

FRIENDSHIP FARMS & FARE
FARM REPORT & NEWSLETTER
APRIL 7, 2014 - 27TH FARM & CSA REPORT

REPORT

68 degrees at 11:25 PM, April 4, 2014

Historical Average (4/4): 78 HIGH, 61 LOW–Weather Underground: <http://www.wunderground.com/>
The historical average continues to creep upward, about a degree per week. The current average high is now eight degrees higher than the lowest average high (70), and ten degrees higher than the lowest average low (51). The average will continue to increase through the spring and summer. It will reach the highest average high in early June (90 degrees) and remain there until early September.

Revision of Report, Missive, and Share List for 2013-2014

We have temporarily assigned the weekly Farm Report to the archives. The full report will be available there each week until further notice.

From time to time we may have a special report or interlude on the Report Page, and you will find a link to the full Farm Report on that page each week.

Available share items will continue to be posted each week in the usual location on the site.

We have discontinued the Market Report for the time being.

Weather Report

Temperatures have running a bit above normal. We had over 4 inches of rain this past week. Cooler temperatures are forecast for later in the week.

Garden Overview

We will soon remove and compost most of the remaining winter crops – arugula, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce. Some plants will be retained for seed collection.

This is the last week when significant quantities of winter crops will be available.

Sweet potatoes have been ordered, and early season okra has been seeded (and sprouted). We harvested over 50 lbs of loquats from local trees this past week, but none from our own. About 50% of our harvest is now in. Eggplant seedlings are up but they have struggled with in the recent cold.

Viticulture (Grape News)

Our six grape vines continue to flourish. Our adventure in viticulture is a joint project with our neighboring farm, Harts' Gardens & Groves.

Spring/Summer Plantings

This spring we'll make a commitment to growing bell peppers, cucumbers, and peach tomatoes. We'll continue to harvest all productive winter crops. Cucumbers are maturing slowly – still pretty cool for them.

For summer, we'll go with okra, sweet potatoes, and (for the first time) eggplant. See later section for details on the eggplant project. Most herbs will be productive through the summer, and we'll have sweet potato leaves by June at the latest. We'll give peanuts a try.

Eggplants & the Ukrainian Coincidence

This spring and summer will be our first serious experiment with eggplant. As always, all of our seeds are from Seed Savers Exchange. All are organic and most are heirlooms.

As noted above, our eggplant seedlings have struggled, and leaf-cutting creature took the young leaves off of a number of the seedlings.

We'll experiment with several other varieties. Next up will be Listada de Gandia. This is a French variety introduced in southern France around 1850. It is reported to thrive in very hot weather. Good! Finally, we'll conclude with test plantings of the Florida High Bush eggplant. This variety dates to the 1940s and is the "standard market variety bread in Florida...for commercial trade." we seeded 36 of the Florida variety and 36 of the Purple Pickling (noted below).

To these three, we are adding three other heirloom varieties: Purple Pickling (from Italy), Rosa Bianca (from Italy), and Udumalapet (from India). That latter two are a bit smaller than commercial varieties. The Rosa Bianca is a round eggplant with lavender-pink skin and creamy white shading. The Udumalapet is pear-shaped, with light green skin streaked with purple. When it can ripen to golden-yellow with lavender stripes. If these and the other varieties mature to harvest, the garden will certainly be colorful. .

We received two other eggplant seedlings from our friends at Cadle's Cove Farms, which we have installed in a planter

Eggplant interest was lighter than expected, but we'll try the various types noted here and devote at least 250 sq feet to this warm weather favorite. If you are interested in eggplant, please let us know. We are going to give them a try again this year, and we'll be more ambitious if there is expressed interest.

Okra

We have planted some of the first of season okra in garden planters. We'll be seeding more in the coming week. Our four varieties are all from last year's seed stock: Star of David, Hill Country Red, Silver Queen, and Red Burgundy. All four are listed in Seed Savers Exchange, and available at a modest price to anyone. Cooler temperatures are slowing growth.

Cauliflower Leaves

We'll harvest cauliflower leaves and a few small heads for any who are interested. The leaves are very tasty and are similar to collards and broccoli leaves. Try them in stir fry, in soups and stews, or as dehydrated crisps – or in any dish where you'd use kale or collards.

Cucumbers

The Japanese cucumbers have been planted in two sites in the New South Garden and in test strip we are trying on the main estate. The Longfellows we started two weeks ago have gone into test areas. All are developing slowly due to the cool weather.

Loquats

Several of us are harvesting local trees. Most the harvest will be used for preserves prepared for the Loquat Festival on April 5. See stories at:

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2014/03/florida-loquat-festival-celebrating-floridas-urban-fruit/>
<http://tbo.com/Local/CommunityNews/festival-to-promote-little-known-loquat-tree-20140319/>

Fruit is available for all shares.

Loquats are a wonderful (and largely unrecognized) harbinger of spring. Their first fruits appear in the depth of winter, and as the days lengthen and gradually warm, their bounty increases.

Broccoli

Broccoli season is nearly over. We'll have small amounts through April. Harvests are now mostly of secondary and tertiary heads, heads of smaller plants, and some heads that have begun to flower. In weeks to come, shares will have multiple smaller heads rather than one or two large heads.

As always, we'll include all parts of the plant – stems, leaves, and head. We are also adding second-growth heads and smaller heads. All parts are edible – delicious, really. Chop or slice the stems, juice up in a blender, sauté or stir-fry, add to soups or stews. The stems can be chopped or grated to make cole slaw.

As noted previously, we let about a third of our crop flower and go to seed. This is to support our companion bees and for seeds for next year's planting. Bees have been bountiful this past week.

European (Domestic/Honey) bees are in decline worldwide due to GMOs and neonicotinoids used in commercial agriculture, and found in most commercial foods. We are committed to doing all we can to enhance their survival, and at this time of the year that means letting a large number of broccoli heads flower since the bees are especially attracted to those specific flowers. Every year, we count 100s of bees in the garden when the broccoli is blooming. We hope this is the case this year. This past week, we observed more bees than we have recently, but still well below usual numbers.

Arugula

Arugula is well past peak, and remaining leaves are getting a little intense. This is the last week that we will have significant quantities. These late season leaves will have a sharper taste than usual.

We have begun composing arugula and will continue to do so for the next week. We'll use a dozen or so for seeds for next year's garden, the 3F Seed Bank, and our listing in Seed Savers Exchange.

Tomatoes

The several young volunteer plants in various parts of the gardens are continuing to do well. There is now a hint of septoria on some of the plants.

The peach tomatoes are maturing very slowly. Like all the spring and summer plants, the cool weather is slowing them down.

Citrus leafing and budding

All our citrus trees have new leaves, and most have blossoms, which yield some of the sweetest scents of all flowering trees. We continue to nourish the young citrus trees with ground and foliar fertilizer once a month. Our March application was made on the 22nd.

Most likely we will take the lives of at least two of the old grapefruit trees from the Old South Grove and one of the old orange trees from the North Garden. Those old grapefruit trees may be older than most of us.

Fig Trees leafing

Our fig trees (installed last year) have begun to leaf. Their show is rather modest compared to the citrus and the loquats, which are rather dramatic in their new virescent apparel.

Persimmons

Persimmons, planted at the same time as the figs, have are now leafing.

Sweet Potatoes

When the warmer weather returns, the old SP vines will quickly regenerate. We have placed our order for SP slips for Spring planting and the Summer growing season. We ordered 250 plants this year (125 Beauregards and 125 Georgia Jets), our most ambitious planting commitment ever.

When the SP slips arrive we'll need to plant right away. George's Plant Farm (our supplier) estimates arrival in the first full week of April. That means we'll have to plant the following weekend (April 11,12,13). If any one would like to join us for the planting please let us know.

We order our slips from George's Plant Farm in Martin, Tennessee, as we have since we started growing SPs. George's is a family farm, with a wonderful story. To learn about the Dellinger Family and their farm, here is a link to their website: <http://www.tatorman.com/>

Habanero Peppers

The Habaneros are still producing and available for shares. 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.

Although no one is requesting this one-of-a-kind peppers, we are going keep them on the list. There is a certain cheerfulness to be found in these healthy little shrubs with their bright orange fruit.

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.

Grape Vines: Leaf Buds

All vines have leafed, and begun to grow rather splendidly. Several have tiny clusters of grapes.

Honey: Good news! Local honey is again available. Our bee husbander, Robert, has just brought in an ample honey harvest. 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.

Eggs: We have increased the cost of the eggs to \$5.00 (\$4.00 per share). Our supplier has now gone to a certified non-GMO scratch for his chickens, which is significantly more expensive than the uncertified scratch. As you know, we work with a humane farmer, practicing compassionate farming methods. Even better, now the eggs will be free of GMOs – at least we can affirm they are being produced by chickens that are consuming non-GMO scratch.

Herbs: We have a large quantity of cilantro, which appears to love the cold. Parsley and oregano are very robust. Consult the share list for available items.

Tampa deliveries will be Wednesday, and Monday if received in time. 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

April 7, 2014 (27)

*** larger quantity available if desired**

FCFS = limited supplies, early submissions given preference

Tampa Transmissions TBA

Vegetables

Arugula*

Broccoli, stem, leaves and head

Cauliflower Leaves

Collards (small quantity) FCFS

Kale (small quantity – a few leaves)

Peppers – Habanero* – very hot

Fruit –

Loquats

Fungus (Mushrooms)

Nuts

Roots

Herbs (* larger quantity available if desired)

Basil – not this cycle

Chives

Cilantro*

Mint – Citrus (Orange) Mint (small quantity)

Oregano

Parsley

Purslane

Rosemary*

Tarragon*

Thyme – (small quantity)

Seasonings

Bay Leaves – fresh leaves

Medicinal

Aloe*

COMPANION FAUNA

Winter report

Bat update: Bats have been active, except for rainy evenings.

Crows: Crows in fewer numbers, but still present

Great Horned Owl: No sight or sound of the local owl.

Opossum: Opossum not observed.

Big Brown Bat: The brown bat was not seen this week.

Robins: No robins observed this week. Most likely we missed the northern migration this year. We have been alert to the flocks heading to their summer homes, but have seen only a few small groups.

Swifts: No swifts observed. No sounds in the swift lodge. They have likely left us for the season.

Tree Frogs: A few songs were heard.

Leopard Frogs: The Leopard frog has been at her regular posts most of the week. She either perches on the bank of the North pond or in the pond, just under a small overhang.

Greenhouse Frogs: No greenhouse frogs. Their annual cycle has probably passed.

Southern Toad: No toads.

Florida Black Snake: The Florida Black Snake that lives in the garden has emerged from hibernation. We observed her near the work shed in the north garden.

Woodlouse – None observed.

Nocturnal Garden Spider – Profusion!

Bees: The bees remain present in great numbers – as many as any other good year. The numbers were a bit down this week since most of the flowering crops have passed either prime and are now going to seed. We've enjoyed hundreds of bees at the flowering broccoli, arugula, cilantro, and the Common Beggar's-tick (Hairy Beggar's-tick) *Biden alba*.

We encourage tolerating the Beggar's-tick for the sake of the bees.

Sweet bees: None

"Asian Tramp Snail." None.

Cats: Mr. Goldie has a scrap with another cat, and visited his physician for a treatment. He is doing better, but we have told him to refrain from fighting. Kit-Kit is enjoying her life.

3F Stories, Events, and Policy Updates

Planting & Harvest Notes

Seeds: 72 eggplant

Garden Starts: eggplant and okra

Harvest Notes: assorted herbs, arugula, loquats, broccoli, various lettuces, collards, kale, cauliflower

Vermipost: no harvest

Bat Guano: no harvest

The Florida Loquat Festival: Celebrating Florida's Urban Fruit
April 5, 2014 – 11:00 – 2:00
Market Off Main, New Port Richey

<http://www.ecologyflorida.org/2014/03/florida-loquat-festival-celebrating-floridas-urban-fruit/>
<http://tbo.com/Local/CommunityNews/festival-to-promote-little-known-loquat-tree-20140319/>

Report to follow next week.

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 anywhere in Florida – and actually in the entire USA. With your help, Friendship Farms and Fare together with Ecology Florida and the Market Off Main in New Port Richey will launch the first one – April 5, 2014. In meantime, add loquats to your CSA Share request.

Soil Test Results

Results of our annual soil test have been received from the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida. The test measures for phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and calcium, and includes recommendations for additions of soil amenities to improve crop yield. Amenities are lime, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium. Soils from the Old North and New South gardens all registered high in phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. This is typical for First Farm gardens. No additional amenities were recommended (except for a little nitrogen in the south garden).

Friendship Farms and Fare Pursues Non-GMO and USDA Organic Certification

As a matter of policy, Friendship Farms and Fare opposes the use of GMOs in food. We are exploring Non-GMO certification for our First Farm in New Port Richey, and possibly Tarry Lane Kitchens. We have the application in hand, and will be submitting it in the near future. Of course, we have never used GMO seeds or products containing GMOs, so you can rest assured that even without the certification, everything we share is free of GMOs.

We have also taken the initial steps to secure USDA Organic certification. The cost for USDA assessment (with no guarantee of approval) will be between \$950 and \$1300 depending on how much of the 3F project we desire to have assessed. As with our non-GMO commitment, we are fully committed to organic farming.

First Farm's 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 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 the 3F Kitchen (Tarry Lane Tasting Station), 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. 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 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)
- * Vegan, Organic food preparation
- * 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.

Next Workday: April 12

We are expecting the sweet potato slips to arrive the week of April 7th. If so, we'll want to plant as many as we can that week, with the 12th being targeted as a workday to get them installed. We'll also be composting a lot of the winter crops, so it will be a pretty week.

If you would like to join in the planting, just let us know.

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 to 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:

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/recognitions.htm>

Seed Dealer License Ecology Florida/Friendship Farms & Fare S009451

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

3F 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, recipes, educational texts and videos, special 3F Films, and community growing information. You will also have access to the new agrarian literary journal, *Bloom*.

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

Non-Members may order shares for \$10 per week. For this nominal amount, the contributor is entitled to request any 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.

EGGS. Prices are \$5.00 a dozen (\$4.00 for shares), and \$3.00 a half-dozen (\$2.50 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. 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.

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.

We have cucumbers starts.

Trees: Young Loquat trees are available in small (half-gallon) and medium (gallon) pots - \$6.00 (\$4.50 for shareholders). \$12.00 (\$9.50) for two-gallon and larger 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, 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 (\$3.20) 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 \$4.50 each (\$3.50 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 – 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.

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, and Organic Wholefoods Kitchen**

Friendship Farms & Fare Community

**Cadle's Cove Farm
Freedom House Farm
Friendship Farms & Fare: First Farm
Seeds of Love Organic Farm
Tarry Lane Tasting Station**

April 7, 2014 – 27th report for the 2013-2014 Garden Year

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