

Fleet Farming

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In December 2013, John Rife, owner of [East End Market](#), first pitched the idea of Fleet Farming at The Hive Orlando, an [IDEAS For Us](#) “think and do tank” that calls on citizens to come up with solutions to global challenges. Over the next few months, Rife and other members of IDEAS For Us streamlined the concept.

In February 2014, The Fleet Farming pilot program converted 5 lawns to farmlettes. By summer of that year, Healthy Central Florida Foundation had awarded the program a \$5,000 grant to help it expand. By January 2015, the program had received an additional \$10k in grants from 1% For the Planet and the Cliff Bar Foundation. In August 2015, Fleet Farming Orlando was on its way to having 15 farmlettes and had sold over \$7,000 in produce. Without considering any of the grants received, Fleet Farming recouped all start up costs in the first year and profited. A true success story!

What is a Farmlette?

A farmlette is a prior lawn that is converted into a food-producing plot at least 500 square feet in size, consisting of row crops grown directly in the ground. Farmlettes are home to a wide variety of veggies, but the main crops grown are an assortment of baby greens, from Siberian Kale to Bibb lettuce, which comprise the Fleet Green salad mixes. Wherever there is grass, sun and water, be it residential or commercial yards, there is a future farmlette!

How Does it Work?

Any landowner (or renter with owner consent), can donate their chemical-free lawn to Fleet Farming. If the area is optimal for growing, we will arrange a site assessment and schedule the

installation. Each landowner must sign a 2 year agreement with a suggested donation of \$500 to the cover start-up costs (subsidies available for those who qualify). With over 300 lawns donated in our first two years, we have developed a wait-list for the Orlando area and hope to have at least 8 Fleet Farming branches with a total of 200 farmlettes throughout Central Florida neighborhoods by 2020.

What Are the Benefits?

As a farmlette host, in exchange for the donation of your lawn, you are allowed to harvest a share of the produce for your own use. Fleet Farming is responsible for the maintenance of the plot, but we encourage all of our hosts to be as engaged as they wish in the farming process. The only additional requirement of the host is to pay for the irrigation's water usage (which should not exceed \$1/month).
