

# WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET  
WEEK OF JULY 28, 2025

Weekly Farm Report back in action. After a brief hiatus, West Pasco Urban Farm Report is again publishing. Our last published report was June 23. Our publishers may post the June 30 and July 7 reports for archival purposes. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by the missing reports.



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

## WEEKLY UPDATE

BY DELL DECHANT

### Weather Update

Hot and dry in the coming week. Temperatures above historical norms, rain probability below typical summer expectations, except for midweek. Best chance of rain will be midweek, with some sources forecasting good chances Tuesday through Thursday; but probability is barely 50%. Other sources offer much lower probability. All sources project low probability early in the week and late in the week.

If it does not rain, temperatures will be in the mid to upper 90s – as they were last week. Average for this time of the year is 91 for the high.76 for the low. So far this summer we have been

generally well above both the normal high and normal low. Several sources forecast highs from 95 to 97 early in coming week.

We are not having a normal rainy season, but very thankful for the rain we have received. Our crops and the whole natural world (that's what is outside our structures and areas not paved or built); the natural world is even more thankful. Most the rain we have received has been from fronts and tropical systems. This was the case last week. Without those fronts and tropical systems this would be another dry "rainy" season.

The coming week promises temperatures above normal if it does not rain.

The average high of 91 degrees will remain the average high until early to mid-September, when it drops to 90, and finally 89 toward the end of September. We will be in the 90s all week, with lows in the upper 70s.High temperature will only

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drop below 90 if there is rain or extended period of cloud cover occurs in the afternoon - until September.

**Image on front cover:** Heirloom variety (Hill Country Red). Grown seasonally in the FarmNet family of gardens since 2010. Originally developed in the Hill Country of Texas, where the recent catastrophic floods occurred.

**Historical average for week: High, 91; Low, mid 70s**

**Forecast: Above normal heat if no rain. High, mid 90s; Low, upper 70s**

**Rain: Rain possibilities are atypical for this time of the year.**

**Good chances for rain mid-week - around 60%**

### Market News

The next FarmNet Evening Market at Plants and Pints is August 19 (8/19).

**Mark your calendar:** FarmNet will have fresh local produce at Plants & Pints, at Ordinance One, in downtown New Port Richey, on Tuesday July 15, 5:30 to 7:30. July will feature summer offerings: sweet potato leaves (try them if you have not before), black-eyed peas, and okra.

In the meantime, CSA shareholders can pick up 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.

FarmNet also has a table at Tasty Tuesday. Look for Amanda Zborek

Wright's Famers' Market is closed until the fall.

**Seasonal Harvest Festival.** The next FarmNet seasonal Food Festival is the Okra Occasion

Mark your calendars and join local food enthusiasts for  
The Okra Occasion  
New Port Richey Public Library  
August 23, 11:00 to 1:00

To enter a dish in the annual Okra tasting contest (and win ribbons and prizes), contact Amanda Zborek at Tasty Tuesday or via email: Amanda Zborek [ajozborek@gmail.com](mailto:ajozborek@gmail.com)

### CSA & Fresh Harvest Feature:

**Black-eyed peas:** These are green, fresh harvest (in the pod) beans. They are great (and very nutritious) raw and fresh off the vine. Can be cooked in the pods for a "green bean" effect. Try suggestions from the fine site: <https://stellinamarfa.com/vegetables/can-you-eat-the-pods-of-black-eyed-peas/>

Most folks have never even seen fresh black-eyed peas. Most who are familiar with them (if at all) know them only as dry beans (only one variety ever found in those plastic bags are grocery stores) and canned or frozen. The good news is that you can grow these now and in abundance; and, if you don't want to grow them yourself, you can acquire them through New Port Richey FarmNet. Try some suggestions from the fine site: <https://stellinamarfa.com/vegetables/can-you-eat-the-pods-of-black-eyed-peas/>

Here is a good to know message from this helpful site: green pods are useful for fresh eating, like snap beans, when they have just "plumped up." At this stage the pods are edible, or they can be shelled and the tender young peas eaten like edamame. These young peas can be blanched and frozen for long term storage.

If you'd like loquat preserves (jams and jelly), let us know.

Other CSA produce includes various herbs and cranberry hibiscus.

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.

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.

Our project is supported through donations. This report and all other FarmNet programs and publications are funded through good-will contributions shared by supporters and those who find benefit in regenerative, sustainable community-based initiatives such as these. Contributions are tax-deductible and most welcome.

Send check or money order to:

FarmNet  
PO Box 596  
New Port Richey  
Florida 34656-0596

FarmNet has a table at Tasty Tuesday. Look for Amanda Zaborek, who can share further details and information on the mission and vision of New Port Richey FarmNet mission, including our programs, events, and service opportunities.

To send a message to New Port Richey FarmNet, see FarmNet on Facebook or the "contact us" link on the webpage

<https://farmnetnpr.com/contact-us>

<https://farmnetnpr.com/>

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

# Harvest & Ripening Update



## Harvest

**Black-eyed Peas:** Check your rows and towers now. Pods should be abundant on most plants. Get going. Black-eyed Peas will produce into September. Big Reds will be the last to produce pods. Start saving best pods for seeds for next year.

**Eggplant:** If you are trying eggplant, check for fruit. Our hotter summers are impacting eggplant production, but this summer we have some fruit for the first time in years. You might have some, too.

**Lima Beans:** If you planted lima beans in late spring they may have pods. Check for flowers, then for pods.

**Mangos:** Look for first fruits. Reports have been received that trees in the area are ripening. FarmNet encourages all regenerative growers to have at least one mango in their agroecological system. If you have mangos to share, let us know; we have established a harvest, share, and distribution network for seasonal fruit, which otherwise would be lost. We do this with loquats every year, and we've gotten pretty good at it. We want to do the same with mangos!

**Okra:** Harvest now. Don't let them get too long. Harvest pods when they are 3-4 inches. If they get much longer, they may be woody. Now, note: if you are using seeds or seedlings from FarmNet nursery, the pods may stay tender longer. We've had some Silver Queen and Red Burgundy stay tender up to 10 inches; and most stay tender up to 8 inches. To be sure, however, 3-4 inches is best (safest). Start saving best pods for seeds for next year.

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

**Sweet Potato Leaves:** Yes. Harvest your sweet potato leaves for an excellent summer green vegetable. If you have not tried sweet potato leaves, give them a try, and as a colleague always says: Try them, and join the rest of the world.

Nutritional Profile: <https://www.nutritionadvance.com/sweet-potato-leaves-nutrition/>

Comparison of SP Leaves with Collard Greens <https://foodstruct.com/compare/collard-vs-sweet-potato-leaves>

Recipes <https://www.natureword.com/5-sweet-potato-leaves-recipe-ideas-and-uses/>

We use SP leaves in any recipe where we would use collard greens – soups, sauces, omelets, stir-fry, boiled in water or vegetable stock with a little ghee.

## Starts

**Beans Try lima beans:** if you have not before. They will likely succeed where other beans do not. They will like it just a bit cooler than our new summer temperatures but give them a try.

**Black-eyed Peas:** There is still time for black-eyed peas, but time is running short. Blackeyes are also called Cow Peas, Southern Peas, Crowder Peas, and several other names. These versatile legumes can be planted through August and produce until October.

**Eggplant:** Start now. May not do well once hottest summer heat arrives (July to September), but has traditionally been able to produce throughout the summer and into fall. We are getting harvests this summer for the first time in years.

If you can get them started now, they may be well established when we get a little cooler weather.

**Okra:** Keep planting. Same suggestion as for black-eyed peas: There is still time for okra, but time is running short. This summer favorite can be planted through August and produce until October.

Start or open sow. Okra starts best in cells. Keep planting okra through August – especially, if you are using seeds from FarmNet Seed Bank.

**Peppers:** (Hot) Start hot peppers now. We have done well with Habaneros in past summers.

**Pigeon Peas:** Start more now. Keep planting until September.

**Sweet Potato Slips:** Last best time to start sweet potato slips. Nearing end of planting season. We usually call it day on sweet potatoes at the end of July. Typical cycle brings harvest in 3 or 4 months (90 to 120) days. Those planted in July will be ready no earlier than October. Best yielders for us are Georgia Jets and Beauregards. Many growers reported very light harvests for the past two years (2023 and 2024). We are planting heavily at our major gardens – nearly 1000 slips. Keep planting until end of June – one more week, through the end of July if you are not risk averse. Remember the shortest maturation period for any sweet potato is 90 days, and some take 120 days.

## Regenerative Growers' Notes

Time to wrap up summer plantings. Keep at it if not finished. There is still time, but it is getting late. Best choices for planting now are okra, black-eyed peas, and pigeon peas -- possibly eggplant. You can open sow these reliable hot weather crops, or start in cells.

Hot peppers are worth a try. We've had success with habanero peppers in the summer. You can try peppers and tomatoes (and some report fruit through the summer), but do not get your hopes up. The plants may survive and even flower, especially those from our localized nursery, but few (if any) will set if temperature gets above 90 for daily high or above 80 for the low.

In our nursery we have okra, pigeon peas, and black-eyed pea seedlings. We also have luffa seedlings. Orders for seeds and seedlings are accepted now. All are 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.

Our agroecological experiment with "Butterfly Weed" (*Asclepias tuberosa*) has had its first (small) success. We are starting the second trial now.

The seeds germinated in natural (90+ degree heat) conditions. Butterfly Weed a native milkweed, which is in short supply and uncommon in the area. This is not a food crop for humans and should not be eaten. It is a food crop for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. We will be starting a few seeds every month and monitoring germination rates and maturation process.

We are offering the seeds to any who are willing to join the experiment. Donations are most welcome. As many know, New Port Richey is a recognized Monarch City, USA, and we are promoting the propagation and installation of native milkweed to support restoration of this imperiled creature. See this short clip on our commitment to the Monarchs: New Port Richey celebrating its role in protecting Monarch butterflies <https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/new-port-richey-celebrating-its-role-in-protecting-monarch-butterflies>

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

**Shade seedlings:** We are running this message regularly though the summer.

For new plantings, seedlings, and sweet potato slips, if you plant in full sun or little shade, use shade cloth, sun shields, shade grates, umbrellas, and canopies. If exposed to direct sun, most will not survive. Remember, in direct sunlight, ground temperatures typically run 10 degrees (or more) hotter than the air temperature -- and the ground is where those precious seeds and seedling are trying to grow.

**Do not plant trees or shrubs:** We are running this message regularly though the summer.

This is not the time of year to plant trees and shrubs. In fact, it is probably the worst time to plant them, especially if they are being planted in a sunny location. The next period to even consider planting trees and shrubs is the rainy season (mid-June to mid-August, and maybe into September), but that also is not an ideal planting time, and do not plant unless it is certain that we will actually have a rainy season. Remember we did not have a rainy season in the summer of 2023. Best bet for planting trees and shrubs is January. The next best months, those on both sides of January (December and February). After that, next best, are the next pair out from January (November and March). October and April are worth considering but they are not ideal. It is definitely not a good time to plant now.

### Nursery Notes

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. FarmNet's seed bank has the largest collection of local seeds in Pasco County, with over 30 different seeds with local genealogies dating back at least 10 years to as long as 25 years

Seedlings are also available. Right now, we have a good supply of seedlings, featuring, black-eyed peas, lima beans, pigeon peas, and okra.

Featured this week:

Okra -- Red Burgundy and Silver Queen  
Black eyed peas -- Purple Pod

We have other varieties- check on those of interest to you:

Okra: Star of David, Hill County Red  
Black eyed peas: Fast Lady, Big Red, Hercules, Zipper Cream, Luffa

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/>



### 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.

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