organic soil. Remember, if you use synthetic chemicals (such as fertilizers or pesticides), the vermipost will be compromised. Pesticides will kill the worms and synthetic fertilizers will kill the worms or drive them away.

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

Seeds: Shareholders are entitled to samples of seeds from our seed bank – three types of okra 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.ffffsite.org> >

Friendship Farms & Fare

An Urban Farm Community, CSA, Seed Saver, Community Garden, and purveyor of seeds, seedlings, fruit trees, and organic cottage-industry foods.

Friendship Farms & Fare Community

Cadle's Cove Farm

Black Cat Growers

Freedom House Farm

Friendship Farms & Fare: First Farm

Hart's Family Farm

Seeds of Love Organic Farm

Tarry Lane Tasting Station

February 16, 2015 – 20 report for the 2014-2015 Garden Year

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Friendship Farms & Fare is a branch of Ecology Florida, a not-for-profit corporation.
Contributions to Friendship Farms & Fare and Ecology Florida are tax deductible.
If you would like to support our work, please consider sharing a donation.
PO Box 596 • New Port Richey, Florida 34656-0596

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



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

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