
WEST PASCO URBAN FARM REPORT

NEW PORT RICHEY FARMNET
WEEK OF MARCH 10, 2025



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www.FarmNetNPR.com

WEEKLY UPDATE BY DELL DECHANT

Weather Update

Temperatures this week will be a bit above normal, except for Monday (3/10), which will also be the one day with a good chance for rain. If we do get rain, look for it in the predawn through early day, ahead of a weak front. Other than Monday, temperatures will be above normal, with a blast into the low to mid 80s by next weekend (3/14-16). r temperatures through the weekend.

We are running a bit below normal for winter rain, but close enough to avoid having our severe drought conditions worsen. Yes, West Pasco County and the entire the Springs Coast Watershed is in the midst of a severe drought.

While much of Florida is in a moderate drought or classified as abnormally dry, only our area and one other (most of Palm Beach and Broward Counties) are experiencing a severe drought. Here is a link to the National Drought Mitigation Center's Florida map:
<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?FL>

The Center is housed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and operates through a partnership of the University, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Agriculture. NOAA and the Department of Agriculture are government departments facing budget cuts, which may force closure or reduction in the work of the National Drought Mitigation Center.

Growers need to remember that the drought is only an intensification of our normal dry season, and irrigation is necessary on days without rain. Rain is rare in the winter and spring, and evaporation is high, especially on sunny days. 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. We are below average thus far this season. Only November, our driest month, has less average rainfall - about 1.5 inches.

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

Growers' Notes: As noted last week, winter vegetables are bolting and flowering.

The bolting and flowering mean 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 may want to harvest winter greens now while they are at peak, cook and can or freeze.

The first crops to bolt are lettuces, bok choy, and arugula. These are followed by 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 Southern Collards and Kale. The Asian Blue Collars are in bolt and flower now - much to the delight of the bees.

No further planting of cool weather crops should occur; start seeds for spring planting, and cull the winter crops. See notes on culling later in the report.

The Regenerative Gardener Regenerative gardeners should see tomatoes coming up in last-year's tomato beds. Same with sweet potatoes in the sweet potato beds.

Growers are advised to start seeds for spring planting and begin culling the winter crops. As you cull your crops, please donating the cullings. Please do not consign them to the garbage bag or can. They are food and packed with nutrition for all of us - all animals (humans and other animals), birds and insects, and the earth itself. Yes. That's right, remember the earth, the soil of our gardens enjoy vegetables just as much as we do, as much as the rabbits, the deer, and the cardinals. Future Farm Reports will offer tips on culling. For now, consider

donating culled crops to community groups that feed the less fortunate, share with friends and neighbors (human and others), and compost. FarmNet advocates no waste gardening.

Regenerative gardeners will keep in mind the drought conditions, which were noted earlier in the report, and keep up with 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 recognizes 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.

At our nursery, market garden, and teaching garden, we have started Dragon Tongue Beans and Pigeon Peas, cucumbers, 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 40 pounds so far. If you started tomatoes in the fall, you are likely also enjoying abundant harvests now.

Readers can acquire our tomatoes thorough our CSA or at Wright's Natural Market in New Port Richey.

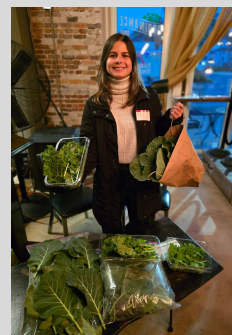
Plants and Pints

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

5:30 - 7:30 pm



**5738 Main Street
New Port Richey, Florida**



5-3-1 Share & Support Event

Hosted by New Port Richey FarmNet

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

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.

Loquat Update

Loquats are slowly ripening. This year will be a very light harvest due to erratic weather conditions

- 80-degree temperatures followed by freezing and near-freezing temperatures, then back to 80s again. The trees were fooled by these fluctuations, and many have fruitlets that will not ripen. Some will, however, and some have ripe fruit now.

If you have loquats on your property, please let us know. We are preparing for the annual Loquat Festival, and welcome new growers, harvested, canners, and makers. If you would like to participate, let know. Contact us through our website and Facebook page

<https://farmnetnpr.com/contact-us>
Plant of the Week: Loquats

Market News

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

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).

CSA & Fresh Harvest Feature: Tomatoes. This week's CSA fresh harvest feature is tomatoes. If you'd like a market basket (about 1/2 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, 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. 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 Farmers Market. Ask for Steve at the Market

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.

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/>

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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 now or very soon.

Broccoli: Broccoli should be producing heads and bolting.

Loquats: Look for loquats ripening. We've harvested 20 lbs so far. This will be a light season.

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

Mangos: Look for the first buds on mango trees.

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

Lettuces: Look for bolting. Harvest now. Season ending.



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