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FLORIDA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM AWARDS 37 TEACHER GRANTS IN 2014

GAINESVILLE – Vertical school gardens, classroom embryology units and schoolyard aquaponics systems are just a few of the projects funded with Florida Agriculture in the Classroom (FAITC) Teacher Grant money for the 2014-15 school year.

Altogether, FAITC funded 37 projects for a total of \$27,904. The projects are expected to reach an estimated 12,525 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade around the state.

“The teacher grant projects we’re funding are very innovative, and show how effective agriculture can be as a teaching tool,” said Ken Barton, chairman of Florida Agriculture in the Classroom and executive director of the Florida Peanut Producers Association. “We’re happy to provide these funds to help teachers educate their students about the Florida agriculture industry.”

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is a non-profit organization based in Gainesville that is charged with educating students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade about the source of their food, fiber and fuel, which is done by providing teachers with curricula, materials, workshops, grant money and more. Its main source of funding comes from sales of the agriculture specialty license plate called the ‘Ag Tag.’

The 37 projects Teacher Grant projects approved for funding are:

1. **“Raising Beds to Fortify Roots”** – Third through fifth grade students at Metcalfe Elementary in Alachua County will refurbish their gardens to integrate the garden more solidly into classroom curriculum and encourage students to consider farming and agricultural businesses as possible careers for them in the future.
2. **“Hydroponics in the Hallway”** - Students at Deane Bozeman High School in Bay County will install hydroponic systems in the hallway of their school.
3. **“Hungry Caterpillars and Beautiful Butterflies”** – Second grade students at Coquina Elementary School in Brevard County will use a butterfly garden to teach students the lifecycle and behavior of the butterfly through direct observation, reading and science texts and creative reading and writing.
4. **“Gardening with Technology Kids”** – Transitional kindergarten students at Tropical Elementary in Brevard County will incorporate technological literacy with environmental knowledge and actions. The end goal of this project is to provide students with books and videos explaining natural phenomena.
5. **“Agriculture for Florida’s Fluttery Friends”** – Elementary students at Bennett Elementary in Broward County will use a butterfly garden to show first-hand the four stages of the butterfly lifecycle, plant parts and how humans get their nutrition.
6. **“Here Little Chickie”** – Elementary students at Sallie Jones Elementary in Charlotte County will learn about the chicken egg development during the 21-day cycle.

7. **“Where’s the Soil?”** – Students at Wilkinson Junior High in Clay County will grow vegetables hydroponically and traditionally to provide an engaging, hands-on, cross-curricular form of instruction that enables students to apply what they have learned in the classroom with the actual growing process in action.
8. **“Kids Feeding Kids”** – Students at Richardson Middle School in Columbia County are going to raise fruits and vegetables to support the school’s backpack program by donating all produce they grow to go home with students in need.
9. **“Protein and Produce Growing Together through Aquaponics”** - Culinary arts students at South Miami Middle Community School in Dade County will use an aquaponics system to learn about the symbiotic cultivation of plants and aquatic animals in a recirculating environment.
10. **“Growing with the ‘E’”** – Students at Miami Edison Senior High in Dade County will create a garden to unite teachers and students in bettering their school, eating healthy, taking care of their environment and learning about farming and agriculture.
11. **“That Grows Here? Exploring Florida’s Agriculture”** - Students at Chets Creek Elementary in Duval County will continue their garden project to allow kids to explore Florida’s agriculture in a multi-disciplinary manner.
12. **“Urban Container Gardens for Sustainable Lifestyles”** – Students at Oceanway Middle School in Duval County will create container gardens in an urban environment to show students how to grow fresh vegetables in small spaces.
13. **“Getting that Green!”** – Students at Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technologies in Duval County will use a greenhouse to learn about cloning of plants as part of the school’s biotechnology program.
14. **“Seed the Superhero”** – Pre-school students at St. Clement Early Childhood Center in Hillsborough County will learn how plants grow. The project will give younger students the opportunity to count and sort seeds and predict what will happen when seeds are planted.
15. **“Let’s Grow Together”** – Pre-kindergarten through third grade students at Claywell Elementary in Hillsborough County will expand their school garden to give them hands-on, scientific experiences with long-term botanical investigations, and allow them to work collaboratively to understand the benefits of gardening on the environment.
16. **“Panther Gardening”** – First, fourth and fifth grade students at Hunter’s Green Elementary in Hillsborough County will continue the momentum created last year with their gardens to create a watering system that is economical and easy for students to install.
17. **“Gardening is SOUP-ER fun, it’s in the air!”** – Students at Treasure Coast Elementary in Indian River County will learn about population growth and how they can play an important role in finding ways to feed the world’s growing population. They also will add an aeroponics system and expand an existing hydroponics garden.
18. **“Bella Verde Farms”** – Students at Cape Coral High School in Lee County will maintain and expand their 2,000-square-foot garden. They will incorporate a drip irrigation system, two rain barrels and four raised herb beds to build an open-air classroom and host a beehive.
19. **“Fish, Butterflies and Veggies!”** – Students at Amos P. Godby High School in Leon County will improve their existing aquaponics garden to learn how to raise tilapia and plants. They also will increase the size of the garden five-fold to give more students an opportunity to raise plants to take home.
20. **“Eggs-ploring the Science of Embryology in Eggs-tended Day”** – Elementary extended day students in Marion County will participate in an embryology project at two after school programs. The project will help students develop science, math and life skills.
21. **“Hobe Sound Horticulturist”** – Students at Hobe Sound Elementary in Martin County will use their school garden to help them develop a love of gardening, and increase awareness of the process of growing and enjoying the bounty of a harvest.
22. **“Life Cycle of a Chicken”** – First grade students at Rock Springs Elementary in Orange County will start an embryology project to teach the life cycle of chickens.
23. **“A Special Hearts Farm”** – High school students with autism and intellectual disabilities at Dr. Phillips High School in Orange County will create a classroom farm to house the four farm animals donated to their agriculture program. The project will teach students the economics of maintaining a farm.

24. **“Koa’s Growing Kinder-Garden”** – Students at Koa Elementary in Osceola County will maintain their existing garden and use the funds to keep the project growing.
25. **“Green Thumb Project”** – Middle school students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Emerald Cove Middle School in Palm Beach County will develop a garden using an aeroponics tower system that will integrate curriculum to provide expanded learning opportunities.
26. **“From the Ground Up”** – Fourth and fifth graders at Bardmoor Elementary in Pinellas County will expand their school garden and focus on topics such as planting and harvesting of fruits and vegetables, developing healthy eating habits and planting Florida native flowers and plants.
27. **“Roosevelt Farms”** - Elementary students at Roosevelt Academy in Polk County will continue their garden project and use the alternative growing method of using Coir grow bags to grow sweet bell peppers. They will also learn about biological controls to reduce crop damaging insects.
28. **“Cardinals Care K-5 Garden”** – Students at Polk Avenue Elementary in Polk County will add to their hydroponics garden more Coir grow bags and nutrients for their hydroponics system.
29. **“Plants and Fishes and Water, Oh My!”** – Fifth grade ACCEL Program Students will lead the project for kindergarten through fourth grade students at Valleyview Elementary in Polk County. The students will design, build and maintain a sustainable aquaponics food production system.
30. **“Critter’s Spectacular Senses Garden”** – Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students at Bagdad Elementary in Santa Rosa County will add a greenhouse to their existing outdoor classroom to enrich learning through their senses.
31. **“Crackin’ Up: Hatching our Eggs!”** – Middle school Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students at Martin L. King Middle School in Santa Rosa County will learn about the process of hatching eggs, the life cycle of a chicken and the concept of farm to table.
32. **“Roots- The More the Merrier!”** – Middle school students at Pace Brantley School in Seminole County will compare the fibrous roots of plants grown in Rootgrow bags versus smooth walled propagation trays. Students also will learn and incorporate lessons on essential soil nutrients and properties of soils.
33. **“Sprouting Knowledge in an Enabling Garden”** – Special needs students at Goldsboro Elementary Magnet School in Seminole County will experience hands-on lessons with a school garden specially designed for them.
34. **“Mrs. Heller’s Garden Gurus”** – Second graders at Perry Primary School in Taylor County will use a garden to teach students about responsibility, the life cycle, how to take care of individual plants, harvesting, and teamwork and how to take pride in their work.
35. **“Gardening without Soil”** – Students at University High School in Volusia County will use a Dutch bucket hydroponics system to grow Florida vegetables. The students will design and conduct an experiment testing a student-generated question.
36. **“Growing Up In a Garden!”** – Kindergarten students at Forest Lake Elementary in Volusia County will refurbish their existing school garden and continue to participate in lessons that tie it to their classroom instruction.
37. **“New Age Hydro Horticulture”** – Kindergarten through eighth grade students at Burns Science and Technology Charter School in Volusia County will set up and maintain a vertical growing system. The older students will then create lessons to teach younger students about their experience.

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