

UPCOMING DATES

Small farmers in Southwest Florida can network about diversified and sustainable farming systems through the UF/IFAS Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Program regional network meetings. Established in 2007, the Southwest Florida Small Farmers Network (SWFSFN) is facilitated by UF/IFAS Extension Agents in Polk, Hardee, Hillsborough, Sarasota, Lee and Collier Counties.



Register through the calendar page of the UF/IFAS Extension Small Farms Website

smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu

For questions, contact
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Southwest Florida Small Farmers Network

Connect with fellow farmers through the Southwest Florida Small Farmers Network!

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WHY JOIN?

The Southwest Florida Small Farm Network is celebrating over ten years of grassroots networking, mentoring and practical education among small and beginning farmers and the broader local foods community.

Network meetings offer opportunity to:

- Visit regional small farms in an informal setting.
- Learn from presentations and hands-on demonstrations on practical topics.
- Meet regional small farmers, exchange new ideas, and learn farmer-to-farmer.
- Share challenges in production, marketing and regulations, and explore solutions together.
- Receive updates of the UF/IFAS-FAMU Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Program.
- Learn about regional collaborative projects and opportunities to enhance your farming profitability.
- Celebrate success and encourage others to become local small farmers.

Farmer-to-farmer community initiatives include:

- Cooperative purchasing of supplies and seed
- Group studies in coordination with UF/IFAS Extension agents and researchers
- Cooperative applications for grants or other opportunities



TYPICAL MEETING AGENDA

Meetings typically run 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. quarterly

- Meet and greet
- Farm tour
- Educational presentations
- Potluck lunch
- Seed swap
- Farmer-led discussion
- Extension training announcements

Meetings are held throughout Southwest Florida, from Collier County to as far north as Pasco County. Previous locations have included:

- Mothers Organics, Seffner
- Shady Oaks Farm, Blueberry U-Pick, Lakeland
- H.E.A.R.T. (Hunger Education and Resource Training), Lake Wales
- Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Wimauma

ACCOMMODATIONS

Network meetings are usually held on farms or at other locations not primarily designed to host large groups. Cooperating Extension Agents will make arrangements for rest rooms and a shady spot for the educational exchange, but we are usually unable to provide enough folding chairs for the entire group. With this in mind participants are asked to:

- Bring your folding chair and one for a friend if possible
- Wear shoes suited to a farm tour
- Bring your water, sunscreen and possibly insect repellent
- Bring seeds for the seed swap
- For the pot luck lunch, bring eating/serving utensils and a potluck dish. Refrigeration and stoves are usually not available. Think picnic items and share what you've grown if possible! Attendance is usually about 30 people.

Cooperating UF/IFAS Extension Agents

- Mary Beth Henry, Polk County, mbhenry@ufl.edu
- Jonael Bosques, Hardee County, jonael@ufl.edu
- Francisco Rivera, Hillsborough County, friveramelendez@ufl.edu
- Dr. Robert Kluson, Sarasota County, rkluson@scgov.net
- Dr. Roy Beckford, Lee County, fbeck@ufl.edu
- Jessica Mendes Ryals, Collier County, jessicaryals@ufl.edu

