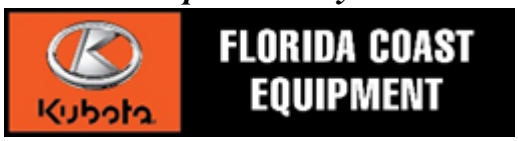
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY 2027 YOUTH PLANT SHOW AND SALE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Sponsored by



Located in the



LIVESTOCK ARENA

New changes highlighted in yellow!

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

November 2, 2026	**All plants for Sections A, B, and C, must be in the participant's possession.It is recommended that students should have plants before this deadline.**
November 2, 2026	**Students who wish to participate as 4-H members must have current enrollment forms on file in the Hillsborough County 4-H office.**
November 2, 2026	**All ShoWorks electronic registrations, names of plants, plant receipts, and/or pictures are due at the Strawberry Festival Office by midnight. https://flstrawberry.fairwire.com/**
November 17, 2026	**Mandatory Meeting at the Strawberry Crest High School Auditorium, 6:30 pm. All exhibitors must attend!**
January 1, 2027	**All plants for Sections D and E must be in the participant's possession and receipts or pictures taken and submitted.**
March 3, 2027	**All record books and plants are checked in to show, screened, and displayed.**
March 7, 2027	**Plant Sale. All participants must be present at 10:30 am for the exhibitor meeting**
March 31, 2027	**Copies of all Thank You letters to buyers must be received by the Florida Strawberry Festival office to avoid forfeiture of funds.**

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Youth Plant Show and Sale is to encourage the production of high-quality plant material among Hillsborough County students of FFA, YLPA and 4-H Club members and to reward junior growers for their efforts.
The general public is invited to support this event. Marketing is an important part of production; therefore exhibitors must contact potential buyers for their plants.

The Youth Plant Show and Sale is an activity that enables students to showcase their production projects. The

activity limits the student to exhibit a small number of plants. These plants should not be the extent of the production project. In most instances, students should have their own small nursery and select representative plants for entering the Youth Plant Show and Sale. Purchasing a small number of plants before the deadline each year for exhibiting is discouraged. **The project is intended to simulate growing plants at a production nursery and plants should be stepped to a larger size from purchase and not merely maintained in the same condition as they were purchased, unless the plants are not fully grown in the container they are purchased in. These plants should be finished growing in the size obtained. Be careful stepping plants into larger containers and not being finished rooting before show time.**

DATE, TIME, AND PLACE: The Youth Plant Show and Sale will be held in conjunction with the Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City, **Mar 3-March 7, 2027.** The exhibits will be housed in the Swindle Family Pavilion west of the Agriculture Show Arena on the Festival Grounds. Plants shall be entered between **12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, 2027.**

Plants will be graded and inspected by a volunteer screening committee at entry. Only Florida No. 1 and Florida Fancy plants as described in Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will be eligible for auction (http://tiny.cc/FDACSGS22). Florida No. 2 and Cull plants must be taken back to the student's nursery. Strict quality standards have been established for the Show and Sale to encourage the production of quality plants. All plants must be fully rooted in containers to enter the show. Do not try to pot plants into larger containers to gain more size causing them to not root completely before show time.

Each exhibitor may choose up to two lots of plants to exhibit at the show. Both lots are guaranteed to sell in the silent auction. One lot of plants may be entered into the drawing to be auctioned in the live auction. To reduce the amount of time the auction takes, 80 lots will be randomly drawn to enter the live auction right after plant check-in. All Senior students will be allowed to show in the live auction with other students randomly selected for the balance of the 80 auction slots. All plants will compete for all awards. All live auction plants will be sold to the highest bidder at the sale, scheduled to start at **2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 7, 2027.** An awards presentation will be held immediately before the start of the auction.
Additional plant lots, and those not selected for the live auction will be sold at a silent auction at 11:00 am on Sunday, March 7, 2027. The Silent auction will close at 1:30 pm prior to the live auction. **All exhibitors must attend a brief mandatory meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 7, 2027, prior to the auctions for instructions on showing plants, loading, and cleaning up.**

AUCTIONEERS
A professional auctioneer will be contracted through the Florida Strawberry Festival, Inc. for the youth plant show and sale.

ENTRIES
All potential participants must attend the mandatory meeting after registration with the Strawberry Festival. One meeting will be held at the Strawberry Crest High School Auditorium November 17, 2026 at 6:30 pm. Each youth participant must be present (no exceptions) at this mandatory entry events to participate in the Plant Show and Sale. Students will not be allowed entry after the seminar has started.

The deadline for all electronic entries to the Plant Show and Sale is midnight November 2, 2026. Electronic entry forms must be completed online, available from the Strawberry Festival. Entrants must complete the electronic form and upload a picture with time/date stamp or receipt of plant purchase. Exhibitors are also required to enter the name of their plants as accurately as possible. This data will be used at check-in to verify lots entered. Remember to save a copy for the record book. FFA Teachers, YLPA and 4-H Leaders are encouraged to attend the entry meeting.

SPONSORSHIP: The Hillsborough County Youth Plant Show and Sale is co-sponsored by the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association, the Florida Strawberry Festival, Inc., and the UF/IFAS Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service. The event will be administered by members of the UF/IFAS Hillsborough County Extension Environmental Horticulture Youth Advisory Committee, Kassy Mendenall (Co-chair) Audie Ham, Jason Steward, Greg Lehman, Michelle Cesario, Amber Norris, Jemy Hinton, Kelly Messick, Jim Jeffries, Jessica Hawkins, Leah Worley, Robert Wilder, Jai Buttram, and Shawn Steed (Co-chair)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER EXHIBITS: Any FFA, Youth Leaders in Production Ag, or 4-H member attending a Hillsborough County School or 4-H club and not having graduated from the 12th grade is eligible to participate. 4-H members must be 8 years old prior to **September 1, 2026.** All ornamental plants must be purchased and paid for by the student and be in his or her possession by **November 2, 2026**, except plants in Sections D and E**.** The plants may be grown at home or personally cared for in the school or other nursery. Each student is eligible to enter and sell in a maximum of two Sections. However, students are encouraged to grow a variety of plants from different Sections and/or species within a Section. Participants must be present with their plants at the sale and must remain with their exhibit after the sale until the plants have been picked up by buyers. The student is also expected to assist in loading plants after the sale and help clean the sales building. At the conclusion of the sale, exhibitor receipts with buyers' names and addresses will be issued. Students and/or leaders and advisors should remain in the plant sale tent to pick these up after all buyers have had an opportunity to check out.

THANK YOU LETTERS TO BUYERS & CONTRIBUTORS: Students must thank all the buyers who purchase their plants & all contributors who do any monetary add-ons. Verbal thanks should be expressed and thank you notes/letters also sent or delivered to buyers at the sale. Gifts for buyers other than thank you cards are not permitted. Buyer addresses will be available at the conclusion of the sale. **The Florida Strawberry Festival office, Attn: KellieAnne Kirkland, P. O. Drawer 1869, Plant City, FL 33564-1869, must receive a copy of a written thank you letter before exhibitors' checks will be sent**. **Failure to provide copies of thank you letters to the Festival office before March 31, 2027, will result in the possible forfeiture of sale funds**.

4-H MEMBERSHIP: All 4-H members who wish to participate in the Florida Strawberry Festival Plant Show and Sale must be bona fide members on or prior to **November 2, 2026.** All enrollment forms and other pertinent information must be on file in the County 4-H Office.

RESTRICTIONS: Although the Florida Strawberry Festival will provide security for the plant exhibits, the Florida Strawberry Festival and the committee shall not be held responsible for the loss or damage of plants. Chapters, departments, or clubs are responsible for maintaining plants while on exhibit and to designate individuals to watch plant material while on exhibit. Patented plants must be accompanied by the proper patent tag.

The committee reserves the right to reject exhibits of inferior quality and diseased plants. A plant 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 plant grading and screening committee will use the Florida Grades and Standards in determining the appropriate grade for the plant. The following and other criteria will be the basis for arriving at the plant grade or rejecting entries: A) Freedom from insects, disease, nutritional stress and excessive environmental injuries, B) Sufficiently rooted completely in the container, C) Acceptable size for the container according to Florida Grades and Standards, (D) Correct pruning techniques, (E) Proper number of plants to comprise an entry.

Students will be expected to know the correct common and botanical names and container size of the plants entered. **Each plant must be labeled with the student's name, and 4-H, YLPA or FFA club.** Labels are made available at the Hillsborough County Extension Office or at the Florida Strawberry Festival, Inc., prior to auction. Exhibitors may purchase their own adjustable, wrap-around plastic plant tags on-line.

COMMISSION: A 5% sales commission will be charged to cover exhibit area arena rental. This amount will be deducted from the sales amount of plant material by the Florida Strawberry Festival.

SALE ORDER: The order of sale for the live auction will progress as follows: A random number will be generated based on the number of live auction plants. The number generated will determine the first lot sold of all lots that do not win special awards. The sale order will proceed in numerical order starting with all Seniors then the randomly drawn lots until all 80 lots are sold. There will be no advantage for early entry on **March 3, 2027**. The champion (award-winning) exhibits will be sold at the beginning of the auction in the following order: Grand Champion, Reserve Champion, Champion - Woody Ornamental, Champion - Foliage Plants, Champion - Hanging Planters, Champion- Edible Plant, Champion-Native, Champion - Miscellaneous, Champion - Liners/Rooted Cuttings/Seedlings, Champion - Number 1, Champion - Number 3, Champion - Number 7, and Awards of Distinction.

DRESS: Participants should wear the official FFA, YLPA or 4-H dress specified in their respective club's by-laws on Sunday, March 7, 2027, while participating in the sale.

PAYMENT: Individual checks will be sent directly to the exhibitors as soon as possible when plants have been paid for by their buyers. The Florida Strawberry Festival will require proof of a thank-you letter to buyers and contributors in the form of a copy of the letter before the check will be written. **Failure to provide copies of thank you letters to the Festival office before March 31, 2027, will result in the forfeiture of sale funds**. All checks issued to students should be deposited within 60 days of the issue date.

DISPLAY: All plant material must be high quality. Containers shall be attractive and clean. Buckets, tin cans, and other types of salvage containers are not acceptable. Exhibitors should use only production-type containers. Agriculture Education Instructors, YLPA and 4-H Leaders are encouraged to screen inferior quality plants before entering time. If parents are unsure of acceptable quality please call Shawn Steed at the Extension Office 813-744-5519 ext. 54147 for a second opinion.

Each individual exhibitor will be assigned a space in the plant pavilion. Only plants to be sold can be used in the exhibit (no support plants). Only hanging baskets will be allowed support structures and these will be provided by the Plant Show Committee. Please do not bring signs, banners, tiers, wagons, chairs, tables, fake flowers, etc., for displaying with plants or accentuating marketing. Just plants in the display area; other objects will not be allowed. Liners or trays may be propped up by a cinder block. Only structures for terrariums, water gardens, and miscellaneous category will be allowed.

It is also the student's responsibility to properly water plants until they are removed from the building.

The students must be present and participate at the time of exhibit set up. Parent and/or leader support is acceptable; however, the student must take an active part in the exhibit setup. Please allow time to arrange your plants. Due to limited space, no student's exhibit shall exceed a space of **3** linear feet wide in size. The committee reserves the right to adjust the space of each student's exhibit.

JUDGING: All exhibits and plants will be judged on Thursday**, Mar. 4, 2027, between 8 a.m. and 12 noon.** This is a closed judging process.

RECORD BOOKS: All participants in the Youth Plant Show and Sale are required to keep records of their production project including receipts with the purchase of the plants. If the participant doesn't have receipts either a signed letter from their 4-H advisor or FFA teacher or a time/date stamped photo will suffice.

All participants will use the Project Record Book provided by the UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County. These will be available online at https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/hillsborough/agriculture/environmental-horticulture/. This book should be printed by the participant and stapled. No record book covers or folders are permitted. Stapling pages prevents pages from sliding out during record book grading.

All participants in the Youth Plant Show and Sale will be required to turn in a complete Record Book at the time plants are entered for the Show and Sale. Participants will not be allowed to leave the staging area to enter their plants unless the record book is complete. Students who attempted to grow plants for the show but were unsuccessful may turn in a completed Record Book may compete for record book prizes.

RECORD BOOK CONTEST: The Record Book must be submitted on Wednesday**, March 3, 2027, before** plants are entered for the Plant Show and Sale. Prizes will be awarded in the following divisions. **FFA:** Senior, Intermediate- first, second, and third places. **4-H/YLPA:** Senior (ages 14-18), Intermediate (ages 11-13), Junior (ages 8-10)-first, second, and third places. The Record Book Judging Scorecard is provided inside the record book and will be judged by either FFA teachers or 4-H Agents depending upon entrants' participation.

PLANT ENTRIES

SECTION A - WOODY ORNAMENTALS: An entry in this section will consist of 10-15 plants in #1 or #2 containers, 7-10 plants #3 or #5 containers, or 3-10 plants in #7, or 3-5 plants in #10. No containers larger than #10 may be entered. Typically these plants are found in a home or business landscape. Mixing of species in an entry is prohibited, cultivars and colors can vary in a lot for the same species. For example roses consisting of yellow, red and white for one lot are acceptable. Each entry will be sold as one lot. Entries containing less than the minimum number of plants will not be accepted.

Examples of plants in this section are: *Buxus microphylla japonica* (japanese boxwood), *Callistemon spp*. (bottlebrush), *Camellia japonica* (camellia), *Camellia sasanqua* (sasanqua camellia), *Codiaeum variegatum* (croton), *Cycas spp*. (sago palm), *Elaeagnus pungens* (silver thorn), *Gardenia jasminoides* (gardenia), *Gardenia jasminoides* 'Radicans' (radicans gardenia), *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (hibiscus), *Ilex cornuta* 'Dwarf Burford' (dwarf burford holly), *Ilex vomitoria* (yaupon holly), *Jasminum spp*. (jasmine), *Juniperus spp*. (juniper), *Ligustrum spp*. (ligustrum), *Liriope spp*. (liriope), *Loropetalum chinense* (loropetalum), *Nerium oleander* (oleander), *Philodendron selloum* (selloum), *Pinus spp*. (pine), *Pittosporum spp*. (pittosporum), *Podocarpus spp*. (podocarpus), *Quercus spp*. (oak), *Raphiolepsis indica* (indian hawthorn), *Rhododendron spp.* (azaleas), *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (confederate jasmine), *Ulmus spp*. (elm), *Viburnum spp*. (viburnum), and palms among others.

No citrus or orange jasmine *Murraya paniculata may be entered!*

SECTION B - FOLIAGE PLANTS - An entry in this section shall consist of 3-10 plants in same-size production containers. Mixing of species in an entry is discouraged. Typically these plants are found in an indoor setting in a home or business. Each entry will be sold as one lot. Entries containing less than the minimum number of plants will not be accepted.

Examples of plants in this section are: *Aglaonema spp.* (aglaonema), *Araucaria heterophylla* (norfolk island pine), *Brassaia spp.* (schefflera), *Chamaedorea spp.* (bamboo palm), *Dieffenbachia spp*. (dieffenbachia), *Dracaena deremensis* (Dracaena), *Dracaena fragrans* (corn plant), *Dracaena marginata* (red-edged dracaena), *Epipremnum spp.* (pothos), *Ficus benjamina* (weeping fig), *Ficus elastica* (rubber plant), *Philodendron spp*. (philodendron), *Spathiphyllum spp.* (spathiphyllum), and ferns among others.

SECTION C - HANGING PLANTERS - An entry in this section shall consist of 3-5 hanging planters or hanging baskets. Macrame or other hangers displayed with plants must be sold with plants. Mixing species in this section is accepted. Each entry will be sold as one lot. Entries containing less than the minimum number of plants will not be accepted.

SECTION D - MISCELLANEOUS - Entries in this section containing less than the minimum number of plants or planters will not be accepted. Each entry will be sold as one lot. Mixed plant arrangements will not be judged on being fully rooted.

Type of Plant Display	Quantities of Plants
Orchid, Bromeliad, House Plant, Cactus Liners	2-3 (Flats)
Terrariums	2-5 (Terrariums)
Driftwood or Other Planters	2-5 (Planters)
Staghorn Fern	2-5
Topiary	2-5 (Topiaries)
Water Gardens	2-5 (Water Gardens)
Dish Gardens	2-5 (Dish Gardens)
Orchids	5-10
Bromeliads	5-10
Flowering House Plants	5-10
Cactus	5-10
Mixed Plant Arrangement and Other Misc. Plants	5-10

SECTION E - LINERS/ROOTED CUTTINGS/SEEDLINGS - An entry in this section shall consist of 2 trays or flats. Students entering these classes are expected to root, setup, or grow from seeds or cuttings the plants in these classes. Students should not buy, maintain and then enter the plants. At least one picture must be included in the record book of propagating plants. Liners may be purchased and then stepped to a larger size. Maximum container size is 4-1/2" and maximum flat or tray size is 18" x 18".

Woody Ornamental Liners (Rooted cuttings, seedlings, divisions)
Foliage Plant Liners (Rooted cuttings, seedlings, divisions)
Vegetables (Seedlings)- minimum size is 4” pots in trays.
Annual or Perennial Bedding Plants (Rooted cuttings, seedlings)

JUDGING AND AWARDS: Plants will be judged soon after they are placed on exhibit. All exhibits that were accepted to the auction will receive a blue ribbon. The following special awards will be presented to exhibits: Grand Champion, Reserve Champion, Champion Woody Ornamental Exhibit, Champion Foliage Plant Exhibit, Champion Hanging Planter Exhibit, Champion Miscellaneous Exhibit, Champion Liners/Rooted Cuttings/Seedlings Exhibit, Champion Edible, Champion #1 (one and two gallon containers), Champion #3 (three and five gallon containers), Champion # 7 (seven and greater sizes), and three (3) Awards of Distinction.

AWARD CATEGORY	AWARD	SPONSOR
Grand Champion Exhibit	Rosette + $75 + Plaque	Florida Strawberry Festival
Reserve Champion Exhibit	Rosette + $35 + Plaque	Florida Strawberry Festival
Champion Entry - Each Section (5)	Rosette + $25	Florida Strawberry Festival
Champion Size Winners #1, #3, and #7	Rosette + $20	Florida Strawberry Festival
Champion Native Plant	Rosette + $20	Florida Strawberry Festival
Champion Edible	Rosette + $20	Florida Strawberry Festival
Awards of Distinction (3) Each Exhibit	Rosette + $20	Florida Strawberry Festival
	Ribbon	Florida Strawberry Festival
Record Book Awards		
Senior Div. (High School, 14-18 yrs)		
First Place - FFA	$100	
Second Place - FFA	$50	
Third Place - FFA	$25	
First Place - 4-H	$100	
Second Place - 4H	$50	
Third Place - 4H	$25	
Intermediate Div. (Middle School, 11-13)		
First Place - FFA	$100	
Second Place - FFA	$50	
Third Place - FFA	$25	
First Place - 4-H	$100	
Second Place - 4H	$50	
Third Place - 4H	$25	
Junior Div. (Elementary School, 8-10)		
First Place - 4-H	$100	
Second Place - 4H	$50	
Third Place - 4H	$25	

Revised: by S.T. Steed Sept. 23, 2026