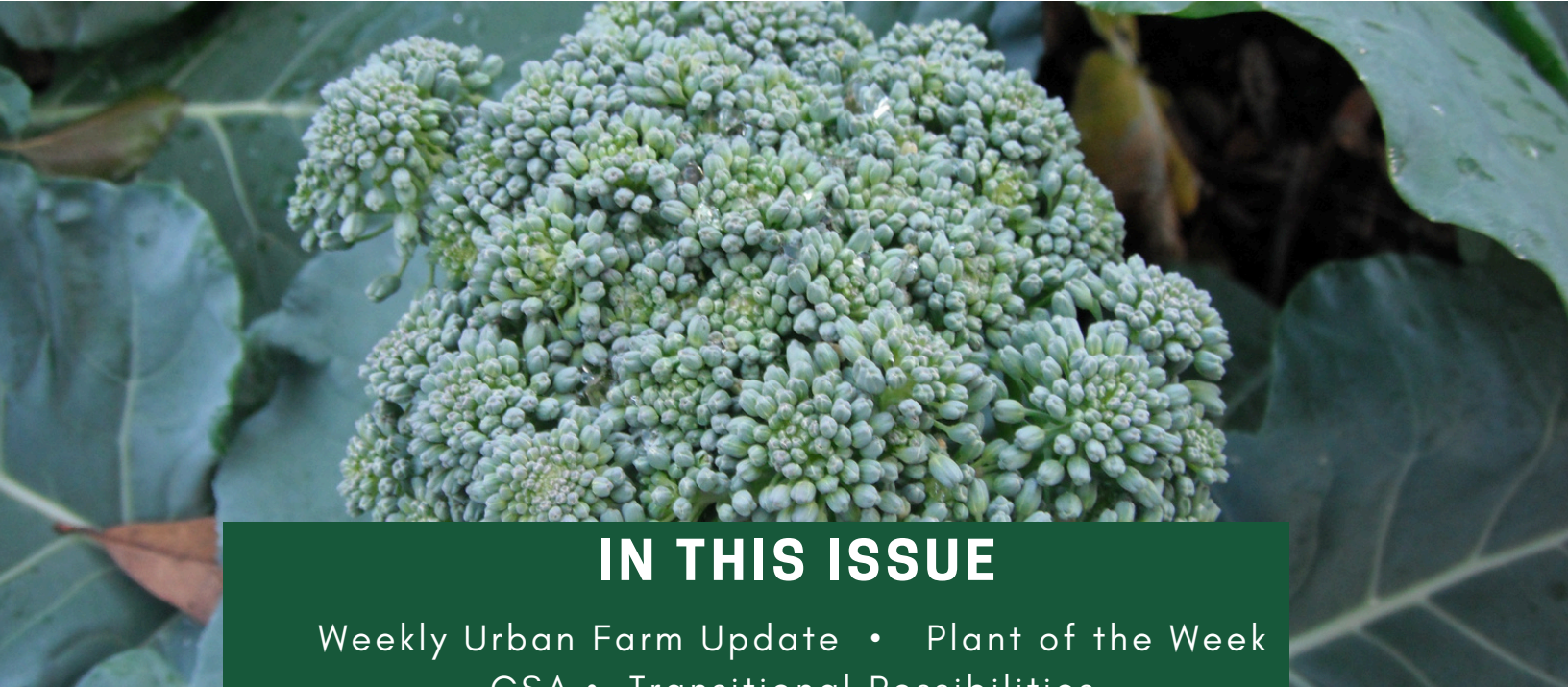

WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET
WEEK OF JANUARY 13, 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

Weekly Urban Farm Update • Plant of the Week
CSA • Transitional Possibilities

www.FarmNetNPR.com

WEEKLY UPDATE BY DELL DECHANT

Weather Update

We made it through another cold week without a freeze. Hopefully, we can avoid a freeze in the coming week as well. Forecast is for continuing cold weather, with below normal temperatures; highs will be in the 50s and lows in 40s. There is no freeze in the forecast for New Port Richey, with the lowest temperatures still in the 40s.

Monday will be the warmest day and the one day this week when rain is possible (about 60%). Tuesday night into Wednesday a.m. until dawn will be the coldest period of the week.

As noted, the one good chance for rain is Monday (January 13) (around 60%). Look for rain in the late day and early evening. Otherwise, the very dry conditions of the coming week will require irrigation daily, except, Tuesday if we get rain on Monday. Hand watering is best and using a watering can the very best. Hand and can watering conserves water and allows for targeted irrigation. For sustainable growing, hand and can irrigation is recommended.



Check out this amazing
broccoli growing this winter.
Thank you for sharing your
photos Dell!

Stay tuned for upcoming
events.



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

Growers' Notes Growers are reminded that we are in the dry season, which continues until next June. Fall was even dryer than normal, and winter is shaping up to be the same.

The one hope for rain until June are cold fronts. In the dry season (September to June), rain occurs when cold fronts pass over the area. If the fronts do not bring rain, irrigation is necessary. So far, our dry season this year has featured front with little or no rain in advance.

Remember to start or expand a rain collection system – even putting a heavy-duty trash can under a gutter downspout will work. If you do not receive rain, irrigation is recommended.

We encourage growers and gardeners to plant all winter vegetables: collards, kale, arugula, broccoli, cabbages, even brussels sprouts. All are members of the Brassica family. All will thrive throughout the winter and into the spring. Additional good news, these greens can survive a freeze.

Collards, are the champions in this regard, and can survive a hard freeze (to about 10 degrees). The other Brassicas are a bit less hardy, with mid-to upper-20s the safe zone for them.

Plant of the Week – Broccoli

As growers know, the winter growing season in Florida is the highpoint of food production each year; and we should have high yields of all winter vegetables, especially the Brassicas – broccoli in particular. Our FarmNet gardens are growing broccoli with a genealogy that dates back 20 generations (20 years). We'll make the pitch that anyone can grow this broccoli; and anyone who is interested can do so with little work – and FarmNet has seeds and seedlings of that 20-generation variety.

Despite the fact that broccoli is easy to grow in Florida, and a local-acclimated variety is available, most of the broccoli sold here is coming from other states – often California. Last week, we found organic (USDA certified!) broccoli for sale at a commercial market for \$4.99 a head. It does not have to be this expensive or shipped from far away. We can broccoli and dozens of other fresh-harvest vegetables here in Florida, probably nearer than you think, for much less than \$4.99 a head, and virtually no “food miles.”

Find a local market, join a Co-Op, take a share in a CSA. FarmNet operates a CSA and we offer fresh-harvest produce every week at markets and at our gardens. Organic broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, and other winter greens are being harvested around the area right now. Florida is food paradise, if we will only recognize it. A local urban gardener produced cauliflower heads weighing between three and four pounds last year, and another harvested 50 heads of broccoli from a front-yard garden.

We can do better than shrink-wrapped industrially-produced organic broccoli, flown across the full width of North America, and sold for \$4.99 a head in a state where just about anyone with few feet of soil or a couple of 10 gallon pots can grow plenty of broccoli, and a hobby farmer can produce over 200 heads with little effort on a tiny urban plot.

This selection is an edited excerpt from “We Can Do Better than California Broccoli.” Here is a link to the full article:
<https://www.ecologyflorida.org/2013/01/editorial-we-can-do-better-than-california-broccoli/>

Transitional Possibilities

Besides the winter greens, right now, three excellent transitional vegetables are cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers. We also like Dragon Tongue Beans. At our working gardens, our tomatoes and beans are flowering. These are all transitional crops and will produce through winter and into spring, when they will really flourish. Be advised, however, unlike the winter greens noted above, they do not thrive in very cold temperatures and a freeze will kill them. So, growers beware. If these great crops survive though the winter, they will produce well in the spring.

Watch for articles coming up on winter growing and freezes on the FarmNet web site. Go to <https://farmnetnpr.com/> In the meantime, pick up seeds and seedlings from FarmNet, which feature organic heirloom seeds from Seed Savers Exchange, and the FarmNet seed bank - the largest collection of local seeds. Seedlings are also available, including tomatoes and collard greens.

Don't Forget Seeds, Seedlings & Fresh Produce from FarmNet Growers

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/>

You can also join our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Program. Shares are available for one year and half-year terms - and special shorter terms of one to three months.

This week's shares for CSA shareholders are collards, kale, arugula, and mustard greens. Mustard share will be smallish - first of the season. This is the eighth full week of harvesting, and shares are getting larger. We are still about a month out from full production. We also have a wide variety of herbs, and a special offering of sweet potatoes, left over from the Round-Up.

To learn more about our CSA, go to <https://farmnetnpr.com/> and request to be added to the mailing list.



Thanks to all who support Friendship Farms & Fare CSA and its Agrarian Mission.

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

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

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.