
WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 24, 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

Weekly Update • Grower's Notes • Upcoming Events
Harvest and Ripening Updates • Market News

www.FarmNetNPR.com

WEEKLY UPDATE BY DELL DECHANT

Weather Update

Temperatures this week will be near normal, with rain Monday (2/28) from pre-dawn hours through most of the day. Last week's colder temperatures and rain were beneficial for the gardens, and the mild weather this week will prolong the life and production cycle of cool weather crops. The rain forecast on Monday this week will be appreciated because otherwise we are looking at dry conditions. We are deep into the dry season now, so any bit of rain is welcome.)

The mild weather will last all week, with some sources forecasting mid-70s Wednesday and

Thursday (2/26 and 27), and general agreement that cooler temperatures will arrive next weekend. Remember, this is still winter.

Even with the rain (if we get it) we are in the middle of Florida's dry season, and growers should be ready to irrigate if rains do not occur. Average rainfall in the region for each of the first five months of the year is about 2.5 inches. That is also the average for October and December. Only November, our driest month, has less average rainfall – about 1.5 inches.

So, keep up with the watering. Using a watering can conserves water and allows for targeted irrigation. For sustainable growing, hand and watering-can irrigation is recommended. It also allows gardeners to observe and interact with each bed, each row, and every plant.

Historical average for week: High, low-70s. Low, low-50s

Growers' Notes: As expected, even with the cool spell, many plants are bolting and flowering. All it took was that blast of upper 80s for many days two weeks ago. Once they get the seasonal signal that winter is ending, plants begin their transition from one lifetime to the next, preparing to die and to generate the next generation of their family. When the heat arrives with force, there is no stopping the process - even if cold weather returns.

Check your beds to see what bolt-and-flower looks like. In our gardens, the most pronounced bolt-and-flower is occurring with four families: broccoli, bok choy, Asian Blue Collards; and joining them this week, arugula. This is early for bolting, which more commonly occurs in March. When bolting starts flavor and texture begin to change, and more leaf-eating insects appear.

Gardeners may want to harvest winter greens now while they are at peak, can them or cook and then freeze. As for bolting: in our experience, first to bolt are lettuces, bok choy, and arugula. Then come the other winter greens, the brassica family, with collards holding out longer than all others - and, maybe, not bolting at all. So far, there has been no bolt-and-flowering on collards and kale, which should remain productive for at least another month.

As we drift out of the winter growing season, gardeners will likely find it best to stop planting winter vegetables: lettuces, choy, collards, kale, arugula, broccoli, cabbages, brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, mustard greens, and others. Try if you like, but they will likely just take up space, time, and plenty of water. Definitely stop by next week.

With the approach of the last possible date (ever) for a freeze (March 3), growers are advised to start seeds for spring planting, and to consider culling the winter crops. Too early for some, to be sure, but certainly time to start. Future issues of the West Pasco Urban Farm Report will give tips on culling. For now, consider donating culled crops to community groups that feed the less fortunate, share with neighbors, or compost. FarmNet advocates no waste gardening.

As we prepare for early spring planting, we recommend peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes. These three transitional crops will produce through the rest of the winter and into spring. The tomatoes will stay with around until the summer. Peppers might, too. Don't count on the cucumbers much past early spring.

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 West Pasco Urban Farm Report - Dragon Tongue Beans (2/17), Pigeon Peas (2/3). Better yet, try growing them. Now is a good time to start.

Market News

Mark your calendar: FarmNet will have fresh local produce at Plants & Pints, at Ordinance One, in downtown New Port Richey, on Tuesday March 18, 5:30 to 7:30. March will feature tomatoes, loquats, collard greens, kale, and arugula. All items, \$3 (more if you can, less if needs be).

*The second FarmNet Evening Market at Plants and Pints (February 18) was very successful; and we will do it again in March (3/18).

CSA & Fresh Harvest Feature:

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

Other CSA produce includes kale, collards, mustard greens, Asian blue 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. 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



5-3-1 Share & Support Event

Hosted by New Port Richey FarmNet

March 15, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

5426 Main Street, New Port Richey

Gateway plaza near Coastline Salt Room, at corner of
Main Street & River Road

Event featuring select used and unwanted items in
good condition at special donation amounts.

For the first hour of the event (10:00 a.m. to 11:00
a.m.), all items are \$5.00, each.

In the second hour (11:00 to 12:00 noon) any
remaining items are offered for \$3.00, each.

In the third hour (12:00 to 1:00 p.m.), remaining
items are offered for \$1.00, each.

Items include books, clothing, household items, lawn
and garden accessories, seedlings, seeds, and other
miscellaneous items.

First come, first share.

All donations go to the community-building work of
New Port Richey FarmNet.

Harvest & Ripening Update

Tomatoes: If you took a chance and
planted in the fall, you will or soon will
have ripe tomatoes

Broccoli: Your broccoli should be
producing heads now or soon. It is likely
bolting.

Loquats: Look for loquats ripening. We've
harvested 10 lbs so far. Still early.

Peaches: Look for flowers on peach trees,
and first fruitings. Peaches follow loquats
by about a month

Mangos: Look for the first buds on mango
trees.

Winter Greens: Reaching peak of season,
look for bolting on some plants. Harvest
now

Lettuces: Look for bolting. Harvest now.

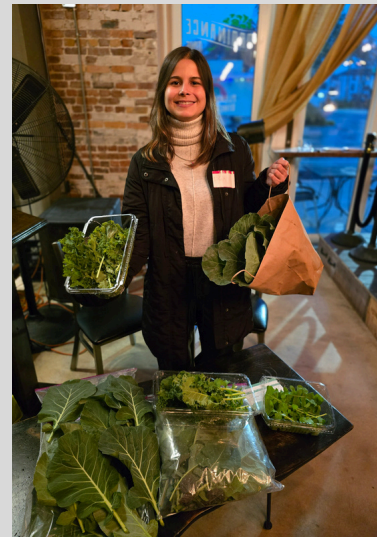
Plants and Pints

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

5:30 - 7:30 pm



5738 Main Street
New Port Richey, Florida



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,
including tomatoes, mustard greens, and kohlrabi,
cauliflower – and (new this week!) onion sets. This is
the last week to get those winter greens in the ground
– so, if you want to make a run at a late winter garden,
we are here with seedlings for you.

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/>



Plant of the Week: Loquats

Next week's plant of the week will be one of Florida's most overlooked and misunderstood fruits - Loquats. In the meantime, look around the area (especially in the City of New Port Richey) for beautiful evergreen trees with dark leaves and small yellow-to-orange fruit. Those are loquats, the most prolific fruit trees in the area - rivaled only by mangos. If you look for them, you'll see them everywhere right now and for the next couple of months. This is harvesting season for this wonderful spring-time Florida fruit - and New Port Richey celebrates the harvest with America's only Loquat Festival. This year's celebration will be April 12, with special events in the week leading up to the festival.

We'll share a little more about loquats and the festival in the next issue of West Pasco Urban Farm Report but for now remember that this is harvest season for loquats and they are easy to find. Unlike oranges, which are often shipped from California to Florida at this time of the year, the prolific loquat thrives right here in West Pasco County. One of our market researchers noticed a big sign in the produce section of a commercial grocery store, reading "In Season Now," perched above a big pile of bagged mandarin oranges (marketed as "Halos"), shipped in from Delano, California. There were no loquats for sale in the store, but you can find plenty in West Pasco urban yards, gardens and groves, and unlike the Delano mandarins, those local loquats do not travel 2,500 miles to get to us. They grow here, and so do we.

Mark Your Calendar!

11th Anniversary

Florida

Loquat Festival

Saturday, April 12

10 am - 2 pm

Sims Park

New Port Richey, Florida

Featuring Loquat products,
vendors and more.

Learn about loquats during our
various event programs.

Thank you to our partners, who make this event
possible.

City of New Port Richey, New Port Richey
Rotary Club, Creative Institute of Dental Arts,
Cotee River Brewing Company, West Pasco
Historical Society, The White Heron Tea & Gifts



**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.

Friendship



Farms & Fare