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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MANATEE COUNTY FEATURES A STUDENT AND A CAREER &amp; TECHNICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

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**Inquizi**  
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SCHOOL  
**Biz**



## Teaching is sharing

Nolan Middle School offers an Agriscience class on its Career Wheel, and at the head of the class is teacher Stefani Heidenthal. Stefani brings her background of finance and banking to the Ag classroom where students are working on an aquaculture project. The classroom has its own fishery where students are raising tilapias. For this fish farming project, students measure the tilapia weekly for length and weight and then calculate percentage of growth. Students are also growing a vegetable garden with an abundance of okra, broccoli, onions and radishes. Coming up in the curriculum is hydroponics, or the cultivation of plants in water. Classroom topics are varied and the students thrive on learning new information in a hands-on environment.

As advisor for Nolan's FFA club, Stefani was pleased with the students' many award-winning entries in the Manatee County Fair. For Stefani, whether in the classroom or at an FFA event, teaching is sharing and there is a wealth of sharing every day. Whether she is sharing technology, life experiences, or encouragement, students are blooming and becoming lifelong learners.

KIDZ  
**Biz**  
 & Buzz



## Living and Learning on the Land

Lacy Kersey loves animals. Living on a 200-acre farm offers a lot of room for pets. She enjoys four horses, two pigs, dogs, cats, chickens, ducks and a crazy goat named Summer, not including the one-hundred head of cattle, to be precise. When Lacy is not out riding the ranch she attends eighth grade at Nolan Middle School where she plays French horn in the band and is a member of the National Junior Honor Society and the National FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) Organization. Being involved in the Nolan Chapter of FFA is a perfect fit for Lacy. Last year she sharpened her leadership skills as president of the club. This year she is a member of the Chapter Team and the FFA District Chair. Lacy completed comprehensive independent research for several FFA competitions. She placed first in the FFA State Land Judging contest last year and was amazed to learn about all the qualities and properties of soil. She also placed first in Extemporaneous Speaking where her topic was Urban Agriculture. Lacy Kersey—you are a winner!

InnoVators

# NOLAN MIDDLE SCHOOL AGRISCIENCE & FFA

## THE SCIENCE AND CYCLE OF SOIL

If you've worked with gardens or potted plants, you're used to getting that dark, rich soil all over your hands. You've cupped handfuls of potential life, of possibilities, of something edible or something beautiful. But have you ever thought about what soil contains? You might be surprised.

Soil is like the skin of the earth. It's the material able to support plant life and growth, and it's composed of disintegrated rock, minerals, water, air, and humus, or organic matter that can't break down any further. There are different layers of soils depending on the surrounding climate and the influence of living organisms. Dead matter also contributes to soil formation; when plants and animals die, they decompose and become part of the soil. It's a continuous cycle of life and death.

Earth is unique in its "soiled" state. Since there is no apparent life on other planets, there is no soil either—only rocks and dust. This humus-rock-organic material is essential for life here; our supplies of food and oxygen would disappear if plants ceased to grow.

The next time you plant seeds or break up clods of dirt, think about what you're really working with. That soil could be a thousand years old, made up of the lives and deaths of a hundred plants or animals, sprinkled with pieces of rock or sand. It's a miracle of life waiting to happen and to be passed on.



DISCOVER  
 the  
**Future**



## Career Pathways in Manatee County

**Regional Careers:** Here are examples of agriscience occupations and current wages in the Suncoast Workforce Region.

Occupational	Entry Level	Exper.
Soil and Plant Scientists	\$26.69	\$34.39
Environmental Scientists	\$16.99	\$26.78
Farm and Home Management Advisors	\$11.05	\$24.53
Agricultural and Food Science Technicians	\$12.56	\$17.30
Agricultural Inspectors	\$15.05	\$24.46
Veterinary Assistants	\$7.75	\$10.68
Veterinarians	\$22.01	\$48.14

Source: <http://fred.labormarketinfo.com>  
 FL Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics & Wages Program

**Career Pathway:** Students desiring a career in agriscience can find related educational programs at these area schools\*:

Nolan Middle School  
 Lakewood Ranch High School  
 University of South Florida

\*Other Manatee schools may offer similar programs. Listed schools are related to today's issue.

WEB  
**Wise**

Check out the following websites:

[www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)  
[www.flffa.org](http://www.flffa.org)  
[www.wtamu.edu/~crobinson/DrDirt.htm](http://www.wtamu.edu/~crobinson/DrDirt.htm)  
[www.thegardenhelper.com/terrarium.html](http://www.thegardenhelper.com/terrarium.html)

Explore  
 IT

## Go Grow Something!

"If you have a seed, a Gatorade bottle, and some soil—you've got yourself a project."

Stefani Heidenthal, Nolan Middle School Agriscience Teacher

For this activity, you are going to make a terrarium or a small environment where plants can grow. You will need:

- A container—a large soda bottle, Gatorade bottle, or a ceramic bowl will work
- Sand or pebbles
- Spanish moss
- Soil
- A seed—you can buy a packet of seeds or use seeds from fruit. A bean will work, too.

1. First, clean the container with soapy water. Make sure all soap residue is washed away.
2. Add a thin layer of sand or pebbles at the bottom of the container. This will help with water drainage and management.
3. Get some Spanish moss from an oak tree and place it on top of the sand/pebble layer. This helps to separate the sand and the soil.
4. Now pack in the soil in a thick layer.
5. Finally, plant the seed(s) and watch it grow.

Note: Terrariums require the same care that other potted plants do: sunlight and moderate amounts of water.



InquiziKidz page is published every Wednesday in Bradenton Herald. Provided by Newspaper in Education, Stefanie Overturf (941) 748-0411 ext. 5832, soverturf@bradenton.com Julie Beacham-Hooie, Page Editor.

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