

NOVEMBER 2023

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

CGUA MEETING NOTES

The Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture working group met on September 28th in-person at North Hi-Mount Elementary School. Eight members were in attendance.

Meeting Discussion & Announcements:

- Anne and Mary Jo provided an update on the grant that was awarded to the NTx School Garden Network and led the group in a brainstorming activity to gather insight from the group.
- The group also discussed potential meeting locations and guest speakers for the upcoming TCFPC Networking Meeting that will feature groups and discussion around community gardens & urban agriculture.
- Lauren provided a written update about TAFB's Community Garden Network.
- Becca provided updates on the Cowtown Farmers Market, their upcoming events and program activity.
- Dave announced that the working group has received grant funds from Texas Health Resources to provide garden and farm tours.
- A recap on the informal August 31st CGUA gathering was given.
- The meeting ended with a tour of the North Hi Mount school garden, led by Anne.

The next CGUA meeting will be on November 30th at 3pm. Location TBD.

Please plan to attend the TCFPC General Networking meeting on November 2nd from 5:30-7:30pm at TAFB (2525 Cullen St. 76107). We would like to have a good showing from the CGUA working group to provide ample opportunities for networking and discussion.

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu or Lauren Hickman at lauren.hickman@tafb.org.

SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are abundant in fall and winter meals, including some of our favorite holiday meals AND they grow very well in North Texas! Sweet potatoes take between 90 and 120 days before the roots are ready to harvest. They prefer hot weather and can tolerate hot, dry summers in Texas.

- While they appear and taste very similarly, sweet potatoes and yams are not related! They aren't related to potatoes, either.
- Sweet potato varieties come in several different colors like orange, yellow, red, purple and white. The flavor, nutrients and texture vary by color. The orange sweet potatoes are the sweetest.
- Sweet potatoes are grown from "slips" that sprout from a harvested sweet potato. You can easily grow them yourself at home. Plant your slips in sandy/loamy soil once the soil is warm in the early spring. They can be planted between mid-May and July.
- To get the sweetest potatoes possible, let your harvest cure before consuming! Curing involves letting your potatoes rest in a cool, dry place for at least a week before eating or storing for the winter.
- Sweet potato greens are also edible! Use them in soups or stir-fry.

Learn more cool facts about sweet potatoes at <https://www.almanac.com/plant/sweet-potatoes>.

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

November 30th, 3pm
Location: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting
Nov. 2nd, 5:30-7:30pm at
TAFB, 2525 Cullen St. 76107

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Composting
Nov. 18th, 8am-5pm
[https://savetarrantwater.com/
events/](https://savetarrantwater.com/events/)

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

EVERY Saturday, 8am to NOON
www.cowtownmarket.com
HOLIDAY MARKET - NOV. 18TH

LAKE WORTH FARMERS MARKET

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8am to NOON
www.lakeworthmarket.com
HOLIDAY MARKET - DEC. 2ND

SAGINAW FARMERS MARKET

2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8am to NOON
www.saginawmarket.com
HOLIDAY MARKET - DEC. 9TH



“November, n.
The eleventh
twelfth of a
weariness.”

**AMBROSE
BIERCE**



NOVEMBER TO-DO

Watch the weather forecast and prepare your frost protection for cold nights.

Plant cool-season and perennial herbs in the beginning of the month.

Cut back perennial herbs and flowers as they dry out.

Continue to direct-seed spinach, lettuce, peas, arugula, radishes, carrots, turnips, beets and rutabaga in any open spaces.

Continue to cover bare areas with mulch to conserve water and prepare crops for cooler weather.

Collect leaves from your neighbors for your compost pile.

FREE ‘FARM TO FORT WORTH’ EVENTS OFFER UP CLOSE LOOK AT URBAN FARMING

COURTESY OF NORTH TEXAS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

North Texas Healthy Communities (NTHC) is planting some seeds in hopes of creating future farmers by inviting the public to experience how urban agriculture is creating a healthy community. Join us for an afternoon “on the farm” and learn how our local urban farms help our community grow!

The “Farm to Fort Worth” series offers free admission at three local farms where you can experience urban farming firsthand, gain tips for growing fruits and vegetables at home, and discover how we all can support local farmers in their efforts to enhance community health. Visitors can stop in at any – or all – of the urban farms during the scheduled times, with no fees or advance registration required, and they’re appropriate for all ages. For more information, visit <https://info.bluezonesproject.com/farmtofw>.

Saturday, Nov. 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Mind Your Garden Urban Farm
3815 Timberline Drive, Fort Worth 76119

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2 to 5 p.m.
Opal’s Farm
2500 Lasalle St., Fort Worth 76111

Saturday, Nov. 18, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Tabor Farms
3400 Village Creek Road, Fort Worth 76105



While all farm events may vary slightly, at each you’ll find:

- Guided and self-guided tours
- Opportunities to meet urban farmers
- Free produce samplings and tastings
- Seeds and information for growing produce at home
- Fun activities for children

Why urban farming? The research is clear. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables reduces the risk of chronic disease and can increase lifespan. Urban farming helps make fresh produce more accessible and affordable to everyone in the community. Urban farms also help give new life to vacant or abandoned land, create employment opportunities, and alleviate the need to rely on extended supply chains and distribution networks for fresh produce.

See you on the farm!



Apple Walnut Cake

Recipe adapted from NYT Cooking

Get ready to gather around a holiday table and utilize your fall apple harvest with this easy, fast, and delicious cake recipe. We shared ours with family and it was gone before we knew it.



INGREDIENTS

- 3 C flour, plus more for dusting pan
- 1½ C vegetable oil
- 2 C sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 C peeled, cored and thickly sliced tart apples
- 1 C chopped walnuts

PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 9 inch tube pan or 9x13 cake pan.
- Mix oil and sugar in a large bowl; whisk for about 5 minutes.
- Whisk in eggs one at a time until mixture is light and creamy.
- Add vanilla; whisk to incorporate.
- In a separate bowl, mix together all dry ingredients. Fold into wet ingredients until incorporated.
- Fold apples and walnuts into cake batter.
- Transfer batter into your prepared pan. Bake for about 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Cool and serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

IN THE NEWS

- Local urban farm engages high school students to help promote farm at state fair <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/state-fair-of-texas/big-tex-urban-farm-working-with-high-school-interns-to-spark-interest-in-horticulture/3358205/>
- Business model launched in Denver combining urban farm, restaurant, and market in one <https://www.agriculture.com/former-potato-warehouse-gets-new-life-as-urban-farm-and-restaurant-8380251>
- New Orleans urban farmers prepare for climate change <https://civileats.com/2023/10/19/new-orleans-urban-farmers-prepare-for-overlapping-climate-disasters/>
- California BIPOC farmers seek equity in land cultivation <https://civileats.com/2023/10/24/california-will-help-bipoc-collective-cultivate-land-access-for-underserved-farmers/>

GARDEN RESOURCES

Local Nurseries:

[Archie's Gardenland](#)
[Calloway's](#)

Free Seeds:

[TAFB Community Garden Program:](#)
communitygarden@tafb.org
[GROW North Texas](#)

Bulk Soil/Compost/Mulch:

[Living Earth](#)
[Silver Creek Materials](#)
[City of FW Drop-Off Stations](#)

Garden Curricula:

CGUA-
<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/resources---reports.html>

Community Food Systems Map:

<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/local-food-map.html>

VIRTUAL GARDENING CONTENT

BRIT | Botanic Garden

[youtube.com/user/BRITplanttoplanet](https://www.youtube.com/user/BRITplanttoplanet)

Paperpot Co Blog & Podcast

<https://paperpot.co/the-blog/>

Tarrant Area Food Bank

[youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank](https://www.youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank)

Tarrant County Master Gardeners

[youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners](https://www.youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners)

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

[youtube.com/c/txextension](https://www.youtube.com/c/txextension)





GREG'S TOP CROPS

Broccoli, Cauliflower,
Cabbage

Carrots, Beets, Radishes

Mustard Greens,
Collards, Kale, Lettuce



FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance

farmandranchfreedom.org

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Natural Resource Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Texas Center for Local Food
texaslocalfood.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
tofga.org

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture
nifa.usda.gov/

OPAL'S PICKS

I must apologize to all our CGUA newsletter supporters – it's been a crazy busy couple of months at the farm. The fall crops are finally in after an extremely long, hot summer, the tomato plants are lush and full, and preparations for winter are well underway.

October started with NBC's 1st Look television crew coming out to interview Ms. Opal and film a segment at the farm. Several of our volunteers came out to help and create a great backdrop for the film crew. The episode will most likely run in January. We are proud to see Ms. Opal honored for her leadership and community service.

On October 11th, we welcomed folks from Unity Unlimited, Inc.; Tarleton State University; Trinity Metro; and Enterprise Rent-a-Car for lunch at the farm. The Enterprise Foundation presented a check for \$40,000 for Unity Unlimited Inc./Opal's Farm. We would like to thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their generosity and belief in Opal's Farm. This will go a long way toward the growth of our partnership with Tarleton State University and our programs for both the community and previously incarcerated persons. Incredible volunteer groups came out this month. We'd like to thank AAA Texas and Encore Bank. Both groups did an amazing job of helping us catch up on the Fall crops.

I'll be sharing specifics next month about the two new programs for our local community members to learn how to create biointensive gardens of their own – at their home or at Opal's Farm.

Opal's Farm staff also had the pleasure of attending the 11th Annual Black Urban Growers National Conference. A wealth of knowledge and connections are being made. I am learning more about how to incorporate urban agriculture into the city planning and ordinances back home. I also met with the Director of Urban Agriculture for both Atlanta and Philadelphia as well as members of their food policy councils. I can't wait to share it with you all.

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

<https://www.facebook.com/opalsfarm>