

Proclamation

The seal of the City of Tampa, Florida, is centered below the word "Proclamation". It features a circular design with a ship on the water, surrounded by the text "CITY OF TAMPA, FLORIDA" and "ORGANIZED JULY 15, 1887". The seal is flanked by decorative flourishes.

Jane Castor, Mayor

WHEREAS, gardening instills in people a greater respect and care for our environment and natural resources, and gardeners have a passion for nurturing the beauty and resources of the earth and they produce the food which feed and sustain our citizens; and

WHEREAS, **community gardens** are plots of land, often located in urban areas that are utilized by individuals and groups for private gardens that benefit the people caring for them, and they vary to include areas where people are growing fruits, vegetables and herbs, a place to create attractive plants and flowers for pleasure and community improvement, and larger areas that are cultivated for land preservation with the goal of maintaining natural beauty, and the environment is greatly impacted through gardening by returning nutrients back into the soil including composting; and

WHEREAS, in Tampa, Florida, many urban community gardens have been created utilizing abandoned properties, turning them into productive gardens that benefit the community, adding to the quality of life of our citizens by providing opportunities for exercise, social engagement, fresh and nutritious foods, and education for the young and old on the art of gardening and the pleasure it can bring; and

WHEREAS, the **Coalition of Community Gardens, Inc.** was established in 2015, and it is a network of community gardens and other allied entities formed to support community gardening, build infrastructure, share knowledge and resources, and advocate for related public policies; and

WHEREAS, **Garden Steps**, a Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization project, seeks to create community gardens with easy pedestrian and bicycle access in identified areas that have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, known as food deserts, in the city of Tampa with a goal of improving health equity and population health by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and the program received the **2019 First Runner Up Award** in the national Healthiest Cities/Counties Challenge, and the \$50,000 award helped to continue improving health equity in the Tampa community; and

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Community Gardens in partnership with Garden Steps established the Healthy 22nd Street Initiative to create a corridor of gardening along 22nd Street with the mission of education, community engagement, health and nutrition activities and establishing new gardens in the East Tampa neighborhood.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jane Castor, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Tampa, Florida do hereby proclaim April 2023, as

"COMMUNITY GARDENING MONTH"

in the city of Tampa, Florida and urge all residents to join me in recognizing the beauty and benefits found in our city because of community gardens and consider becoming involved in a local community garden or establish one to enhance a neighborhood.

Dated in Tampa, Florida, this 24th day of March 2023.





Mayor