URBAN FARMING
– From Seed To Market

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DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR FOOD COMES FROM?
LOCAL FOODS

- Food security
- Economic security
- Food safety
- Socially responsible
- Environmentally responsible

“That’s strange. The grass looks greener on our side of the fence.”
The local foods movement - Locavores

- Sourcing locally grown food is now just as important as sourcing organically grown foods – FreshPointe Regional Sales Manager, Orlando

- Popularized in central Florida
  http://www.slowfoodorlando.org/
  http://www.simplelivinginstitute.org/index.html

- Local Food Cooperative
  http://www.homegrowncoop.org/

- Local Harvest website
  http://www.localharvest.org/
MARKETING

- You should not plant what you can’t sell
- Have multiple options for selling your product
- Be conservative in your estimates of cost and returns
- Be prepared to be flexible – every growing season is seldom what you expect
SEEDS

- Germination date and percent germ test
- Direct seed or grow from transplants
- Overseed & thin back

Seed Storage = % HUMIDITY + TEMP = 100
Growing The Transplant

- Keep moist but not wet – covers can be beneficial

- Sunlight usually not important until after germination

- Once germination occurs get the plant into some light

- Grow for 2 to 5 weeks before transplanting, shorter time for hydroponics
Growing The Transplant

- Optimum temperatures for seed germination - lettuce, spinach, onion, parsley – 70-75 F
  tomato, pepper – 85 F, cucumber, corn – 95 F

- Pathogen, pest and weed free – sheltered conditions

- Fertilize well with a broad spectrum water soluble fertilizer - may use hand held misters with nutrients
TRANSPLANTS
Growing Your Own Transplants
Transplant Media

- Rockwool – various sizes
- Oasis cubes – various shapes
- Peat pellets
- Pre – mix potting mixes for transplants
- Speedling trays for floating raft systems
  – Sun City [http://www.speedling.com](http://www.speedling.com)
Micro Greens
Producing your own food – market gardens

- Follow planting date guidelines for outdoor conditions – fall / winter / spring

- Climate failures due to cold, heat, rain, pests – tomatoes won’t set fruit when night temps above 74 F & most plants won’t grow if temps below 60 F

- Extend season with protective structures / shade
Producing your own food – market gardens

- Average monthly air temperatures for best growth:

  cabbage, collards, spinach, lettuce, potato – 60-65 F
  cucumber, sweet pepper, tomato – 65-75 F
  watermelon, hot pepper, okra, sweet potato – 70-85 F
Growing Systems

- On the flat stale seed bed
- Raised beds with and without additional compost or manures added
- Nursery pots with potting mixes, worm castings, compost or manures added
- Grow boxes and patio gardens
- Hydroponic growing
- Vertical systems
Raised Bed Gardening
Drip irrigation – reducing inputs

- Water conservation by reducing evaporation, runoff, deep drainage – high water application efficiency

- Fertilizer conservation by applying nutrients when needed at the root zone, not pre-plant granular, which may be leached with other irrigation systems

- Reduction in diseases as leaves are kept dry during irrigation - splashing irrigation and rainfall the most common means of spreading disease spores
Drip (trickle) irrigation waters crops efficiently.
Credit: Nova Scotia Agriculture and Fisheries
Venturi Injectors
16:1
Nursery Pots, Grow Boxes, Patio Gardens
Swim Pool or Vegetable Farm?
Low Tech Build Your Own
Alternative Floating Garden Containers
Serious Floating Lettuce Production
Vertical Production

http://vertigro.com/
Greenhouse Production
Postharvest Handling

- Tender leafy vegetables must be used immediately or refrigerated – herbs, lettuce, spinach, etc.

- Other must be used soon or refrigerated – cucumber, pepper, squash, broccoli, etc.

- Watermelons, butternut or acorn squash, pumpkins, and tomatoes, can be stored at room temperature but will last longer when cool...slows ripening
Selling what you grow – farmer’s markets

- Usually limit vendors by category - waiting list at the best markets like Winter Park and Lake Mary

- Once in, the best spots go to long term vendors

- Miss a week and you may go to the back of the line

- Pricing varies $15 to $25, or more, for a 10x12 with or without tables / tents