Greetings from Caitlyn Glatting, Central District Food Systems Coordinator

The UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition Program Farm to School, Farm to Community team would like to welcome all of our food system advocates across the state to enjoy the third edition of our newsletter. Our team has also been growing and has welcomed four new Food System District Coordinators (DCs): Tiffany Torres (NW), Judy Dampier (Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy), Malory Foster (South-Central) and Heather Henderson (South).

This edition of the newsletter highlights the variety of benefits available to SNAP-eligible residents when shopping at their local farmers market, such as the Fresh Access Bucks Program. We also highlight two successful gardens in the Northeast District, one focusing on hydroponics and the other traditional raised beds. As a reminder to all, now is the time to create a plan for your gardens during the Summer months. We provide various options for “Putting Your Garden to Bed,” including cover crops and solarization. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your Food Systems Coordinator to get a plan in place. See our Directory on Page 3.

Lastly, remember to mark your calendars for the Summer School Garden Workshop at Bok Tower Gardens, June 14-15. We hope you enjoy this newsletter as you sit back and relax with a refreshing salsa recipe from Chef Bearl.

If you have any ideas for future newsletters please email David Campbell, Statewide F2SC Coordinator at campbell@ufl.edu. In addition, if you know of any other farmers, teachers, or community members who would appreciate receiving this newsletter, encourage them to send an email as well.

Happy reading!

Caitlyn Glatting
Family Nutrition Program
UF/IFAS Extension
cglatting@ufl.edu
Farmers Market Shopping

Warmer weather means Florida farmers markets are in full swing. You may already be aware that many of these markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars, providing better access to fresh fruits and vegetables for Florida’s citizens. Here are a few other programs that benefit Florida farmers and our citizens:

Fresh Access Bucks Program:

SNAP participants can double their SNAP dollars at participating markets. Bring your SNAP benefits card to the EBT booth at your local market, swipe your card to receive double the amount of tokens (up to $20 per market day), and exchange these tokens for fresh Florida grown produce. There are currently 29 farmers markets in the state participating in this program. For a complete list of these markets and for more information about the program, please visit the Florida Organic Growers website.

WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP):

Pregnant and postpartum women and children up to the age of 5 enrolled in the WIC program can receive FMNP coupons to purchase approved locally grown produce at participating markets. Produce can be purchased using these coupons from April 1 to October 8. For a list of participating counties and for more information about the program, please see the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences website.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP):

Low-income elders living in certain Florida counties are eligible to receive coupons that can be exchanged for fresh local produce and honey at participating markets. Qualifying elders receive $40 worth of coupons (10 coupons in $4 increments). These coupons are provided on a first-come, first-served basis beginning in April. For more information about this program and a list of participating counties, please visit Florida’s Department of Elder Affairs website.

Hydroponics Bounty in Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy

Big success for the Dixie/Gilchrist/Levy (DGL) county FNP team! The DGL Program Assistants have been successfully delivering the YUM curriculum at Bell Elementary School in Gilchrist County where a 14-tower Verti-gro hydroponic garden system is installed. In January, the third grade classes planted strawberries, turnips, mustard greens, and other delicious veggies including three types of lettuce: looseleaf, butterhead, and romaine.

On Friday, March 18th the third grade along with DGL staff and members of the Gilchrist County Extension Office harvested the bounty. The lettuce yield surpassed expectations by leaps and bounds! This harvest was a “one and done” with a 60-day harvest interval. Thirty 1-gallon pots yielded over 80 pounds of a beautiful variety of lettuces. While washing the harvest in the school cafeteria, FNP caught the attention of the school food service manager. Amazed by the harvest, she said it was enough lettuce to feed her school (600 students) a salad a day from 2 days to one week, depending on the type of salad. Bell Elementary is on board from the principal to the food service staff to incorporate harvests into their lunch program. With staggered planting, it will be possible to provide the school salads 3 to 5 times from November - March using a fraction of their hydroponic garden.

The positive impact of this garden system is seen not only in the bountiful harvest and the contribution it can make to the school lunch program, but in the pride and beaming smiles of the Bell Elementary third grade classes. For more information about hydroponics in the DGL area, please contact Judy Dampier, DGL District Coordinator, at mullanju@ufl.edu

School Garden Spotlight in Madison County

Rural Madison County now boasts a school garden at each of its public elementary schools: Lee Elementary, Central School, Greenville Elementary and Pinetta Elementary. Each school now has at least one raised bed and floating hydroponic garden, with the teachers and grades adjusting their school culture to promote gardening as part of the daily activities.

At Lee Elementary, each teacher met with DC Kelly Korman to review the UF Grow to Learn guide and plan a small garden for their classroom that met their individual needs. Some classes received a grow light system, while others received hydroponic or raised bed gardens.

Thanks to a successful partnership with Dan Fenneman, Madison County Agriculture Agent, Studstill’s Lumber and Siembra Farms for discounted pricing, and FNP Coordinator and FCS Agent Diann Douglass, each site received a garden with hands-on training, local resources, and a network of relationships to continue their growth.
Putting the Garden to Bed for Summer

The onset of the rainy season, combined with Summer break from school and our absence from the gardens, can bring with it an increase of weeds and pests in raised beds. Per the UF/IFAS Grow to Learn guide, one method of putting the garden to bed for the Summer is to solarize:

Solarizing occurs when we cover the soil with clear plastic “that allows sunlight to pass through and heat up the soil to a temperature lethal to many weeds, nematodes, diseases and insects. When you return in the Fall, you can roll up the plastic, add mulch, and plant.”

Other options for Summer prep include cover crops and heavy mulching. Cover crops such as cowpea or sun hemp prevent weed growth and improve soil. Covering beds with cardboard and mulching on top with woodchips or leaves about 6” deep also prevents weeds from growing over the summer. These methods also add organic matter to the soil.

Sites receiving a series of direct nutrition education from our program are eligible to receive material support for gardening from our F2SC team. To request plastic, cover crop seed, mulch, and other materials for putting your gardens to bed for the Summer, please contact your regional District Coordinator.

Seasonal Recipe from Chef David Bearl

Cool off with some fresh salsa:

**Orange Salsa (6 servings)**
- fresh oranges (6, sectioned)
- green bell pepper (1, diced)
- red bell pepper (1, diced)
- green onions (2, minced)
- cilantro (1/4 cup, minced)
- lime juice (1 oz)

Combine all of the ingredients.
Refrigerate for at least an hour prior to serving.

School Garden Workshop at Bok Tower Gardens

UF/IFAS Extension Family Nutrition program has partnered with Florida Ag in the Classroom and the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS) to provide Florida Pre-K to 8th grade teachers with a two-day school garden workshop.

The event will be held at Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales on **June 14-15, 2016**. Attendees can expect to gain hands-on experience with lessons on seed starting, composting, soil health, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), irrigation, and hydroponics.

For more information and registration please view: [http://faitc.org/summerschoolgardenworkshop/](http://faitc.org/summerschoolgardenworkshop/)

Farm to School, Farm to Community Team Directory:

- David Campbell, Statewide F2SC Coordinator: campbell@ufl.edu
- Dr. Danielle Treadwell, Faculty Advisor: ddtreadw@ufl.edu
- David Bearl, Chef: david.bearl@ufl.edu
- NW DC: Christina Walmer cbwalmer@ufl.edu
- NW DC: Tiffany Torres tiffany.torres@ufl.edu
- NE DC: Kelly Korman korman33@ufl.edu
- Dixie/Gilchrist/Levy DC: Judy Dampier mullanju@ufl.edu
- Central DC: Caitlyn Glatting cglatting@ufl.edu
- South-Central DC: Zachary Gloriozo ziglorioso@ufl.edu
- South-Central DC: Malory Foster maloryrfoster@ufl.edu
- South DC: Beth Owens balexis@ufl.edu
Congressman Yoho Visits Alachua County’s Farm to School to Work Hub

The Farm to School, Farm to Community team was proud to host Congressman Ted Yoho (FL-3) at the Alachua County Food Hub on Monday, April 4th. Stakeholders including Statewide F2SC Coordinator David Campbell, Alachua County Farm to School Coordinator Kelli Brew, Superintendent Dr. Owen Roberts, and others provided a tour of the school garden facilities at Horizon Center and Loften High School.

During the tour, we had the opportunity to share about the incredible growth and return on investment that the Alachua Food Hub has demonstrated over the last two years, including job training for students graduating from the program who are finding jobs in local plant nurseries and in food prep. Congressman Yoho was introduced to some of the wonderful Growing Education Training (GET) students participating in the garden and to representatives from 10-Can Farm, a partner in establishing a mushroom production space at the Hub.

For more information about the Alachua County Farm to School to Work Hub, please visit their website.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

See below for descriptions and links to other grants available to assist producers and schools with their farms and gardens:

**USDA Value-Added Producer Grants**
The USDA has $44 million reserved for agricultural producers that are entering into "value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products". Planning grants award up to $75,000 and working capital grants award up to $250,000, requiring 50 percent matching funds. Paper applications are due by July 1 and electronic submissions are due by June 24. For more information, please click here.

**USDA Farm to School Grants**
The USDA awards up to $5 million dollars nationwide each year for the creation and implementation of Farm to School programming designed to increase access to local foods in schools. There are 4 types of grants available- Support Services Grants; Planning Grants; Implementation Grants; and Training Grants. Each grant has different eligibility requirements and award amounts ranging from $15,000-$100,000. Requests for proposals will be released in September and will be due in November. For more information, please click here.

**Captain Planet Foundation Garden Grants**
Schools and non-profit, tax-exempt entities are welcome to apply for this grant that awards $500-$2,500 for project-based, agricultural projects that are performed by youth. These grant applications are due by September 30, 2016. For more information, please click here.

**Fruit Tree Planting Foundation Grants**
The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation's (FFTP) “Fruit Tree 101” provides all of the tools and trees necessary for sites to grow vibrant fruit trees for the purposes of environmental and nutritional enhancement. The applications are currently accepted on a rolling basis, though it is encouraged to apply as early as possible. For more information, please click here.