



Hello friends and neighbors,

We're getting ready for a Florida summer of intense challenges: scorching heat, raucous thunderstorms, and destructive pests.

We prepare for challenges of the growing season in the midst of heightened challenges to our community's well-being. We strengthen our resolve to offer safety, respect, trust, compassion, and love to all, but especially to women; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people; and our natural environment, as we face our collective challenges together.

We're getting ready for a Florida summer of intense rewards: brilliant sunshine, thirst-quenching rain, and collaboration with partners to nurture growth, learning, and wellness.

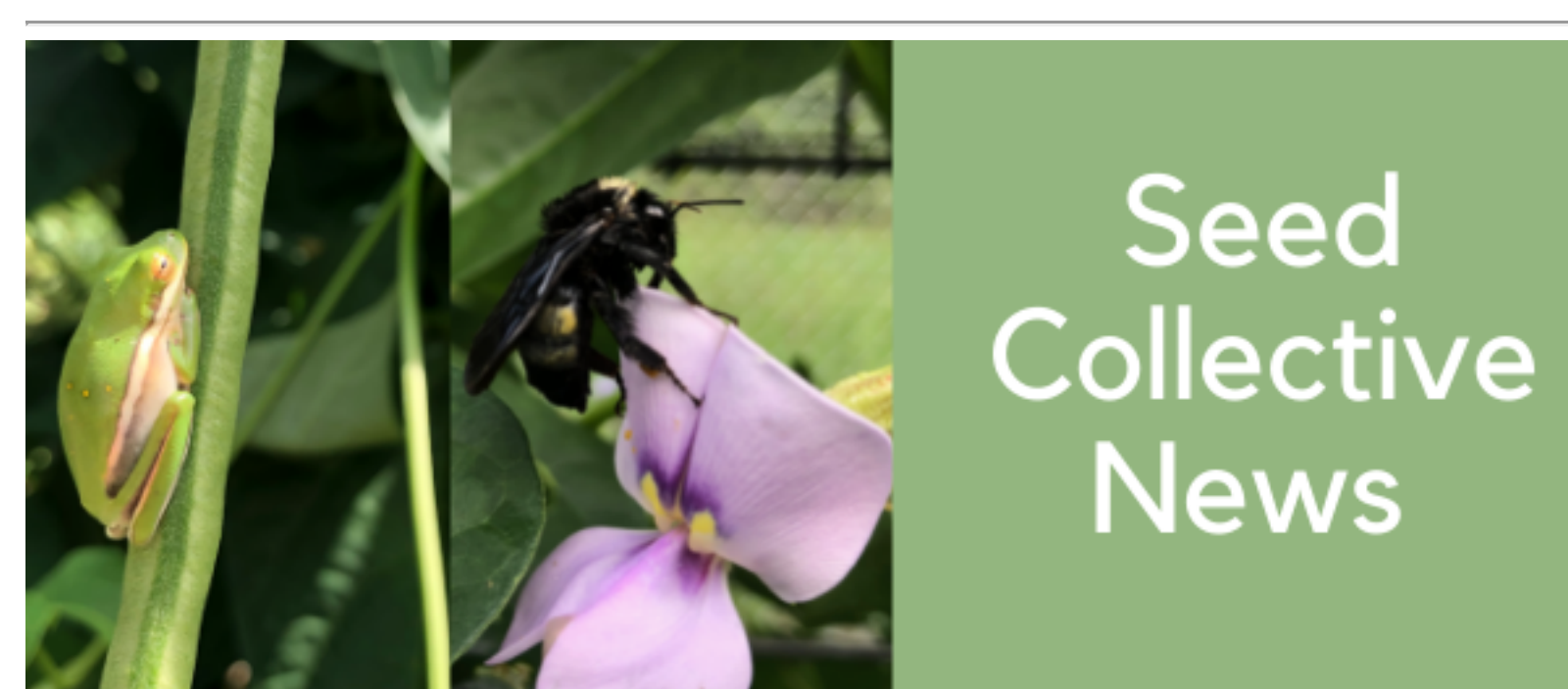
We look forward to working together in the gardens, kitchen, and community, sharing harvests and meals. Your support energizes our responses to challenges and our celebration of collective rewards: thank you!

Our gratitude for your generosity during the Amazing Give fundraising campaign is boundless! Hear how your investment sustains our local food community by listening to this ["Tell Me About It" podcast](#). Many thanks to Sue Wagner and WUFT for the opportunity to share our story.

Here's to a summer of overcoming challenges and celebrating rewards, together!

In community,

The Working Food Family



This month's seed spotlight is on [Cowpeas!](#)

We love cowpeas, also known as field peas, southern peas, black-eyed peas, and crowder peas. They're one of the many crops we're thankful for that originated in West Africa. So many cowpea varieties to choose from, and they all offer a wealth of rewards! Cowpeas are:

- A wonderful cover crop or "green manure", improving soil health during the hottest months. Plants who grow where cowpeas have lived and decomposed thrive in the nitrogen and biomass that cowpeas create in the soil. You can plant cowpeas when it's warm, from May through September.
- Weed controllers. Planted densely, cowpeas can smother aggressive summer weeds and may suppress dreaded soil nematodes. Not all cowpeas have this superpower of nematode resistance; [learn more here](#).
- Delicious - seeds, pods, and leaves are all edible! It's fun to grow different kinds and find your favorites.
- Loved by frogs who spend lots of time on bean hammocks, in the shade of the leafy canopy. Although cowpeas are self-pollinating, we see lots of large, fuzzy bees prying open and enjoying sips from the gorgeous flowers. Frogs and bees on cowpeas featured in the photos above!
- Easy to save seeds for - a handful of pods from one planting is enough for most backyard gardeners' next season of growing.

[Check out our collection of cowpeas and other legumes](#), including the rare Florida Conch Pea [featured on the Slow Food Ark of Taste!](#)

More news about seed-saving and growing: we're thrilled to share [NPR's coverage of The Heirloom Collard Project](#). It's an honor for Working Food to be included in this important work of preserving cultural heritage and crop diversity.

A big shout out to Seed and Soil School collaborators and students! We hosted this hands-on learning event at Grow Hub, with local experts teaching how save seeds, reduce waste, and turn food scraps into soil, and leading tours of the gardens and compost operation. Everyone who joined us said they were inspired to save seeds and make compost: hooray for expanding our resilient local food community! [Here are some Seed and Soil highlights](#).

You can find our seeds at Ward's Supermarket and Auk Market in Gainesville, Mosswood Farm Store in Micanopy, and our [online store](#) where you can order seeds for local pickup and USPS delivery.

If you'd like to help support our seed collective, email [melissa@workingfood.org](mailto:melissa@workingfood.org) for options and details.



[UF/IFAS May Plant of the Month](#) is watermelon!

Florida is tops for watermelons! We're offering a very special Turkish heirloom variety, Cekirdeji Oyali (shown above), in our seed shop: [learn more here!](#)



Winding down our after-school garden programs, we're reflecting on a year of abundance. The Duval Community Youth Garden has continued to provide us with endless collard greens, sweet tomatoes, crisp cucumbers, and nutritious green beans, as well as handful after handful of the best strawberries you've ever tasted. While eating heaping servings of fresh tomato salsa made from their garden of goodies, one of our students said, "[and I don't even like tomatoes!](#)" She sure does, now! Having grown more than their families can eat, kids are decorating a cooler to share free fresh veggies with neighbors next week. Many thanks to Greater Duval Neighborhood Association for making this all possible!



At the CHLD Center garden, we celebrated graduating Pre-K students who've been gardening with us for two years (half their lives!). As we ate our "whole plant" feast - from roots (carrots), leaves (sorrel), and flowers (squash), to fruit (tomatoes) and seeds (sunflower) - it was amazing to see how kids' palates have developed: "I love eating flowers!"

With the Cultural Arts Coalition's George Washington Carver Science Club, these last couple weeks have been all about soil and nutrient cycling. Students tested their soil and designed plans to build soil over the summer with cover crops and compost, so they can look forward to another year of abundance. After six years growing at this site, the soil is still going strong thanks to attention and care from these students, year after year.

We're looking forward to our final Young Chefs Class of the school year, that will be held in [Chef Carl Watts' new Food Science Lab!](#) We'll then lead in-person classes through the summer, using produce from the Duval Community Garden and collaborating with Chef Carl, the Food Science Lab, and the Summer Sling program. Happy feasting!

Learn more about the new Food Science Lab and the Summer Sling program in [this Gainesville Sun feature!](#)

If you'd like to help support our youth garden and culinary learning programs, email [jesse@workingfood.org](mailto:jesse@workingfood.org) for options and details.



Mega-congratulations to the [first graduating class of UF Culinary Certification students!](#) Thanks to Cat Deesse whose bourbon caramel apple tarts are featured above, and hats off to [Chef Amadeus](#) for leading the premiere session of this innovative program.



We're delighted to be hosting a second course this summer in the Working Food kitchen and look forward to sharing more success stories from these accomplished students.

The next session of the Culinary Arts Certification course begins July 12th and is [open for registration](#). This is a 16-week course; students learn through intensive professional and practical experiences with culinary preparations and operation of a professional kitchen. Classes covers a full professional cooking school curriculum including kitchen and food safety, knife skills, moist- and dry-heat cooking methods, seasoning, culinary nutrition, basic breads and baking, salads and dressings, and pastry basics. **Scholarships are available; please help spread the word!**

To learn more about our community kitchen facilities and opportunities, email [robert@workingfood.org](mailto:robert@workingfood.org)



Interested in an easy and fun way to support our local food community? Become a [Working Food locavore!](#) As a [#wflcavore](#), you pledge to eat and drink what's grown and produced here in North Central Florida, and to show your support of local food providers. [Learn more here!](#)

Our inaugural #wflcavore event last month featured an abundance of locally produced goodness: veggies and herbs from [Nicoya](#) and [Siembra](#) farms and [Grow Hub](#); cheeses, crisps, and dip from [Salty Cow Cheesemongers](#); sourdough bread from [Vine Bakery](#); Land of Flowers honey; [Green Gate Olive Oil](#); [Berryland](#) kombucha; and [Cypress and Grove beer](#). Thank you to all growers, producers, and #wflcavores who made the celebration possible!

Robert Colon who leads our kitchen programs created scrumptious carrot top pesto with Nicoya carrots. Here's how you can make your own using Robert's recipe and fresh, local ingredients.

#### Carrot Top Pesto Recipe

##### Ingredients

- 2 cups carrot tops
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 bunch parsley
- 1/3 cup pine nuts (or nuts of your choice)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp salt ([local salt!](#))
- 1 tsp lemon juice

##### Directions

- Wash and dry the carrot tops, cilantro, and parsley.
- Peel garlic.
- Pulse together carrot tops, cilantro, parsley, nuts, garlic, and cheese in a food processor until mixture is crumbly.
- Add olive oil, black pepper, salt, and lemon juice. Pulse together until blended but still chunky.
- Serve! Garnish with more olive oil if desired. Adjust flavors as desired.

Working Food is a [501 \(c\)\(3\) non-profit organization](#) (registered as Forage) that works to cultivate and sustain a resilient local food community in North Central Florida through collaboration, economic opportunity, education, and seed stewardship. To support our work, please click the button below. Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you!

