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# WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

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NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET  
WEEK OF APRIL 8, 2025



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[www.FarmNetNPR.com](http://www.FarmNetNPR.com)

## WEEKLY UPDATE BY DELL DECHANT

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### Weather Update

Temperatures this week will start off above normal, then fall a bit below as a weak front passes, and drift back to normal by the start of next week. Best chance of rain is late Monday (April 7) into early Tuesday (April 8) when the front drifts through - about 70% possibility for the overnight hours. The rest of the week will be dry.

This is the dry season, so keep up with the irrigation. Using a watering can conserves water and allows for targeted irrigation. For sustainable growing, hand and watering-can irrigation is recommended.

It is the most responsible and conservative approach during a drought - or anytime for that matter.

It ensures only plants the gardener sees receive irrigation, and only those the gardener recognize as actually needing irrigation. Automatic systems do not allow for such focused and conservative water use - even drip systems are often less thrifty. Watering can irrigation also allows gardeners to observe and interact with each bed, each row, and every plant.

## Historical average for week: High, low-80s. Low, low-60s

**Growers' Notes:** As noted in recent weeks, plants are bolting and flowering.

Gardeners should be closing out the cool weather harvests. If lucky, we'll have collards through April. The record-breaking heat this past week has hastened the passing of many plants. Mustard Greens are finished, with a wonderful abundance of seed pods forming on best plants. Arugula and Asian Blue Collards are seeding nicely and many still have harvestable leaves. Most broccoli plants have high seed counts.

All plants in this family (brassica) are reliable seed producers – and this year, for the first time for us, some of our collard greens produced seeds. We can also note that seeds from the brassica family are beloved by seed-loving birds – especially cardinals. Regenerative agro-ecological growers will likely be saving seeds from their brassica plants: collards, kale, broccoli, choy, and others. They produce easy to harvest pods – and lots of them. We recommend doing this. If you do, however, leave some pods for those local seed-loving birds. There will be more than enough seeds for your garden next year, and all your neighbors' gardens as well – and still plenty for the birds as well!

The bolting and flowering is always welcome. This means the plants are healthy and following their natural course of life. Bees and other pollinators thrill at the seasonal vegetable flowers.

So do we. Flowering broccoli and mustard are favorites, with arugula not far behind.

Gardeners will want to harvest winter greens now while they are at peak to cook, can, or freeze.

Growers should start seeds or open sow for spring gardens. Winter crops should be culled.

In our nursery we have Dragon Tongue Beans and cucumber seedlings. Shortly we will have eggplant, and peppers. Others are encouraged to consider these reliable Springtime transition crops – and certainly, add tomatoes to that list. We are not starting tomatoes now, because we already have an abundance, having avoided a hard freeze.

The nursery has dozens of tomato seedlings – available to the community for donations. Remember, these seedlings are acclimated to the region and especially West Pasco. They will also produce reliable seeds for regeneration.

The tomato harvest has been exceptional this year. At our main garden we have harvested over 50 pounds so far. If you started tomatoes in the fall, you are likely also enjoying abundant harvests now.

As you cull your crops, please donating the cullings. Share your harvest with friends and neighbors (human and others), compost, and return to the soil. FarmNet advocates no waste gardening.

Those using regenerative methods, should see tomatoes coming up in last-year's tomato beds. Same with sweet potatoes in the sweet potato beds. Two other great spring crops are Dragon Tongue Beans and Pigeon Peas. See featured stories on both these high-yield legumes in recent issues of the Farm Report.

### Market News

**Mark your calendar:** The next FarmNet Evening Market at Plants and Pints is April 15 (4/15).

FarmNet will have fresh local produce at Plants & Pints, at Ordinance One, in downtown New Port Richey, on Tuesday April 15, 5:30 to 7:30. April will feature tomatoes, loquats, collard greens, and possibly kale and arugula.

FarmNet also has a booth at Tasty Tuesday and Wright's Famers Market.

**CSA & Fresh Harvest Feature:** This week's CSA fresh harvest feature is loquats. If you'd like a market basket (about ½ a pound) of locally-grown tomatoes from one of our gardens, let us know. Suggested donation, \$3 (more if you can, less if needs be).

Other CSA produce includes tomatoes, kale, collards, and arugula.

CSA shareholders can pick up their shares at the homestead every Tuesday evening. If you are interested in acquiring a share contact us through the FarmNet website <https://farmnetnpr.com/>

Weekly shares and single items are also available. Suggested donations: \$10 one item, \$20 any four, \$30 five or more.

If you are interested in acquiring a share, contact us at <https://farmnetnpr.com/> We'll give you a day and time to pick them up.

FarmNet also has a booth at Tasty Tuesday and Wright's Famers Market.  
Ask for Steve at the Market



## Check out our CSA

Costs of annual shares are very modest compared with other CSAs.

Weekly, monthly, and quarterly shares are also available. Suggested donations:

Weekly \$10 one item, \$20 any four, \$30 five or more.

Monthly (full share, 4 weeks): \$70

Quarterly (full share): \$180

Half Year (5 months) \$250

Annual Share \$400

If you would like to acquire local seeds and seedlings, send a message to New Port Richey FarmNet on Facebook and ask to be added to our mailing list.

## **LOQUAT BEER TAPPING PARTY!** *Let's Raise a Glass to Loquats!*

### **FARMNET IS HEADING TO COTEE RIVER BREWING COMPANY**

to support the release of their famous

**LOQUAT BEER**—a fan

favorite and longtime tradition in celebration of our beloved


**LOQUAT FESTIVAL!**




 **WHERE: COTEE RIVER BREWING CO.**  
**5760 MAIN ST, NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 34652**

 **WHEN: THURSDAY, APRIL 10**

 **TIME: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

 Join us for a casual pint, great company, and local flavor as we kick off the season with one of our community's coolest collaborations.

 Wear your **LOQUAT FESTIVAL** t-shirt and let's roll in together to show Brian and the Cotee River crew our support and appreciation!

**Come thirsty. Come festive. Come loquat-lovin'.** 

## Harvest & Ripening Update

**Tomatoes:** If you took a chance and planted in the fall, and did not have a freeze, you should have ripe tomatoes in abundance. If you planted in January or February, you have a few more weeks before harvesting – but you should have fruit forming.

**Broccoli:** Broccoli should be producing heads, with bolting increasing. Nearing end of season.

**Loquats:** Loquats continue to ripen. Because of the erratic weather, this will be a light season.

**Peaches:** Look for increasing fruitlings. Peaches follow loquats by about a month. Some are ripe now.

**Mangos:** Look for the buds on mango trees. Look for first tiny fruitlings.

**Winter Greens:** Season ending, look for bolting on some plants. Harvest now or let them seed.

**Beans:** Dragon tongue beans will be producing flowers and first pods.

**Lettuces:** Look for bolting. Harvest now. Season is nearly over and may be over for some.

### Starts

**Tomatoes:** Continue planting and start more now.

**Beans:** Start bush and pole beans now. Continue planting Dragon tongue beans and start more now.

**Pigeon Peas:** These reliable legumes are flowering and producing pods now and until fall. Start more now.

**Peppers:** Start peppers now.

**Okra:** Start okra or open sow. Okra starts best in cells.

**Black-eyed Peas:** Start now.

**Eggplant:** Start now.

If you are looking for seeds and seedlings for local growing, FarmNet is the place to go. FarmNet features organic heirloom seeds from Seed Savers Exchange, and the FarmNet seed bank – the largest collection of local seeds in the area. Seedlings are also available. Right now, we have a good supply of seedlings, featuring tomatoes, dragon tongue beans, and climbing cucumbers.

Coming soon, Pigeon Peas, peppers, and eggplant.

If you desire seeds and seedlings, contact us through FarmNet web site, and join our mailing list for the Seed & Seedling Project. Go to <https://farmnetnpr.com/>

All these transitional crops will produce through the rest of the winter and into spring. The tomatoes will stay with you into the summer. Peppers might, too. Don't count on the cumpers much past early spring.





Ecology Florida and New Port Richey FarmNet, with support of the City of New Port Richey, will host the 12<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of the Florida Loquat Festival on Saturday, April 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in New Port Richey at Sims Park in and around historic Peace Hall. This is the only loquat festival in the United States. Thanks to our major sponsor, The New Port Richey Rotary Club; our community supporters, SERVPRO – Team George, NLG Divorce and Family Law; and other businesses, groups, and individuals in the community.

The festival is a learning and sharing event to help expand the knowledge and appreciation of the loquat tree and its fruit. There will be presentations on the cultivation of loquat trees, various uses of the fruit and leaves, and presentations about community markets and agrarianism.

**Thanks to all who support New Port Richey FarmNet and its agrarian mission.**

If you know anyone who would like information on acquiring a share in the CSA, send a message to New Port Richey FarmNet on Facebook.

<https://farmnetnpr.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NPRFARMNET/about>

Cost of annual shares are very modest compared with other CSAs.

If you would like to acquire local organic produce, seeds, and seedlings, send a message to New Port Richey FarmNet on Facebook and ask to be added to our mailing list.

