

# HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY 2026 YOUTH VEGETABLE AND FRUIT SHOW RULES AND REGULATIONS

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UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County  
&  
Steed Farms

## IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

February 4, 2026	All entries are due online with Eventbrite by 11:59 pm.
March 15, 2026	Must take photo by this date to be submitted to Shawn Steed <a href="mailto:ststeed@ufl.edu">ststeed@ufl.edu</a> via email.
April 15, 2026	All vegetables/fruit in show must be brought to the Hillsborough County Extension office and properly entered and displayed. Record books are due.
April 16, 2026	Awards for best in show.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Youth Vegetable and Fruit Show is to encourage the **production** of high-quality vegetables and fruit among students in Hillsborough County and to reward junior growers for their efforts. The general public is invited to support this event.

The Youth Vegetable and Fruit Show is an activity which enables students to showcase their production project. The activity limits the student to exhibiting a small amount of produce. The produce entered should not be the extent of the production project. In most instances, students should have their own small garden and select representative vegetables and/or fruits for entering in the Youth Vegetable and Fruit Show. **Purchasing produce before the deadline for exhibiting is prohibited.** The project is intended to simulate growing plants at a production farm.

The vegetables and/or fruit plants can be grown at school, club gardens, home, or on a piece of land on a commercial farm. In all growing locations, it is the student's responsibility for the upkeep of the plants. These plants can be grown in the ground, raised beds, potted, or grown in a hydroponic set up.

**Email pictures** of the produce being grown to Shawn Steed ([ststeed@ufl.edu](mailto:ststeed@ufl.edu)) by March 15, 2026. **Record books** will be emailed to contestants after they are registered through Eventbrite. Completed record books are due at time of check-in on April 15, 2026.

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE:** The Youth Vegetable and Fruit Show will be held at the UF/IFAS Hillsborough County Extension Office April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The exhibits will be housed in the reception area for one day and judged. **Produce shall be checked in between 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday April 15, 2026, and judged on April 16, 2026 at the Hillsborough County Extension Office.**

Each exhibitor is eligible to pre-enter and show up to three (3) different entries in the Vegetable and Fruit Show. Entries must be different types of produce (example: cabbage, tomatoes, peppers). **PRODUCE MUST BE CLEANED FROM ALL DIRT BEFORE CHECK-IN AT SHOW TIME.** The judges reserve the right to discard produce which deteriorate and become unattractive for display. No produce will be returned to

exhibitors. The Extension Office will dispose of all produce at the close of the show for health and safety reasons. **HERBS** must be in a cup, vase or glass jar with water at time of check-in. All vases and jars will be returned to contestant when awards are distributed at the end of the show.

Produce will be graded and inspected by a volunteer screening committee upon check-in on **April 15, 2026**. Strict quality standards have been established for the Show to encourage the production of quality produce.

### VEGETABLES & FRUIT

The following are the acceptable varieties and the amount or quantity of specimens necessary to constitute an entry:

Vegetable:	Quantity:	Vegetable:	Quantity:
Arugula	1 bunch (15 tied)	Kohlrabi	3
Basil	1 bunch (12 stems tied)	Leeks	4
Beans – Snap or Pole	2 dozen	Lettuce – head	2 heads
Beets – Bunched	3 – tightly tied	Lettuce – leaf	1 bunch (12 leaves tied)
Beets – Topped	3	Mint – bunched	1 bunch (12 stems tied)
Berries	1 pint	Mustard – bunched	1 bunch (12 leaves tied)
Bok choy	2 heads	Mulberries	1 pint
Broccoli	3 heads	Onion - Bulb	2
Brussel Sprouts	2 stalks	Onion – green bunched	6
Cantaloupe/Melon	2	Parsley – bunched	1 bunch (12 stems tied)
Cabbage	2 heads	Peas – English (pods)	2 dozen
Cabbage – Chinese	2 heads	Peppers	3 or 1 pint
Carrots – Bunched	6 - tied	Potatoes – Irish	6
Carrots – Topped	6	Radishes – bunched	2 bunches of 3
Cauliflower	2 heads	Rutabaga	2
Celery	2 bunches	Spinach – bunched	2 bunches (12 leaves/bunch)
Chives – Bunched	12	Strawberries/Black Berries	1 pint
Cilantro	1 bunch (12 stems tied)	Sweet Corn	4 ears (2 husked, 2 unhusked)
Collards	1 bunch (12 leaves tied)	Swiss Chard Bunched	1 bunch (12 leaves/bunch)
Cucumber	3	Tomatoes	Large 3, Small 10
Dill	1 bunch (12 stems tied)	Turnips – bunched	3
Eggplant	2	Turnips – topped	3
Endive	2	Yellow Squash (summer)	3
Escarole	2	Zucchini	3
Kale	1 bunch (12 leaves tied)	Winter Squash	2

**Please note that any exhibit that does not follow the rules for the class will be lowered one ribbon placing.**

### ENTRIES

The deadline for all entries to the Youth Vegetable and Fruit Show is February 4, 2026 through an Eventbrite link. <https://2026hcyouthvegetableandfruitshow.eventbrite.com>

**ELIGIBLE CONTESTANTS:** Any youth aged 8 years old or older and residing in Hillsborough County not graduated from the 12th grade is eligible to participate. Affiliation with agriculture clubs or 4-H is not

required. Youth may participate as individuals, agriculture club members/4-H members, or through their club chapters as a group effort.

#### **CHAPTER ENTRIES:**

FFA and 4-H chapters are eligible to submit group projects in the contest. Each chapter will be subject to the same submission limits as individual exhibitors (3 entries per chapter). Members can submit individually in addition to chapter entries. Teachers/group leaders are responsible for submitting applications and photos for chapter entries.

**The committee reserves the right to reject exhibits of inferior quality and diseased entries. An entry grading and screening committee will determine if each exhibit meets quality standards. The committee also has the power to interpret the Rules and Regulations and settle any disputes. All committee decisions are final.**

The grading and screening committee will use the following criteria for accepting or rejecting entries: (A) Free from insects, disease, nutritional stress and excessive environmental injuries, (B) Acceptable size for the entry, (C) Proper quantity of entry.

Students will be expected to know the correct common and botanical names of the plants entered. **Each entry must be labeled with the student's name, and the correct common and scientific name of the plant (and variety name, if available) on labels provided by Hillsborough County Extension Office at time of drop off.**

**JUDGING:** All exhibits will be judged on Wednesday, April 16, 2026, **between 8 a.m. and 12 noon.**

**CLASS A – LEAFY GREENS** – arugula, broccoli raab, collards, endive, escarole, kale, head lettuce, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, spinach, Swiss chard, turnip greens.

**CLASS B – FRUITING VEGETABLES** – beans, cucumbers, eggplant, English peas, southern peas, peppers, strawberries, tomatoes, squash, zucchini.

**CLASS C – ROOT CROPS** – beets, carrots, potatoes, rutabaga, radish, turnips.

**CLASS D – HEADING CROPS** – broccoli, bok choy, brussel sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi.

**CLASS E – HERBS AND MISC.** – basil, chives, cilantro, dill, mint, onions, green onions, parsley, oregano

**CLASS F – FRUITS AND BERRIES** – Strawberry and other berries.

AWARD CATEGORY	AWARD	SPONSOR
Grand Champion Exhibit	\$100.00	Steed Farms (Plant City)
Reserve Champion Exhibit	\$50.00	TBD
Champion Class Entry - Each Section (6)	\$20.00	TBD

If you'd like to be a sponsor of the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County Youth Fruit and Vegetable Show please contact Shawn Steed 813-744-5519.