What's Growing On!

TCFPC COMMUNITY GARDENS & URBAN AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

CGUA HAPPENINGS

The last CGUA meeting was held on March 28th at the Tarrant Area Food Bank. Eight people were in attendance.

Members of the group shared updates on current projects and programming.

Grow Southeast shared:

🌸 Silver Creek Materials has donated more soil to the various projects.

🌷 Iris has named her farm "Lady Butterfly Urban Farms," and will host a ribbon cutting on April 22nd.

🌼 Opal's Farm has tilled 72 rows and will be looking for volunteers to help soon.

🌸 Friends of Cobb Park will need help wrapping trees to protect them from animals.

🌷 Greater Mt. Tabor is having to do a more involved design process than the rest.

🌼 Two new community gardens are getting started in the area - one at a church and one at the McDonald SE YMCA.

Dave's **Food Justice** students continue to work in the community. They are working with YMCA Camp Carter, TAFB, Grow Southeast, Refugee Services and Harmony Science Academy.

CGUA is always looking for more members - many hands make light work!

For more information on how to be involved in the CGUA working group, please contact our chair Dave Aftandilian at **d.aftandilian@tcu.edu**.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, May 16th from 3:00-4:30pm at Tarrant Area Food Bank (2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, TX 76107) in the Rodriguez Meeting Room-2nd Floor.

Events

TCFPC GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING, 4/4

GARDEN TOUR, 4/5
TAFB
EVENTBRITE.COM

RAINWATER HARVESTING & BUILD A RAIN BARREL, 4/15
TARRANTMG.ORG

COMPOST 101, 4/20
FORTWORTHTEXAS. GOV/COMPOSTOUT POST

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET, SATURDAYS **8AM-12PM** 3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD.

Opal's Farm

By Gregory Joel

Unity Unlimited, Inc. had their ribbon cutting ceremony for Opal's Farm on February 15th. The urban farm has been the vision of Ms. Opal Lee, a longtime Fort Worth community activist and humanitarian. Six years ago, Ms. Lee began discussions with the Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD) about using some acreage east of downtown for an urban farm to benefit the United Riverside neighborhood and the Community Food Bank on Galvez Street, where she presently serves as President Emeritus.

After speaking with many of the food bank clients, Ms. Opal envisioned a farm that would bring fresh produce to the area and provide jobs for those who face barriers to other employment such as previous incarceration. The lease was signed in early January 2019 and Ms. Opal's dream of such a farm became a reality.

The TRWD granted a total of five acres just east of downtown to Unity Unlimited, Inc. and Opal's Farm. The farm's mission – to "restore hope and vitality to neglected communities through an agricultural intervention and education" – is an extension of Unity's focus on education and helping people overcome racial and cultural division so that they can live productive lives in harmony with their fellow man.

INGREDIENTS

2 leeks
2 pounds Russet potatoes
2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 1/2 Tablespoons butter
3 cups vegetable stock
1/3 cup light cream
1/2 teaspoon salt

Leek and Potato Soup

RECIPE FROM: The Vegetable by Caroline Griffiths & Vicki Valsamis

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Scrub and rinse leeks and potatoes.
3. Trim the dark green leaves from the top of the leeks. Save a four-inch piece. Rinse and set aside.
4. Cut the whites and light green parts of the leeks lengthwise; agitate in cool water to help remove any remaining soil. Slice thinly.
5. Peel the potatoes. Save the peels from one potato. Set aside.
6. Chop the peeled potatoes into small chunks.
7. Heat the butter and 1 tablespoon oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat.
8. Add the sliced leeks and cook for 10 minutes, or until soft.
9. Add the potatoes, stir well and cook for another 5 minutes.
10. Pour in the stock and bring to a boil. Cover and cook for 15-20 minutes, until potatoes are very soft.
11. Meanwhile, toss the potato peels and sliced leek greens in a small bowl with 1 tablespoon olive oil and salt.
12. Spread in a thin layer on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes, or until golden brown.
13. When the potatoes are soft, use a blender to puree the soup. Add the cream, salt and pepper.
14. Top with the roasted leek greens and potato peels. Serve warm.

Resources

LOCAL NURSERIES:
Archie's Gardenland
Calloway's
Redenta's

FREE SEEDS:
TAFB Community Garden Program
communitygarden@tafb.org
GROW North Texas

BULK SOIL/COMPOST:
Living Earth
Silver Creek Materials
City of FW Drop-Off Stations

GARDEN CURRICULA:
CGUA-
http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicyc
ouncil.org/cgua-working-group.html

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS MAP:
http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicyc
ouncil.org/community-food-systems-
north-texas.html

April To-Do

Plant tomatoes, peppers and eggplant by seedling or transplant.

Plant zucchini, squash, green beans and cucumber from seed.

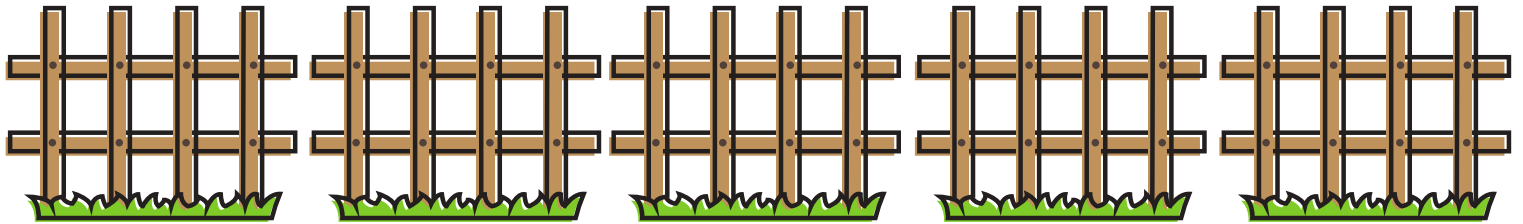Continue to plant radishes in empty spaces in the garden until the weather warms.

Plant fruit trees, shrubs and vines.

Continue to add compost while doing your spring planting.

CGUA PROJECTS?

Is there a North Texas gardening matter that you'd like to see more accessible information about? Some specific kind of advice for community gardeners that you've been wishing for? Then please let us know; CGUA is looking for new, small-scale projects to tackle.

All questions and ideas can be sent to our chair, Dave Aftandilian, at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu.

Opal's Farm (continued)

A portion of the fruit and vegetable harvest will be sold to local chefs, restauranteurs, and farmer's markets at retail prices to support local farm-to-table needs and to help make the farm economically self-sustaining. The remaining portion will go to area food deserts and low-income communities, helping restore health and vitality to local neighborhoods, and sold at cost. Ten percent of each harvest will be donated to area food banks.

The farm also creates jobs and provides job training at a living wage to encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency. Most importantly, the farm is intentionally designed to be a model for regenerative agriculture, offering education in soil conservation and teaching stewardship of the land. It's not only about the food – that's just the first step. Changing lives, educating, providing growth opportunities – that's what agricultural intervention can do!

Follow Opal's Farm on Facebook @unityunlimited..