



# HILLSBOROUGH 100 CONSERVATION CHALLENGE



Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District

*In proud partnership with* **Tampa Bay Times**



# Lipman Family Farms

## Sponsors Garden Challenge for 2nd Consecutive Year

Lipman Family Farms, America's largest open-field round tomato producer, has once again stepped up to sponsor the Hillsborough 100 Lipman Garden Challenge. This year's Challenge pits sixteen area schools in a competition to grow the best garden using the same plant materials.

According to Kevin Yue, environmental engineer for the four-generation Lipman Family Farms, "Our goal is to support student efforts to learn what it takes to be successful in production agriculture. That includes the challenges that come at every stage of production." Yue further noted, "Last year's students did an excellent job with their gardens, even though several were confronted with the problem of blossom-end rot, a physiological disorder caused by a calcium imbalance in the plants. They had to research the problem and determine the best methodology to resolve it."

Last year, first place honors in the high school division went to the Tampa

Residential Facility, with Armwood High School taking second place and Newsome High third. In the middle school division Greco placed first, followed by Rodgers and Randall Middle Schools. All six winners received cash awards and plaques, with parties for the top student gardeners in each division. Steve Harlow, Tampa Residential Facility Garden Project Coordinator notes, "This project was a really good opportunity for my students to participate in the type of program they weren't especially familiar with. Students got involved and learned a lot at the same time."

According to Keri Ladd, teacher and garden coordinator at Greco Middle School, winner in their division, "Our students had a great time doing the Garden Challenge and certainly appreciated the sponsorship and support from Lipman Family Farms. They provided the plant beds, financial support and transplants of tomatoes,

LIPMAN, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



# GASPOUR BEADS OF TAMPA BAY

## Survey & Clean-Up Event

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as part of the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge

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(Subject: GaspOur Beads!)

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## LIPMAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

peppers, cantaloupes and watermelons we used for the garden. The pizza and cupcake party was a great reward."

Returning for the second year of competition in the high school division is the Tampa Residential Facility, along with Armwood High School, Newsome and Riverview. New high schools in the Challenge are Middleton, Plant City, Sickles and Spoto. Middle schools in their second year include Ben Hill Middle, Buchanan FFA, Greco, Marshall, Randall and Turkey Creek. New middle school participants are Dowdell and Horace Mann.

To make the competition more challenging, Lipman Farms has added a new twist. This year's gardens will include four types of tomatoes: round, plum, grape and cherry, as well as cantaloupes and watermelons. "We at Lipman are aware of the different techniques involved in growing each species of tomato," offers Yue. "It's

going to be interesting to see how students determine the best methods to use. Also, each garden has to be grown in the two 48 x 84 inch boxes provided, so everyone's on an equal footing. The only difference will be the soil and nutrients the classes decide to use for their gardens."

The Lipman Challenge is a STEM initiative, focusing on science, technology, engineering and math. It helps reinforce the fact that today's agriculture is indeed science based, and factors such as temperature, water, nutrients and soil play a major part in achieving the desired outcome.

Judging for the Hillsborough 100 Lipman Garden Challenge, with representatives of Lipman Farms and Supervisors of the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District participating, will take place the first week of May. Winners will again be honored with checks, plaques and parties.



## About Lipman

Based in Immokalee, Florida, Lipman is the largest open-field tomato grower in North America, providing dependable year-round fresh produce through an integrated network of research and development, farming, processing and repacking. Farms in Florida, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, California and Mexico – totaling tens of thousands of acres – allow Lipman to grow and ship fresh produce 365 days a year. For more information, visit [www.LipmanFamilyFarms.com](http://www.LipmanFamilyFarms.com).

"... soil conservation is not just an incidental bit of the mechanics of farming; it becomes part and parcel of the whole business of making a living from the land, and is the only way by which we may have permanently productive land for a permanent agriculture to support a permanent nation."

— Hugh Hammond Bennett, father of soil conservation

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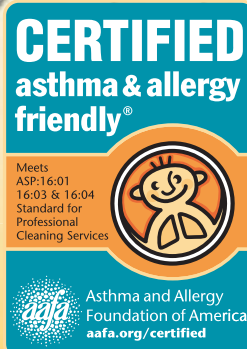
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# Paper or Plastic? *Paper!*

Look all around you. Virtually everywhere we turn we see vast quantities of disposable paper, plastic, foam, aluminum cans and other debris. Americans are literally drowning themselves in garbage! We might think that this is "just the way it is" around the world. According to the Earth Policy Institute, nearly one trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. The simple problem is that since most are made of polyethylene, they're simply not biodegradable. In fact, it's estimated that the average plastic bag takes more than 500 years to break down – into microplastics that leach toxicants.

The problem starts right at your local grocery store. Walk back to the produce aisle and you'll see clear plastic bags to put your fruits and vegetables in. Don't be tempted! Remember, that bunch of bananas you hold comes with its own wrapper, compliments of Mother Nature. You might busily add items to your cart as you go up and down the aisles and pretty soon there'll be a dozen or more of those



bags piled high in your cart.

You move to the front of the store and check out. The clerk usually asks, "Is plastic all right?" NO! NO! NO! Without thinking, individuals often take home 20 or more plastic bags in a single shopping trip. Many stores offer the option of paper sacks, which used to be the norm in grocery stores throughout the country.

When shopping, why not practice the four Bs: Produce bag? Bad. Grocery bag? Bad. Paper Sack? Better. Reusable cloth bag? Best! Choosing wisely becomes a simple habit and a great way to teach children to be good stewards of the earth.

But plastic bags don't just harm our environment. They're a danger to fish and

wildlife, who get tangled up in them and suffer a painful death. Because of their long life, plastic bags and other debris can be found in lakes, rivers and streams, on mountaintops and buried in the earth virtually everywhere. In addition, plastic bags clog up recycling equipment, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in repairs.

And what's the rest of the world doing about it? Well, actually a lot more than we do in the United States. In Africa alone, more than 15 countries have taken action to tax or ban plastic bags outright, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. In fact, in Kenya the use of plastic bags can result in up to four years in prison, plus a civil fine.

In Europe, multiple countries have taken a stand against plastic bags, including England, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Scotland and Wales. In Ireland, since the inception of taxes for plastic bags in 2002, bag use has declined 90 percent. The European Union has set a goal of an 80 percent drop in plastic bag use by 2019.

South American countries have begun to take action against plastic bag usage, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia. Likewise, Asian countries banning or taxing plastic bags include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Within the United States a national ban on plastic bag usage has yet to be enacted. While some states and municipalities have taken action, they are

few and far between.

It's up to each and every one of us to be the change we want to see. When you go to the store next time, grab a recyclable bag. You'll not only practice good conservation, you'll be doing your part to make the world a better place.

## Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District

201 South Collins Street, Suite 202,  
Plant City, 33563

(813) 752-1474 Extension 3  
or Betty Jo Tompkins,  
(813) 477-8332 | Fax: (855) 464-1961

[www.hillssoilandwater.org](http://www.hillssoilandwater.org)

### ELECTED SUPERVISORS:

**Chairman** – Mark Proctor

**Vice-Chairman** – Kim O'Connor

**Treasurer** – Mike Hepburn

David Maynard

Susan Dumke

**STAFF:** Betty Jo Tompkins,  
Executive Director

Jennifer Gray, Administrative  
Services Coordinator

Kaila Kelly, Conservation Outreach  
Technician

Erik Moretuzzo, Conservation  
Ag Technician

# ELECT

# MICHAEL ISAIAK

## for COUNTY JUDGE



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# For Farmers Conservation is a 24/7 Priority



Just ask any farmer.... today's agricultural operators are faced with more challenges than ever before. Everything from labor to markets to weather can mean the difference between a successful season and a disastrous one. Equally important is the responsibility to integrate conservation practices into every facet of the growing operation.

HSWCD Supervisor Susan Dumke, owner of Blues Berry Farms, practices conservation on a daily basis at their Plant City Farm on Holloway Road. The Dumke's, like many farmers, use drip irrigation on timer systems in lockstep with a tensiometer to determine the moisture level in their growing medium. Additionally, they use a variable frequency driver on their well system to provide energy savings. The VFD is a power conversion device that converts fixed voltage to a variable frequency., lowering power usage.

A wind machine serves to

bring warm air down from above into the field during frost/freeze events. Other in the field monitoring devices determine dew points, as well as temperature and rain levels, making forecasting more accurate. One other issue that faces the Dumke's is the constant stream of birds that enter the field to "snack" on the luscious blueberries. To combat this, Blues Berry Farms use bird kites, a sound system and even a "mirror ball" in the fields.

But their conservation efforts don't stop there. They drive a Chevy Volt that averages over 100 miles a gallon of gas and practice recycling of all paper, plastic and cardboard. Finally, Susan has one more conservation secret.... she frequently wears recycled gingham shirts that are now her trademark. "Wearing these shirts reminds me of how we should all practice conservation and sustainability on a 24/7 basis. It's not only fun, but it's just the right thing to do."

**"Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we will say our work is finished."**

— Rachel Carson, marine biologist and nature writer

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**Department of Solid Waste and Environmental Program Management**



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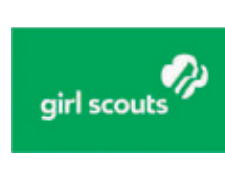
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- Greater Riverview Chamber of Commerce
- Coalition of Community Gardens
- Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association
- Florida State Beekeepers Association

Articles for this publication produced by Betty Jo Tompkins



# Bee a Honey, Buy A Hive Keeps Buzzing Along



The "Bee a Honey, Buy a Hive" project of the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District continues to gain momentum throughout Tampa Bay. Seeking support of residents, businesses, clubs and organizations, the project's two-fold purpose is to increase pollination for the myriad of food crops in the area, as well as to strengthen the bee population in general. Pollination, critical to many crops, is done through bats, bees, birds and butterflies; the most significant being bees. Without bee pollination, crops such as almonds, apples, apricots, avocados, blueberries, cantaloupes, cherries, cranberries, cucumbers, kiwis, plums, and peaches would cease to exist. Other crops, like strawberries, would be greatly diminished.

While over 2,000 species of bees exist, only 7 actually are honey producers.

Bee colonies consist of a queen, drones and worker bees. In the past decade a phenomenon known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has occurred. This phenomenon actually happens when the majority of worker bees in a colony disappear, leaving behind the queen, a few nurse bees to care for immature bees, and plenty of food. Bee hives cannot sustain themselves for long without worker bees and eventually die. The issue of CCD is currently being researched by USDA, EPA and land grant universities throughout the country.

Bee colonies also suffer losses in the winter due to weather and other factors. These losses sometimes represent over 20 percent of the hives in a given year. Research into this has focused on new and emerging pathogens, bee pests (such as mites), environmental and nutritional stresses and pesticides.

For these reasons, the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to working toward the production and growth of bee colonies in the area. Any individual, business or group may sponsor a hive and they'll be placed at multiple locations, including community gardens, private residences and other county sites. Sponsors will receive honey from their hive, as well as the satisfaction of knowing they're helping the environment. Hives make a perfect Mother's Day or birthday gift and can be sponsored by contacting the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District, (813) 752.1474, Extension 3.

Further information about melittology (the study of bees) can be found through the Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association, as well as the Florida State Beekeepers Association.

## Did You Know?



The Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association Hillsborough 100 project will be to build and place "swarm" boxes to assist residents in removing unwanted bees for relocation. Contact Jan Allen, 863-662-5057. TBBA meets on the 2nd Thursday monthly at 6:00p.m., Hills. County Extension Service.



# Congratulations

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# Earth Day



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# Kids and Conservation the Perfect Combination

Walt Disney said it best when he stated, “Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.” With that in mind the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District conducts contests and activities throughout the year for youngsters in public, private, parochial, home and virtual schools.

## Poster and Speech Contests

The district’s poster contest, open to students in kindergarten through grade 12, asks youth to express their thoughts on natural resources and conservation through art. Each year the National Association of Conservation Districts selects a theme used for district, area (region), state and national competitions.

This year’s winning posters – reflecting the national theme, “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home” – will be judged and announced as part of the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. All posters will be on exhibit at the 2018 Hillsborough County Fair in October.

Also featuring the national theme, and in time for this year’s conservation challenge, is a speech contest for students in grades 6-9 and grades 10-12. Last year’s Hillsborough district winner, Roxanna Storms, placed first in both area and state competitions. Katya Pledger placed second and Deepak Duggal, third.

## Land Judging Contest

Then, in the fall, HSWCD holds a land judging contest for middle- and high-school students in 4-H clubs and FFA chapters. Teams travel to an undisclosed Hillsborough County location to ascertain elements of the soil without the use of electronic devices. Head-high rectangular pits dug in advance provide the cleanest delineation of soil striation. Students compete individually and as team members for cash prizes and the chance to advance to state competition.

## Envirothon Faceoff

Known as the “Environmental Olympics”, the Envirothon competition for students in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties tests student skills involving environmental issues and disciplines, including aquatics, forestry, soils and land use, as well as oral questions on a current issue. Winners advance to state competition. In this year’s Envirothon, at Upper Tampa Bay Park, Strawberry Crest High placed first; Canterbury School of Florida, in Pinellas, second; and Newsome High, third. At the 2017 Envirothon, held at the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds, King High School placed first; Plant City High, second; and Strawberry Crest, third.

District officials are excited for this year’s round of annual competitions. “We’re happy to give students opportunities to deepen their conservation knowledge and skills with fun and educational activities, working alone and in teams, and to



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highlight these efforts throughout the year and during our annual Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge," said Mark Proctor, chairman of the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District. "Moreover, since Pinellas County does not have a conservation district, we gladly allow their students to participate in our events."

### Long-Established 'AgVenture'

Conservation education doesn't stop with competitions. Twice annually, the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District participates in "AgVenture" at the Florida State Fairgrounds. Third-grade students get a first-hand learning experience about where their food comes from and how agriculture affects their everyday life. Students visit five stations representing different aspects of agriculture, and participate in a variety of hands-on activities representing a balance of plant and animal programs.

The HSWCD station operates the soil study for the event. Students create "soil babies" using nylon stockings, soil and seeds, with colorful decorations. Taken home and watered, the "babies" soon grow a grassy head of "hair," creating a fun activity for kids and parents alike. This Spring's AgVenture is set for April 24 through May 11, as part of the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.

### 2017 Contest Results

Last year's poster contest, featuring the theme, "Healthy Soils are Full of Life," brought outstanding poster entries in all age groups, including Aubrey Ellis Duncan, who placed first in state competition in the K-1 category. This marked the third consecutive year Hillsborough County took top state honors in the category, including a national winner two years ago. Audrey's twin sister, Kennedy Iris Duncan, placed second last year, while Bristol Hope Wooten placed third. For grades 2-3, Mia S. McLeod placed first; Claire Isabel, second; and Brady G.B. Fogarty, third. For grades 4-6, Caroline M. Shreve placed first; Emily Ann Powers, second; Nico Adrian Martinez, third. For grades 7-9, Olivia Jean Millburn placed first; Shannon Maya Adams, second; and Kayl Aisling Ward, third. And Stephanie Robinson placed first in the senior high school category, followed by second-place winner Noe Gomez Ramirez.

High-scoring individuals in last year's land judging competition were Durant High School students Emma Poole, first place; Adrianna Lane, second place; and Alysa Branch, third place. Poole



and Lane were on Durant's first-place team along with Danyelle Harris and Destiny Grant. In second place, on the Newsome A team were Jake Fitzpatrick, Chloe Murphy, Cade Fitzpatrick and Julie Rossborough. In third place, on

the Newsome B team, were Madelein Rossborough, Julianne Ream, Dana Royer and Matt Sisco.

Providing a barbecue dinner at the land judging event – for the 27th year – was Doug Holmberg of Holmberg Farms, with the Florida Strawberry Growers Association once again providing their facility.

HSWCD also hosted the 58th annual state competition with 34 land-judging teams from throughout Florida. Students competed for cash awards and the chance to represent the state at the national competition. Goody bags filled to the brim with gifts provided by commodity groups (dairy, beef, citrus, sugar, etc.) and fairs were distributed to all participants. Dennis Carlton of Audubon Ranch provided the site, with backhoe services donated by Castillo Farms, in coordination with HSWCD and soil scientists Rex Ellis and Gregory Means of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

For more information on conservation contests and educational opportunities, contact the HSWCD at 813-752-1474, ext. 3.

# What's a Neem?

If you've always wondered what a neem tree was, then here's a great opportunity to find out. Grab gloves, garden tools and a small bag on May 5 and head out to Neem Tree Farms, the largest neem nursery in the country. There you'll find not only neem producing trees, but Seminole pumpkins for the summer and Daikon radishes later in the year.

According to owner Vicki Parsons, "The neem tree has a fascinating history that traces back over 4,000 years in India. It's considered to have medicinal properties and millions of people have used all parts of this sacred tree from the seeds to flowers, fruits, leaves, oil, roots and even bark to improve their health."

Neem is actually a botanical cousin of the mahogany tree and is a hardy evergreen. In many parts of the world, the neem tree is used as a source of medicine to treat more than 100 health problems from skin rashes and scratches to diabetes and malaria.

As a Hillsborough 100 Conservation

Challenge project, Neem Tree Farms will open its gardens – including nearly ¼ acre of pollinator food – to visitors to share cuttings, seeds and "you-dig" plants that naturally spread. The event will be held from 10 am until 2 pm at 602 Ronele Drive in Brandon.



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# HILLSBOROUGH 100 PROJECTS



## ■ Ag Venture at the Florida State Fairgrounds

**When:** April 24 – May 11, 2018

**Where:** Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 US 301, Tampa, 33610

"Hands on" experience for 3rd grade students in Hillsborough County, teaching them the importance of agriculture to their daily lives. HSWCD project will be the creation of take home "Soil Babies" by each student. For further details, please see Youth Activities article or call HSWCD, (813) 752-1474 Ext. 3.

## ■ Armwood High School – Lipman Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.

**Judging first week of May.**

**Where:** Armwood High School, 12000 U.S. Hwy 92, Seffner, 33584  
Eddy Watkins, (813) 842-2744.

## ■ Bloomingdale Children's House – A Montessori School

**When:** Throughout the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge

**Where:** 3920 South Kings Avenue, Brandon, 33511 (School Location)  
Students will work with staff to build and plant a hydroponic garden on site where

they currently have a regular garden and an animal caretaking program. For further information: Tim Johnson, (813) 685-0009.

## ■ Blues Berry Farms

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge  
This Plant City Farm features innovative conservation techniques through the resourceful use of water, weather stations, a sound system, paper birds, etc. In addition to fresh berries, Blues Berry Farms products are used in jalapeño and habanero jellies, ginger blueberry beer and blueberry sausage. Susan Dumke, (813) 597-4019.

## ■ Brandon Kiwanis Club

**When:** Saturday, April 28, 2018  
**Where:** Alafia River State Park, 14326 South County Road 39, Lithia, 33547  
Brandon Kiwanis members will join the Friends of the Alafia to enhance and improve the entrance to the park using a number of approved native plants. Gena Shaffer, (813) 546-5043.

## ■ Brandon Republican Club

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge  
**Where:** Hillsborough County  
The Brandon Republican Club will continue to join others in support of the

"Bee a Honey, Buy a Hive" project. Melissa Jackson, (813) 399-6892.

## ■ Buchanan Middle School – Lipman Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.  
**Judging first week of May.**  
**Where:** Buchanan Middle School, 1001 West Bearss Avenue, Tampa, 33613  
David Pottroff, (813) 975-7600.

## ■ Busch Gardens

**When:** Sunday, April 22, 2018, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Busch Gardens Animal Care Center, 10165 North McKinley Drive, Tampa 33612  
Park visitors on Sunday, April 22, will be able to participate in four ten-minute educational programs : 1) The SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, 2) The importance of beekeeping and bees' positive effect on the environment, 3) Backyard composting, and 4) Wildlife rehabilitation. Following the programs, participants will receive small planters made from recycled maps loaded with compost from the Park's own browse garden and Florida native plant seeds.

Davion Walker, (813) 987-5087.

## ■ C4OE (Center For Open Exploration) – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

**When:** Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Downtown Tampa

Second annual multi-group clean-up dive and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green Diver Initiative. For further details, see "GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay" article. Amanda O'Connor, (813) 628-6284.

## ■ Coalition of Community Gardens

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge

**Where:** At Community Gardens throughout Hillsborough County

The Coalition is an organization of community gardens promoting agriculture, community development, conservation and sustainability through gardening activities. For further details, see Community Gardens article. Kitty Wallace, (813) 992-0940.

## ■ Community Roundtable of Brandon

**When:** 9:00 a.m. – noon, Saturday, April 28, 2018 and 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Saturday, May 5, 2018

**Where:** Bloomingdale High School Parking lot, 1700 East Bloomingdale Avenue, Valrico, 33596

The public is invited to recycle their electronics (no televisions or computer monitors) and at the same time help the school. Dawn Marshall, (813) 352-1617

## ■ Community Water Wise Award Application Period

**When:** Application period open until June 30, 2018

**Where:** Open to Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties

The Community Water Wise Awards are presented annually by Tampa Bay Water, in conjunction with UF/ IFAS Extension and Florida-Friendly Landscaping. The contests recognize businesses and individuals committed to conserving water resources and protecting the environment by using "Florida Friendly Landscaping" (FFL) principles. For further information and to enter: <http://tampabaywaterwise.org>. Brandon Moore, (727) 791-2304 .

## ■ Composting Workshop – UF/IFAS

**When:** Saturday, May 5, 2018, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

**Where:** UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County, 5339 CR 579, Seffner, 33584

Learn how to turn trash into treasure. Participants will receive a free compost bin and thermometer. Limit of one adult per household. Open to Hillsborough County residents only. Advance registration required. <https://may2018hillsresidents.eventbrite.com>

## ■ Dowell Middle Magnet School – Lipman Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.

**Judging first week of May**

**Where:** Dowdell Middle School, 1208 Wishing Well Way, Tampa, 33619  
Gary Floyd, (813) 744-8322.

## ■ Durant Leo Club

**When:** Saturday, April 21, 2018, 8:00 a.m. – noon

**Where:** Plant City Commons Community Garden  
See project under Plant City Lions Club.



### ■ Environmental Protection Commission – Clean Air Fair

“Tomorrow is Coming, Clean Air is No Game”

**When:** Thursday, May 3, 2018, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Where:** Poe Plaza, Downtown Tampa  
The 17th Annual EPC Clean Air Fair will include displays of all types promoting conservation of air, soils and water. Exhibitors include business, civic and governmental representatives and attendance is open to the public. Exhibitor registrations must be submitted by April 27, 2018. Jeff Sims, (813) 627-2600.

### ■ Environmental Protection Commission – Yates Elementary Tree Planting and Commemoration

**When:** Friday, April 27, 2018

**Where:** Yates Elementary, 301 North Kingsway, Brandon, 33510  
EPC Director Janet Dougherty and Yates principal Richard Shields will join students and others to plant a tree and honor the memory of one of the school's outstanding counselors, Tina Brancato. Allanna Cusica, (813) 627-2600 Ext. 1259; Richard Shields, (813) 744-8177.

### ■ “Feed a Bee” Bayer’s Bee Care Program

Project of the Plant City Lions Club. See information under Plant City Lions.

### ■ Florida Aquarium – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

**When:** Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Downtown Tampa  
Second annual multi-group clean-up dive and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green Diver Initiative. For further details, see “GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay” article. Amanda O’Connor, (813) 628-6284.

### ■ Florida Department of Agriculture – Office of Ag Water Policy

Services will be provided for agricultural operators in the area of BMP (Best Management Practices). For further information: HSWCD, (813) 752-1474, Ext. 3.

### ■ Friends of the Alafia

**When:** Saturday, April 28, 2018

**Where:** Alafia River State Park, 14326 South County Road 39, Lithia, 33547

Friends of the Alafia will join members of the Brandon Kiwanis Club to enhance and improve the entrance to the park using a number of approved native plants. Gena Shaffer, VP, Friends of the Alafia, (813) 546-5043.

### ■ Fuson, Robin – Park Cleanup

**When:** Saturday, April 28, 2018

**Where:** Flatwood Park, 42540 Bruce B Downs Boulevard, Tampa  
Robin Fuson and volunteers from the Robin Fuson For Judge Campaign will clean the bike and jogging trails at Flatwood Park to enhance the park's natural beauty by removing debris. Volunteers welcome!

### ■ Gardening Micro Irrigation Workshop – Vegetables – UF/IFAS

**When:** Monday, April 23, 2018, 10:30 a.m.

**Where:** UF/IFAS Extension, Hillsborough County Conference Center, 5339 CR 579, Seffner, 33584

Learn important vegetable gardening tips and how to install your own vegetable garden micro-irrigation system from a free

kit provided to all adult participants (one per household). The kit hooks up to your home's outdoor faucet or spigot. Free workshop open to Hillsborough County residents only. Advance registration required. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/april-23-vegetable-microirrigation-workshop-tickets-44800853559>

### ■ Gardening Workshop – Top Tips for Tempting Pollinators

**When:** Monday, April 23, 2018,

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Seminole Heights Branch Library, 4711 North Central Avenue, Tampa, 33603  
Learn simple tips for attracting bees, butterflies, moths and beneficial wasps to your own piece of Florida paradise. Talk presented by Master Gardener Nanette O’Hara, including recommendations for a “Pollinator Palette” of specific wildflowers, trees and shrubs for West Central Florida landscapes. Florida has 316 native bee species. Learn how even urban habitats can help support these small but mighty engines of food production.

### ■ Gardening Workshop – Basic Vegetable Gardening

**When:** Tuesday, April 24, 2018,

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** North Tampa Branch Library, 8916 N. Boulevard, Tampa, 33604  
Learn about the challenges and rewards of vegetable gardening, including what grows best in Central Florida, where and when to plant for best results.

### ■ Gardening Workshop – Garden of Bright Ideas

**When:** Tuesday, May 1, 2018,

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Austin Davis Public Library, 17808 Wayne Road, Odessa, 33556  
Learn innovative and easy projects in: lighting, pathway enhancements, container gardens, fences, hedges, gates, themed garden beds and garden rooms.

### ■ Gardening Workshop – Begonias

**When:** Tuesday, May 1, 2018,

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Riverview Branch Library, 10509 Riverview Drive, Riverview, 33578  
Learn about how to use different varieties of begonias in your yard, as well as history of the plants and propagating strategies.

### ■ Gibsonton Elementary

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge

**Where:** 7723 Gibsonton Drive, Gibsonton, 33534

Project: To construct a student built, led and managed garden with focus on fruits and vegetables to illustrate how it's done and encourage home gardens. Scott Confare, (813) 671-5100.

### ■ Girl Scout Troop 267, Part of Beautiful Butterflies

**When:** Sunday, April 22, 2018

**Where:** Seffner Community Garden, 406 North Kingsway Road, Seffner, 33584

Girl Scout Troop 267 will be cleaning up and weeding the community garden to enhance its beauty and productivity. Jeanne Baldi, (813) 856-9222

### ■ Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce

**When:** Saturday, April 21, 2018,

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Westfield Mall, Brandon at the

### ■ Chamber’s “Taste of Brandon” event

The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce will support the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge through recycling efforts at the “Taste of Brandon” and through an exhibit by the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District at the event. Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, (813) 689-1221.

### ■ Greater Riverview Chamber of Commerce

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough

100 Conservation Challenge

**Where:** Gibsonton Drive in Riverview

The Greater Plant City Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with Hillsborough County, will be planting 9 new crape myrtle trees in the median of Gibsonton Drive, as a continuation of the tree project initiated along US Hwy 301. Goal: To maintain green space in south Hillsborough. Debbie Kirkland, (813) 234-5944.

### ■ Greco Middle School – Lipman Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. Judging first week of May.

**Where:** Greco Middle School, 6925 East Fowler Avenue, Temple Terrace, 33617  
Keri Ladd, (813) 987-6926.

### ■ Green Diver Initiative, NAUI – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

**When:** Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Downtown Tampa

Second annual multi-group clean-up dive and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green Diver Initiative. For further details, see “GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay” article. Amanda O’Connor, (813) 628-6284.

### ■ Green Party – Tampa

**When:** Saturday, April 21, 2018, Noon – 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Peace House, 8052 North 56th Street, Tampa, 33617

The Tampa Green Party, in a continuation of its efforts to eliminate plastic bag distribution at grocery stores, will conduct an educational outreach and barbecue for interested members of the community. The program will include illustrating alternatives to plastic bags and a cost analysis of each to the stores. Petition forms will be distributed to be turned in at the following TGP meeting. Francisco Pierre-Louis, (754) 757-0135.

### ■ Hillsborough County – HSWCD Exhibit

**When:** April 20 – May 7, 2018,

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. daily

**Where:** Hillsborough County Center, 601 East Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa

A comprehensive exhibit featuring the programs, projects and activities of the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District will be on display throughout the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. For further information: (813) 752-1474 Ext. 3.

### ■ Hillsborough County Fire Rescue

**When:** During Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge

**Where:** Homes of senior citizens in Hillsborough County

Hillsborough Fire Rescue will again provide smoke detectors to Hillsborough County seniors as part of their “Conserve



Life” Hillsborough 100 Challenge. Working smoke alarms in homes decrease the risk of dying in a fire by over 50%. This project is being presented in partnership between Hillsborough Fire Rescue and the American Red Cross. For further information, (813) 752-1474.

### ■ Hillsborough County Property Appraiser – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

**When:** Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.

**Where:** Downtown Tampa

Second annual clean-up dive and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green Diver Initiative. For further details, see “GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay” article. Amanda O’Connor, (813) 628-6284.

### ■ Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) Board Meeting and Awards Presentations

**When:** Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** HSWCD offices, 201 South Collins Street, Suite 202, Plant City, 33563

The HSWCD will hold its bi-monthly Board meeting and recognize winning posters for students in the 2018 competition, “Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home.” Award categories are grades K – 1, 2 – 3, 4 – 6, 7 – 9, and 10 – 12. Winning students will receive cash awards and certificates. For further information, (813) 752-1474 Ext. 3.

### ■ Lipman Family Farms Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. Judging of gardens will be held during the 1st week of May.

**Where:** High schools and middle schools throughout Hillsborough County.

The country's largest field-grown round tomato producer this year has sponsored 16 schools in the garden challenge. Each school received two 48” x 84” planter boxes, a \$100.00 gift card for soil and nutrients, and an equal number/size of transplants. 2018 Challenge plants are: round, plum, grape and cherry tomatoes, cantaloupes and watermelons. Winning schools in each category will receive cash awards and plaques, with top middle and high schools receiving parties for gardeners. Participating schools listed separately.

### ■ Marshall Middle School – Lipman Garden Challenge

**When:** Throughout Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.

**Judging first week of May.**

**Where:** Marshall Middle School,



18 South Maryland Avenue,  
Plant City, 33566  
Kelcie Williams, (813) 757-9360.

#### ■ Microirrigation Workshop

When: Saturday, May 5, 2018,  
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.  
Where: UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough  
county, 5339 CR 579, Seffner, 33584  
Learn how to create a healthy and  
attractive lawn and landscape while  
conserving water. Tips on installing  
and using microirrigation are also  
presented. This irrigation system not  
only conserves water, but is not as  
restricted as current regulations as  
traditional in-ground irrigation systems  
. One free micro irrigation kit provided  
to one adult member of a household,  
when attending the workshop. Open  
to Hillsborough County residents  
only. Advance registration required.  
<https://may2018hillsresidents.eventbrite.com>

#### ■ Middleton High School – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge.  
Judging first week of May.  
Where: Middleton High School,  
4801 North 22nd Street, Tampa 33610  
Melissa Francavilla, (813) 233-3360.

#### ■ Mosaic - Oyster Reef Restoration

Mosaic team members will be in the  
Bay to help Tampa Bay Watch create  
oyster reefs at Desoto Park, 2617 Corrine  
Street, Tampa, 33605. Project includes  
shoveling fossilized shell into mesh bags,  
transporting bags via boat and placing  
oyster shell bags on the shoreline to  
create a series of oyster bars. This project  
is an effort to restore lost habitat systems  
to the bay, prevent further erosion o  
the shoreline and improve water quality  
through natural biological filtration.  
Contact: Tampa Bay Waters, 727.867.8166

#### ■ Mosaic – Great American Clean-up

When: Saturday, April 28,  
2018, 8:30 a.m. – noon  
Where: Stephen J. Wortham Park,  
12108 Rhodine Road, Riverview  
Volunteers are needed to clean up and  
beautify this park in conjunction with  
Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful and the  
Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.  
Everyone's welcome to participate!  
Contact: Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful,  
(813) 221.8733

#### ■ NAUI, Green Diver Initiative – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

When: Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.  
Where: Downtown Tampa  
Second annual multi-group clean-up dive  
and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green  
Diver Initiative. For further details see  
“GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay” article.  
Amanda O'Connor, (813) 628-6284.

#### ■ Neem Tree Farms Tour

When: Saturday, May 5, 2018,  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Where: Neem Tree Farms, 602 Ronele  
Drive, Brandon, 33511  
Visit the country's largest neem tree  
farm, learn about this ancient tree and  
participate in a sharing of cuttings, seeds  
and “you-dig” plants. Vicki Parsons,  
(813) 661-8873.

#### ■ Newsome High School – Interact Club – Plant A Tree Project

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. - Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School  
See details under Rotary Clubs.

#### ■ Newsome High School – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge. Judging first  
week of May.  
Where: Newsome High School,  
16550 Fishhawk Blvd., Lithia, 33547  
Kenneth Hiscock, (813) 740-4600.

#### ■ Odiorne Insurance

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: 1206 North Parsons Avenue,  
Brandon, 33510  
Staff at Odiorne Insurance continues  
to be committed to working on the  
conservation movement. They sponsor  
HSWCD's youth projects and programs  
and will be conducting a conservation  
activity during the Challenge.  
(813) 685-7731.

#### ■ Plant City Commons Community Gardens

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: Plant City Commons Community  
Garden, 2001 East Cherry Street,  
Plant City  
For further details see Community  
Gardens article. Karen Elizabeth,  
(813) 435-8111.

#### ■ Plant City High School – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge. Judging first  
week of May.  
Where: Plant City High School,  
One Raider Place, Plant City 33566

#### ■ Plant City Leo Cub

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. – noon  
Where: Plant City Commons Community  
Gardens  
See project under Plant City Lions Club.

#### ■ Plant City Lions Club with High School Leo Clubs

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8 a.m. - noon  
Where: Plant City Commons Community  
Gardens, Plant City HCC/UF campus,  
2001 East Cherry Street, Plant City.  
Members of the Plant City Lions Club  
will spend the morning doing plantings  
in the gardens and prepping beds for  
growing wildflowers, as well as tree  
plantings. Assisting in this project will be  
the Leo Clubs from Plant City, Durant and  
Strawberry Crest high schools, USF Lions  
Campus Club and Community Garden.  
Karen Crumley, (813) 924-3829.

#### ■ Portamento of Hope, Inc.

When: Throughout Hillsborough  
100 Conservation Challenge.  
Where: 107 Mason Street, 303 South  
Parsons Avenue and 305 South Parsons  
Avenue, Brandon, 33511  
Student and adult volunteers are growing  
a garden using all natural compost, in  
conjunction with the Bright Futures  
Program community service hours. In  
addition, comprehensive recycling is done  
and excess food is obtained from multiple  
sources to support the feeding programs  
for less fortunate individuals and families

in the Tampa Bay area. Lela Lilyquist,  
(813) 493.9644

#### ■ Progress Village Girl Scout Troop

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
9:00 a.m. – Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School, 8113 Zinnia Drive, Tampa, 33619  
Girl Scouts will plant a garden for the  
Progress Village Middle Magnet School.  
Student coordinators: Jasmine Cheong  
and Aurora Benjamin. Wil Talenti,  
(813) 802-8933.

#### ■ Rain Barrel Workshop

When: May 5, 2018, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
Where: UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough  
county, 5339 CR 579, Seffner, 33584  
Learn how Rain Barrels can be useful for  
collecting rainwater for irrigation, while  
reducing erosion and stormwater runoff.  
Make your own rain barrel using a 55  
gallon plastic food grade drum. One free  
rain barrel provided to one adult member  
of a household, when attending the  
workshop. Open to Hillsborough County  
residents only. Advance registration  
required. <https://may2018hillsresidents.eventbrite.com>

#### ■ Randall Middle School FFA – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge.  
Judging first week of May.  
Where: Randall Middle School 16510  
Fishhawk Blvd., Lithia, 33547  
Brittany Andrews, (813) 740-3900.

#### ■ Riverview High School Science Club – Alafia Area Cleanup

When: During Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: Alafia area  
The RHS Science Club will be cleaning the  
roadways around the Alafia river, bagging  
trash and trucking it to the US 41 transfer  
station. For further information:  
(813) 752-1474 Ext. 3.

#### ■ Robles Park Village Community Garden

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: Community Garden,  
3518 North Avon Avenue, Tampa  
For further information, see Community  
Gardens article. Reva Iman,  
(813) 609-4958.

#### ■ Rotary Clubs – Plant A Tree Project

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. – Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School, 8113 Zinnia Drive, Tampa, 33619  
Rotary Clubs of Brandon South Global,  
FishHawk Riverview and Sun City Center  
will join with Newsome High School  
Interact Club to plant trees and landscape  
the area around the school. This project  
is being held to commemorate Rotary  
International President Ian Risley's goal  
to plant one tree for every member  
worldwide (1.2 million trees) and to  
kickoff the Hillsborough 100 Conservation  
Challenge. Open to Rotarians, friends  
and the public. Please bring shovels (if  
available), gloves, hats, water and wear  
closed-toe shoes. Also please bring an  
auger if you have one. Mike Broussard,  
(813) 716-5341; Wil Talenti (813) 802-8933.

#### ■ Rotary Club of Brandon South Global – Plant A Tree Project

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,

8:00 a.m. – Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School  
See details under Rotary Clubs.

#### ■ Rotary Club of FishHawk Riverview – Plant A Tree Project

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. – Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School  
See details under Rotary Clubs.

#### ■ Rotary Club of Sun City Center – Plant A Tree Project

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. – Noon  
Where: Progress Village Middle Magnet  
School  
See details under Rotary Clubs

#### ■ St. Pete Makers – GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

When: Sunday, May 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m.  
Where: Downtown Tampa  
Second annual multi-group clean-up dive  
and survey coordinated by NAUI, Green  
Diver Initiative. For further details, see  
“GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay” article.  
Amanda O'Connor, (813) 628-6284.

#### ■ Seeds of Faith Community Garden

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: Bay Life Church, 1017 Kingsway  
Road, Brandon 33510  
Volunteers at the Seeds of Faith  
Community Garden will relocate compost  
and disperse the soil to free up additional  
space in the garden. Student assistants  
will also spread a large quantity of mulch  
throughout the garden for summer weed  
control. Cindy Paulhus, (813) 629-5953.

#### ■ Seffner Community Garden

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: 406 North Kingsway Road,  
Seffner, 33584  
For further information see Community  
Gardens article. Joy Ingram,  
(727) 424-5524.

#### ■ Seminole Heights Community Garden

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge  
Where: 6114 River Terrace, Tampa  
For further information see Community  
Gardens article. Colleen Parker,  
(917) 697-9659.

#### ■ Sickles High School – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge. J  
udging first week of May.  
Where: Sickles High School,  
7950 Gunn Highway, Tampa, 33626  
Brooke Cooley, (813) 631-4742.

#### ■ Spoto High School FFA – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100  
Conservation Challenge. J  
udging first week of May.  
Where: Spoto High School,  
8358 Eagle Palm Drive, Riverview, 33569  
Kelli Hamilton, (813) 672-5405.

#### ■ Strawberry Crest Leo Club

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,  
8:00 a.m. – noon  
Where: Plant City Commons Community  
Garden



See project under Plant City Lions Club.

#### ■ Summerfield Elementary

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 11990 Big Bend Road,

Riverview, 33579

Students in Wendy Barnes 5th grade class have planted a garden using primarily recycled materials. Garden plants include both vegetables and herbs. Jessica Sandin, (813) 671-5115

#### ■ Sustainable Living Project

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 918 West Sligh Avenue, Tampa

For further information, see Community Gardens article. Georgea Snyder, (813) 230-7437.

#### ■ TBD @ 301 (Tea, Bowls and Desserts)

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 3840 US Hwy 301 South,

Riverview, 33578

This restaurant will be reusing used tea leaves and tea bags as deodorizers and/or fertilizer. Team TBD is committed to implement efficiencies in their operations from the start and is seeking groups and educational institutions willing to study how used tea may be the basis for organic fertilizer. Isabella Rosal, (702) 945-1601.

#### ■ Tampa Bay Community Garden

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox

Church, 2418 South 86th Street, Tampa

For further information, see Community Gardens article. Father Bekele, (813) 679-4982.

#### ■ Tampa Bay Waterkeeper – Safety Harbor

When: Sunday, April 22, 2018,

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Where: Downtown Safety Harbor Tampa Bay Waterkeeper, in partnership with Bar Fly, will be hosting a walk, wade or paddle clean-up in Downtown Safety Harbor, followed by awards and celebration of clean water at Bar Fly! Awards presented for most collected, largest item, weirdest object. Goals: to engage the public to clean the water and learn about impacts of marine debris and plastic pollution. Andrew Hayslip, (828) 719-7624.

#### The following groups have not completed their plans prior to publication:

Boy Scouts

Brownies and Girl Scout Troops

Emergency Care Help Organization of Brandon (ECHO)

Fancy Farms

Florida NRCS

Florida State Fair Authority

Florida Strawberry Growers Association 4-H Clubs

Greater Plant City Chamber of Commerce

Hillsborough Community College – Brandon Campus

Hillsborough County Fair

Hillsborough County Farm Bureau

#### ■ Tampa Heights Youth Development & Community Center

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 605 East Frances Avenue, Tampa

For further information, see Community Gardens article. Kitty Wallace, (813) 992-0940.

#### ■ Tampa Residential Facility – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge. Judging first

week of May.

Where: Tampa Residential Facility,

9508 East Columbus Drive, Tampa, 33619

Steve Harlow, (813) 740-3630.

#### ■ Temple Terrace Community Garden at Greco Middle School

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 6925 East Fowler Avenue,

Temple Terrace

For further information, see Community Gardens article. Travis Malloy

#### ■ Turkey Creek Middle School – Lipman Garden Challenge

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge.

Judging first week of May.

Where: Turkey Creek Middle School,

5005 South Turkey Creek Road,

Plant City, 33567

Buddy Coleman, (813) 757-9442.

#### ■ University Area CDC “Harvest Hope Garden”

When: April 27, 2018 and May 4, 2018,

9:00 a.m. – noon

Where: 13704 North 20th Street, Tampa

For further information see Community Gardens article. Erica Nelson, (813) 558-5212 Ext. 203.

#### ■ USF Lions Campus Club

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018,

8:00 a.m. – Noon

Where: Plant City Commons Community Garden

See project under Plant City Lions Club.

#### ■ Ybor City Street Garden “Tampa Eden Project”

When: Throughout Hillsborough 100

Conservation Challenge

Where: 2924 Ybor Street, Tampa

For further information, see Community Gardens article. Jessica Summers

# Hillsborough 100 Kickoff Luncheon

## Features Awards, Proclamation and “Hillsborough Harvested” Foods



Supervisors joined Commissioner Stacy White to honor 2017 Conservation Challenge winners.

Over 100 business, civic and governmental leaders celebrated the kickoff of the 2018 Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge at a noon luncheon on October 11 at the Florida Strawberry Growers Association. Highlights of the event included awards from the last Hillsborough 100 Challenge, a proclamation from Hillsborough County and a “Hillsborough Harvested” meal featuring blueberry cobbles from Blues Berry Farms, Fancy Farms strawberry shortcakes, and milk and yogurt produced locally by M & B Products.

Susan Dumke, an elected HSWCD Supervisor and owner of Blues Berry Farms noted, “It’s always great to serve delicious Hillsborough-grown blueberries because it reminds everyone of the great produce available right here. On top of that, blueberries are nutritious and just fun to eat.”

Commissioner Stacy White presented a Proclamation, signed by the entire Commission, in support of the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge honoring its first year success and promoting the 2018 effort. Commissioner White personally participated in the last Challenge with a tour of farming operations to get a close-up look at

all the elements that farmers face in bringing a successful crop to market.

Lipman Family Farms, represented by family member Kevin Yue, was honored as “Partner of the Year” for its sponsorship of the Lipman Garden Challenge for Hillsborough Middle and High Schools. “Volunteer of the Year” honors were awarded to past HSWCD Chairman Roy Davis for his leadership as Chairman of the annual HSWCD Plant Auction held each October at the Hillsborough County Fair to benefit HSWCD youth programs.

The NAUI Green Diver Initiative’s project, “GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay,” was recognized as the “Project of the Year.” The project, which included a clean-up dive into Tampa Bay, was the result of a collaboration between NAUI, C4OE, and other groups. “Supporter of the Year” honors were given to Odiorne Insurance for their year-round support of the Conservation District’s programs, projects and activities.

Every attendee received a goody bag filled to the brim with gifts from commodity groups, fairs and festivals, and a honey bear compliments of Bridges Farms Honey. At event’s end, participants left enthused about their 2018 Conservation Challenge projects and the prospect of the next Challenge luncheon.



# Fairs and Festivals take Center Stage

The fragrance of candy apples, cotton candy and elephant ears waft through the air. Roosters crow in the background as cows bellow loudly. It's a kaleidoscope of color and a cacophony of sounds that tell us it's the annual fair-and-festival season in Hillsborough County. Fairs represent a unique slice of Americana and the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) proudly participates, providing educational opportunities as part of the fair experience. While fairs offer tons of fun, they also offer a great chance to learn the importance of soil stewardship and protection of natural resources.

The fair season for HSWCD kicks off in February with the 12-day Florida State Fair. Participation at the fair includes an exhibit in the Ag Hall of Fame building during the duration of the event, as well as two "Hillsborough Harvested" days showcasing home-grown products. Other activities include providing food samples at the "Fresh From Florida" breakfast, and participation in the Governors Lunch, Woman of the Year in Agriculture Luncheon, Ag Hall of Fame Dinner and Champion of Champions Dinner honoring outstanding youth exhibitors.

March opens annually with the Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City. HSWCD



4-H member Skylar Grooms stops by the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District booth in the Grimes building at the Strawberry Festival to check out youth programs.

can be found in the Grimes Building at the festival where all livestock shows and competitions take place, as well as at the Farm Credit Salute to Agriculture Breakfast and Grand Parade Luncheon.

On the Friday between the Florida State Fair and Florida Strawberry Festival, it's time for "Farm Night" in Temple Terrace. This annual event is sponsored by M&B Products, a dairy operation that produces milk and yogurt products for schools in more than 20 Florida counties. Farm Night features exhibits, fun and fabulous food for everyone, with proceeds benefiting

youth activities.

Events scheduled for April include an exhibit tent at the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce's "Taste of Brandon" at the Westfield Brandon shopping mall, 1 to 5 p.m., April 21, opening day of the Hillsborough 100. Other exhibits are scheduled throughout the conservation challenge, including a display in the lobby of the Frederick B. Karl County Center, 601 East Kennedy Blvd., Tampa.

In May, HSWCD is set to exhibit at the Clean Air Fair, May 3, from 11:30 a.m.

to 1:30 p.m., at Poe Plaza in downtown Tampa, focusing on this year's event theme, "Tomorrow is Coming.....Clean Air is no Game." Attendees will receive informational materials relating to all types of conservation, as well as liquid fertilizer sticks, compliments of the District and Miracle Gro.

September's exhibits include the Girl Scout Fest, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sept. 22, at the Florida State Fairgrounds. More than 1,000 girl scouts participate in this event with HSWCD promoting the 2019 Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge.

The Hillsborough County Fair, scheduled for October 18-21 and 25-28 will once again include an HSWCD educational display emphasizing the importance of urban agriculture. In addition, hundreds of posters prepared by K-12 students in Hillsborough County public, private, and parochial schools will be on display, featuring the 2018 National Conservation theme, "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home."

November will include an HSWCD exhibit at the Florida Ag Expo at the University of Florida Gulf Coast Research Center in Balm. For further information on exhibit opportunities for your group or event, contact HSWCD at (813) 752-1474, ext. 3.



## ROBIN FUSON FOR CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE GROUP 25

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# GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay

## Clean Up and Survey



**L**ong after Tampa's Gasparilla Festival has ended, the many bright and colorful strands of plastic party beads and trinkets that partygoers toss to-and-fro remain. Underneath Tampa Bay's water surface, plastics from the festival and other events are carelessly left to sink out of site, and often out of mind. This gives groups like the Center for Open Exploration (C4OE) and the Green Diver Initiative of the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) cause for concern.

How does plastic debris impact the water quality and aquatic habitat of Tampa Bay? That was the question that motivated C4OE and the Green Diver Initiative to lead their first cleanup in 2017 as part of the inaugural Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. During this cleanup, at a single site alone, volunteer scuba divers, kayakers, snorkelers, paddle boarders and help ashore collected approximately 100 pounds of beads and 70 pounds of other trash! Among the unique items found was a barnacle covered unopened bottle of champagne and a walker, leading one to wonder what other treasures might be found beneath the surface.

This year, as part of the 2018 Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge, GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay is back again on May 6 with another motivated group of engaged water-goers to survey the quantity and distribution of plastic and other debris and to remove what is identified. With support from

St. Pete Makers and The Florida Aquarium, C4OE and Green Diver anticipate an even more productive event this year with the positive community response received after last year's event.

Also on board for the first time is Bob Henriquez and the Hillsborough County Property Appraisers Office. They reported, "Since we're involved in many parades and events throughout the year, we wanted to do our part to keep Tampa Bay clean. This just seems like a perfect partnership."

"GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay is a great event where local recreational water enthusiasts, industry-associated professionals, and those that want to learn how to be better stewards of their local waters can come together, meet, learn, have a positive impact on their home bay, and see exactly why we need to be more cautious and responsible when celebrating during the Gasparilla Festival and on a daily basis," shared Amanda O'Connor, Manager of the Green Diver Initiative.

The beauty of Tampa Bay and the surrounding waters bring people from all over the country to partake in all the great activities found here – so it's up to everyone to keep it beautiful below the water's surface as well as above. For more information about the GaspOur Beads of Tampa Bay Cleanup and Survey, or to get involved, email [aoconnor@greendiverinitiative.org](mailto:aoconnor@greendiverinitiative.org) or call: (813) 628-6284.

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# Community Gardens

## Support Hearts, Souls and Stomachs

Decades ago, it was common to see backyard gardens in urban, suburban and rural communities throughout the country. While many grew crops for economic reasons and personal satisfaction, the truth was that not everyone had the ability to enjoy this opportunity, due to space, location and other reasons. This led to a resurgence of community gardens, which date back to the 1890s, and began as a result of an economic recession. In fact, the first organized urban garden program was developed in Detroit in the early 1900s. Early gardens were referred to as “vacant lot gardens” as they utilized unused lots in urban areas.

According to the American Community Gardening Association, “Community gardens are located within urban, suburban and rural areas to grow vegetables and flowers, as well as a sense of community. Each garden may consist of a single plot or many individual plots and its design and operation are determined by local participants.”

In the 1960s and '70s, renewed interest began in the community garden movement. Today, thousands of gardens are located in cities and towns throughout the United States. Sometimes tucked in between urban parks, schools and churches, they bring together individuals from all walks of life.

Locally, the Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) supports community gardens throughout the county, both financially and educationally, and reports that a dozen Hillsborough gardens are set to take part in the Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge. Each project is unique, with the ultimate goal of promoting

conservation of natural resources, while growing healthy, nutritious food. Additionally, community gardens help tackle the problem of “food deserts” that frequently exist in underserved communities. HSWCD “is committed to support the efforts of community gardens to create a greater sense of community pride, and raise living standards wherever possible,” said Mark Proctor, chairman of the district’s board of supervisors.

All the gardens are part of the Coalition of Community Gardens, established as a network of community gardens and other affiliated entities. Members partner to support the success of community gardening by sharing knowledge, resources, experience; to support public policies; and to increase community gardening in the west central Florida area.

Benefits of participation in a community garden include opportunities for outdoor enrichment and exercise, getting to know neighbors and building friendships, learning the art and science of agriculture, and most importantly,

growing a wide variety of healthy, organic produce.

### Here’s a sampling of Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge community garden projects:

► **Plant City Commons Community Garden** / 2001 East Cherry St., on the Plant City campus of Hillsborough Community College and University of Florida / Contact: Karen Elizabeth, (813) 435-8111. Volunteers are set to build a vermiculture bin using earthworms to decompose waste matter, thereby creating worm casings. Red wiggler worms will be available free of charge to Plant City residents to improve their personal gardens. Donations are welcome. At 6:00p.m., Thursday, April 26, gardeners and friends are invited to a covered dish dinner and discussion of the Earth Day Theme, “End Plastic Pollution”.

► **Robles Park Village Community Garden** / 3518 North Avon Ave., Tampa

Contact: Reva Iman, (813) 609-4958. The Robles Park Village Community Garden provides fresh produce for more than 3,000 families in the Robles Park Village of the Tampa Housing Authority. The garden has grown and prospered over the past two years at its current location. The Hillsborough 100 Conservation Challenge project involves rebuilding the deteriorating fence surrounding the garden to keep the grounds safe and healthy.

► **Seeds of Faith Community Garden** Bay Life Church, 1017 North Kingsway Road, Brandon / Contact: Cindy Paulhus 813.629.5953. Volunteers at the Seeds of Faith Community Garden will relocate compost and disperse the soil to free up additional space at the garden. Student assistants will also spread a large quantity of mulch throughout the garden for summer weed control.

► **Seffner Community Garden**, 406 North Kingsway Road, Seffner, 33584 Contact: Joy Ingram, (727) 424-5524.



The project's aim is to create an accessible section of garden beds designed to accommodate gardeners in a chair or wheelchair and those who need to garden from a standing position. The project will include preparation of the area for the beds, construction of wood and cinderblock raised beds, and expansion of the irrigation system to provide drip irrigation to this new section. To help "root" the community, organizers plan to engage local clubs, scouts and/or students and staff from a nearby martial arts studio to volunteer the necessary labor.

➤ **Seminole Heights Community Garden** 6114 River Terrace, Tampa / Contact: Colleen Parker, (917) 697-9659. Celebrating its ninth anniversary this month, the garden was moved to its new location last year. Members are cultivating organic soil with compost and mulch and developing necessary infrastructures such as fencing, terracing, worm bins and irrigation. Also, they're laying 200 feet of pipe with multiple hose bibs attached to a nearby wellhead. Additionally, the aim is to create a sail tarp installation to capture rainwater in the garden's 550-gallon cistern, making it independent from the city's grid.

➤ **Sustainable Living Project** 918 West Sligh Ave., Tampa / Contact:

Georgea Snyder, (813) 230-7437 Through its food waste collection and composting program, the project aims to encourage local residents to provide food scraps for composting and offer finished compost to the community. To accomplish this goal, volunteers are set to revamp composting system, including how food scraps are collected, stored and composted; with a goal of project data collection.

➤ **Tampa Bay Community Garden** St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 2418 South 86th St., Tampa / Contact: Father Bekele, (813) 679-4982. Immigrant volunteers from Asian and African countries, including Ethiopia, Burma, Somalia, and Sudan, are set to build a compost system to return garden waste back into soil nourishment. The project includes upgrading compost bins and chicken coops, and utilizing organic chicken waste to enrich the soil. Members grow vegetables common to their native cultures to help ease the transition to their new country.

➤ **Tampa Heights Youth Development & Community Center** 605 East Frances Ave., Tampa / Contact: Kitty Wallace, (813) 992-0940. The project is to upgrade the solar power system installed in 2016-17 to power the fans and pumps for an aquaponics garden. Also scheduled is work on

two, 275-gallon fish tanks, including cleaning of pipes and filters. Fingerlings will be added and nutrient-rich water from the tanks will be used to fertilize the gardens. The garden's active youth gardening group will be involved in the project to provide a rich learning experience.

➤ **Temple Terrace Community Garden at Greco Middle School** 6925 East Fowler Ave., Temple Terrace / Contact: Travis Malloy. There are four Temple Terrace Community Garden locations, at Riverhills Elementary, Riverhills Park, Linwood Park and Greco Middle School. The project to enrich the soil includes expanding the compost operation to include kitchen waste from the Greco cafeteria and expansion of worm bins for waste breakdown.

➤ **University Area CDC "Harvest Hope Garden"** / 13704 North 20th St., Tampa / Contact: Erica Nelson, (813) 558-5212, ext. 203. The public is invited to participate in the Harvest Hope Community Garden's Days of Service, 9 a.m. to noon, April 27 and May 4. Projects are set for all levels of gardeners, from beginner to experienced. Projects include switching out crops for summer, repairing a broken seed table station, and constructing a compost area. Participants also can help in the establishment of a new flower garden

with the planting of seeds and seedlings. Garden instructors will be on hand to teach necessary skills and all project supplies will be provided. Pre-registration and walkups are welcome. For further information, email Erica Nelson at enelson@uacdc.org.

➤ **Ybor City Street Garden Tampa Eden Project** / 2924 Ybor St., Tampa Contact: Jessica Summers. Members are set to add soil and replace rotten lumber on beds, refurbishing the small pocket garden for the engagement of both new and current gardeners to grow vegetables and flowers.

**The Coalition of Community Gardens** held a successful two-day workshop in Tampa Heights. "Growing Community Gardens" featured health, wellness and sustainable living topics. For more on the coalition, contact Kitty Wallace, (813) 992-0940.

The Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District's support of the gardens was a result of a National Association of Conservation Districts grant for urban agriculture. To find out more about other grant activities, contact Betty Jo Tompkins, HSWCD Executive Director, at (813) 752-1474, ext. 3. Or, (813) 477-8332.



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# Conservation Districts, An Historical Perspective



**"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."**

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

The story behind the creation of conservation districts throughout the United States reads like a fiction novel with twists and turns around every corner. Indeed, it was America's worst ever man-made ecological disaster that led to a crisis of national scope. This disaster wasn't a hurricane, tornado or earthquake, but rather the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

It was the gravity of the situation that made the disaster almost incomprehensible. Because of multiple unchecked farming practices and a severe multi-year drought, tens of millions of acres of top soil were lifted into the sky, blown across the United States and over three hundred miles into the Atlantic.

The thick clouds of dirt turned daylight into darkness, and it is said that when Congress debated the issue, the curtains were pulled back in the Chambers to expose the deadly clouds of dust, moving members to vote unanimously to establish the Soil Conservation Service. In fact, when Franklin Roosevelt signed the Act establishing the Service on April 27, 1935, he envisioned the establishment of districts in counties throughout the United States run by elected, volunteer supervisors.

Without a doubt, the most influential individual in the conservation movement was Hugh Hammond Bennett, who upon his graduation from the University of North Carolina in 1903 became involved in soil studies. Through research in both the United States and abroad, Bennett became convinced that soil erosion was one of the most serious problems facing the planet.

Not everyone was convinced of Bennett's belief that left unchecked, soil erosion would literally destroy the very fabric of American life. Bennett co-wrote a United States Department of Agriculture publication in 1928 titled *Soil Erosion: A National Menace*, considered his most significant work, which foreshadowed the coming destruction of the Dust Bowl. He influenced the passage of the 1935 soil conservation act, and became the first director of the Soil Conservation Service, a position he held until his retirement in 1951. It was Bennett's efforts that changed the mindset of American farmers toward soil conservation and opened the doors for further research in this field throughout the United States.

In ensuing years since first established, Conservation Districts have

added water to their mission. Today, over 3,000 districts exist in counties nationally. It's sometimes easy to question the relevance of conservation districts in our modern world, but one only has to realize that even now, 2 million people die annually from consuming polluted water, and another 20 million are debilitated. If this was not sobering enough, it is estimated that world food production must increase by 70% in the next 40 years to avert widespread starvation.

At the local level, Hillsborough's Soil and Water Conservation District, founded in 1946, is committed to serving inner-city, urban, suburban, as well as rural communities. According to HSWCD Chairman Mark Proctor, "Our district offers cost-share funding to bona fide agricultural operators to develop projects that meet conservation goals. We're very careful to be responsible stewards of the public's money, so we don't fund speculative ventures. However, equally important are the efforts we make to reach out to all segments of the population when it comes to conservation." Proctor further notes, "Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District serves as educators, not regulators. Our goal is to make everyone aware of the importance of responsible conservation."

In addition to Proctor, Kim O'Connor serves as the Board's Vice-Chairman, Mike Hepburn as its Treasurer, with Supervisors David Maynard and Susan Dumke rounding out the five-member Board. All members are elected on the countywide ballot for four-year terms. Uniquely, Board members run the gamut of political persuasions from Republicans to Independents, a Green Party member and a socialist.

According to Vice Chair O'Connor, "We may see things from different perspectives, but we're all really committed to conserving and improving the environment we call home." She further states, "As a Green Party member, our group's project focus includes combatting the use of plastic bags that degrade our environment."

As a high school science instructor, Treasurer Mike Hepburn particularly enjoys the emphasis on education. "Many of our projects are STEM related and we offer something for residents from small children to senior citizens. It's critical that we convince the public that conservation is everyone's business."

Supervisor Maynard echoes that sentiment and adds, "We continue

to build alliances and engage new groups of individuals in our programs. This year's involvement of the area's community gardens is a great example of this."

Further information on Hillsborough Soil and Water Conservation District programs, projects and activities can be obtained by contacting Betty Jo Tompkins, Executive Director at the HSWCD office, (813) 752-1474, Extension 3 or (813) 477-8332; 201 South Collins Street, Suite 202, Plant City 33563; hillssoilandwater.org.



**"The land, the earth God gave to man for his home ... should never be the possession of any man, corporation, (or) society ... any more than the air or water." "Laws change; people die; the land remains."**

- Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States



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A photograph of two women standing in a sun-dappled forest. The woman on the left, wearing a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and jeans, is pointing at a tablet held by the woman on the right. The woman on the right is wearing an orange polo shirt and jeans, and is smiling while looking at the tablet. The background is filled with tall trees and green foliage, with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

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