
WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET
WEEK OF JUNE 23, 2025



IN THIS ISSUE

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

www.FarmNetNPR.com

WEEKLY UPDATE BY DELL DECHANT

Weather Update

Rain last week was most welcome. We received about one inch over three days. The overcast conditions were equally beneficial. We are entering the rainy season, which should commence by the first week of July. Most days this week will likely be dry.

The coming week promises temperatures above normal (as high as 94 degrees) with average chances for rain – between 30 and 40% each day. Rain chances are typical for late spring, prior to the start of rainy season.

There is not (and will not be) any relief in the heat. Readers have likely observed high temperatures already running into the mid-90s. 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. At this point, it appears that we will be counting ourselves lucky if our high temperatures do not exceed that 91 degree average.

Here is a reprint of an educational memo (a sidebar) from last week, repeated here for new readers or incase it was missed by subscribers last week. We'll run it through the end of the month. For now, here is the story on how average temperatures are computed and what this tells us:

***Cover Photo: Black-eyed Peas, Green Pods on the vine: Heirloom variety (Hercules), one of the largest black-eyed peas. Grown seasonally in the FarmNet family of gardens since 2018. See short narrative on black-eyed peas in this issue.**

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

**Forecast: Above normal heat.
High, low to mid-90s; Low, upper 70s**

**Rain: Rain possibilities are moderate
throughout the week – 30 to 40%, at
best**

Sidebar on average temperatures, which you see in weather reports on TV, in newspapers, and online.

Those average temperatures are the work of NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information (<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/>) in accordance with the World Meteorological Organization. They are adjusted every 10 years and reflect the average over a 30 year period. Here is good link to this important work: <https://www.noaa.gov/explainers/understanding-climate-normals>

The latest change in averages was in 2020 and covers the 30-year period from 1991 to 2020. The averages are uniformly higher than they were for the previous period (1981 to 2010). For example, the average high for our June to September hot period was 90 for 1981 to 2010. This average was reached later in June and ended earlier in September than is the case today. Of course, this is a consequence of climate change and is simply another marker of global warming. Finally, sidebar to sidebar: As some readers already are well aware, NOAA, and the NCEI are among the many governmental agencies the current Administration is de-funding, de-staffing, or eliminating.

Dry season is mid-September through mid-June. What we call the very dry season is mid-April to mid-June. So, we are moving out of the driest time of the year, and although the rain last week was most welcome and the any we get this week will also be a touch of grace, rain is still the exception to the seasonal norms. If it does come, no one will complain – certainly not the crops, or the animals, trees, birds, wildflowers, insects, and the Gulf-coast earth.

For summer vegetable growing, if you are planting now, be sure to keep up with the irrigation. Use a watering can if possible. This method conserves water and allows for targeted irrigation. For regenerative growing, hand watering and watering-can irrigation is recommended. It is the most responsible and conservative approach during a drought – or anytime for that matter.

Hand watering and watering-can irrigation 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.

CSA & Fresh Harvest Feature:

Black-eyed Peas – First of the season. These are green, fresh harvest (in the pod) beans. They are great (and very nutritious) raw and fresh off the vine – and you can eat the whole bean, pod and all.

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 right 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.

Harvest & Ripening Update

Harvest

Black-eyed Peas: Check your rows and towers now. Early plantings now have pods ready for harvest. Get going. These will produce all summer long. Start more now.

Cherries: Barbados cherries are now producing their spring fruit. Watch for the cheerful red berries.

Mangos: Look for first fruits. Might be a bit early, but we are hearing reports that some 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 are working set up distribution network for this wonderful summer fruit.

Okra: Look for your first pods, if you have not already had some. Remember: harvest pods when they are 3-4 inches. Much longer, in most cases, will be woody. More on okra in the coming weeks.

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

Tomatoes: Harvest now. The season is over. With the high heat rolling in, the fruit will not last long. The plants might, but the fruit will not set once temps are above 90 by day and above 80 by night. Keep them going if they are healthy, but do not expect much production

Starts

Beans: Try lima beans – if you have not before. They will likely succeed where other beans do not.

Black-eyed Peas: Start now. Black-eyed peas can be started all summer long. Blackeyes are also called Cow Peas, Southern Peas, Crower Peas, and several other names.

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.

Okra: Keep planting. Start or open sow. Okra starts best in cells. Okra can be started all summer.

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

Pigeon Peas: Start more now. Keep planting throughout the summer.

Sweet Potato Slips: Start now. 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.



Market News

The next FarmNet Evening Market at Plants and Pints is July 15 (7/15).

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), blackeyed 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 Zaborek

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

Nursery Notes

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/>

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 – Knuckle Pod, Fast Lady

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, Purple Pod

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/>

Regenerative Growers' Notes

If you have not finished planting your summer garden it is time to get on it. Keep planting summer seedlings and seeds – or open sow for summer gardens. Best choices for planting now are sweet potato slips, okra, black-eyed peas, pigeon peas, and (possibly) eggplant. You can also open sow these reliable hot weather crops. See featured story on pigeon peas in previous issue of The West Pasco Urban Farm Report.

Hot peppers are worth a try. We've had success with habanero peppers in the summer. Despite our success, time has passed for bell peppers. It is definitely too late for cucumbers and tomatoes. You can try peppers and tomatoes (and some report fruit through the summer), but do not get your hopes up.

In our nursery we have okra, pigeon peas, and black-eyed pea 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. The seeds have 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. 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.

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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