



*A Quarterly Newsletter from the NJ Department of Agriculture  
Farm to Everything Program*

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

### Coming soon 2022 Farmer Recognition Award Applications

Do you know of a farm that is connecting New Jersey students to New Jersey agriculture? Applications for the 2022 Farmer Recognition Award will be coming out in January. Applications will be open from January -March 2022!

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## Tax Check-Off: NJ Farm to School & School Garden Fund

Look for the "New Jersey Charitable Funds" section on the 2021 State of New Jersey tax form to donate on Line 73-75, number 19. These donations will provide grants to schools for gardens, salad bars and Farm to School related field trips.



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US!**

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# TOP TOMATO WINTER 2021

## SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN FARM TO SCHOOL

When faced with the challenge of how to implement a more dynamic Farm to School program, Sue Solleder, the Director of Food and Nutrition for Greater Bergen Community Action, “hit the pavement” both literally and figuratively with her Farm to Preschool truck. If you are driving around the Greater Bergen area you just might catch a glimpse of the truck in action. Recently, Troy Greer, Food & Nutrition Manager for Paterson Head Start, & Audra Tamayo, Associate Director of Food and Nutrition for Greater Bergen Community Action, used the truck to visit City Green where they harvested beets for local Head Start preschools.

The program included educating preschoolers on the nutrition of a beet, hands on education (students were able to see and hold a beet that had just been picked from the field), and taste testing of the beet at lunch. The parents were not left out of all the fun as they had a chance to try beet salad and take fresh beets home. Greater Bergen Community Action delivered close to 400 lbs. of beets that day, they have got the “BEET” on Farm to Preschool!

The Greater Bergen Community Action's mission is to reduce poverty within the community and address the causes and conditions of persistent economic insecurity. They service 13 Head Start Programs in Paterson, Jersey City and Bergen County. In addition to the Farm to Preschool truck, some of Greater Bergen Community Action programs are as follows:

- Food and Nutrition staff provide workshops on healthy eating which includes introducing families to fresh produce
- Dietitians discuss the nutritional benefits of products and accessibility
- Taste testing for caregivers on products served to their children

More information on Greater Bergen Community Action and the work they do to serve their community can be found here. Agency Happenings - [Greater Bergen Community Action](#)







## FARM TO SCHOOL:

How can I incorporate "Farm to School" in the classroom?

Check out our monthly activity sheets at [Jersey Tastes!](#) for simple and fun ways to bring the Farm to your school.



## FARM TO PRESCHOOL:

We highlight frozen blueberries as our January Jersey Tastes! fruit of the month. Join in the delicious fun with your preschoolers by downloading our [Jersey Tastes Blueberries flyer](#) & [taste test stickers](#).



## FARM TO SUMMER:

It's never too early to start planning what local produce you will feature on your summer menus. Visit [findjerseyfresh.com](http://findjerseyfresh.com) to find growers in the Garden State.

DIG DEEPER

**JERSEY FRESH**  
**JERSEY TASTES!**  
**ACTIVITY SHEETS**  
*Bountiful Blueberries*

**ALL ABOUT NEW JERSEY!**  
New Jersey's state fruit is the blueberry and it ranks 3th in the nation in blueberry production. Blueberries are in season during the summer months June & July. They are largely grown in the south Jersey Pine Barrens because the blueberry plants like the acidic, sandy soil there.

**HOW DOES IT GROW:**  
Check out this [video](#) on how blueberries grow!

**FUN FACT:**  
Native Americans once called them "star berries," because the five points of blueberry blossoms make a star shape.

**RECIPES:**  
Breakfast: Blueberry Banana Oat Bars  
Lunch: Blueberry Coconut Roll Ups  
Dinner: Jersey Fresh Blueberry Pizza  
Fun: Blu-Nana Smoothie

**ACTIVITIES:**  
Pre-K, 1-2: Blueberries for Sal Book with Lesson plans  
Upper Elem 3-5: Berry Spinach Smoothie  
Middle: Farms of blueberries and Recipe Flavor Pairings  
HS: Article about Wild Blueberry Production in NJ

**NUTRITION FACT:**  
Blueberries contain more disease-fighting antioxidants than almost any other fruit or vegetable.

**MADE IN COLLABORATION WITH:**  
Farm to School Vegetable

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**JERSEY FRESH**  
**JERSEY TASTES!**  
**ACTIVITY SHEETS**  
*Stupendous Sweet Potatoes*

**ALL ABOUT NEW JERSEY!**  
Sweet Potatoes are in season in New Jersey during late summer into the winter, from late July through December. Once harvested, you can cure sweet potatoes and they will last 4-6 months on average. Here are some curing tips.

**HOW DOES IT GROW:**  
Sweet Potatoes grow under the ground on long vines and need lots of space to spread out and grow. Here are some sweet potato growing tips. They are typically grown from slips, which are sprouts that are grown from stored sweet potatoes. You can buy slips from garden centers, nurseries, or local farmers or grow your own inside.

**NUTRITION FACT:**  
Make sure to leave the skins on your sweet potatoes, they are a great source of fiber. Sweet potatoes are also high in beta carotene, vitamins E and C, iron, potassium and vitamin B-6.

**ACTIVITIES:**  
Pre-K: Grow it, Try it, Like it. Sweet Potato Hill  
Lower & Upper Elem: Harvest of the Month Lessons  
Middle: Sweet Potato History Lessons  
HS: Sweet Potato Newsletter

**RECIPES:**  
Breakfast: Sweet Potato Breakfast Buns  
Lunch/Dinner: Mediterranean Baked or Black Bean Bean Stuffed Sweet Potato Sweet Potato Chili  
Simple: Roasted Sweet Potato

**FUN FACTS:**  
Sweet potatoes and yams are NOT the same thing! Sweet potatoes are actually a flower, a part of the same genus as the morning glory flower. Meanwhile, yams are related to lilies and grasses, and are not even in the same botanical family.

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