



Testimonials

“This incubator program has helped me learn the realities of farming. There will always be an issue that you have to solve, from insects and diseases to infrastructure.

I enrolled to learn from mistakes on a small scale and gradually grow before my livelihood depends on it. There’s no better program to learn to be a farmer.”

—Igor Pertile

“We joined the incubator because we wanted the opportunity to learn more about farming in a low-risk, high-learning and high-reward environment.”

—Kabrena and Jabari Williams

About Us

UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County

partners the resources of Sarasota County, the University of Florida, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

We translate expert research into community initiatives, classes, and volunteer opportunities related to six core areas: 4-H youth development; agriculture; gardening and landscaping; natural resources; nutrition and healthy living; and sustainability.

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UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County



Small Farm Incubator and Apprenticeship Programs

*Hands-on learning.
Expert mentorship.
Exciting opportunities.*

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Sarasota County

MOTE MARINE LABORATORY
& AQUARIUM



Incubator

The Small Farm Incubator Program supports the next generation of farmers by fostering agricultural innovation and promoting sustainability. Each participant (family/ household) can start with an 8-foot by 10-foot plot at a Sarasota County Extension community garden or an 1/8-acre site at the Mote Aquaculture Research Park. Participants can design, implement, and adjust plans for future farming operations, scaling them to larger areas over time and trial. Starting small allows for firsthand experience with and education about pest control, crop growth, marketing and business management. In this way, the plot can eventually transition to an operational farm with sustainable profit margins.



Incubator Levels

STAGE	AREA	DURATION
Pilot (optional)	80 square feet in community garden	3-6 months
Small plot	Lease 1/8- to 1/4-acre plot	12-18 months
Large plot	Lease 2- to 3-acre plot	12-18 months
Operational business	Buy land	Launch

Learn more

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Apprenticeship

The Apprenticeship Program connects apprentices with active farmers and ranchers, providing hands-on work experience and practical education under the mentorship of successful entrepreneurs and producers. Participants gain practical skills in a range of areas, including crop cultivation, soil health, irrigation, pest and disease control, equipment operation, harvesting, marketing and management. In partnership with Mote Marine Laboratory, participants can also train with aquaculture experts at the Ron and Marla Wolf Aquaponics Center at Mote Aquaculture Research Park, to gain knowledge of aquaculture, aquaponics and soil-based vegetable and fruit production.



About Mote Aquaculture Research Park

This state-of-the-art research center, located 17 miles inland in Sarasota County, focuses on sustainable saltwater system technologies used in the production of high-value crops, such as saltwater vegetables and fish.



CREDIT: Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium

