

AUGUST 2022

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 July 21st via at 3pm via Zoom to discuss current and ongoing projects.

Meeting Recap:

- Guest speaker Brittnay Meyer, Home Horticulture Extension Agent for Texas AgriLife in Tarrant County, gave a great overview of the programs she supports, including the Master Gardeners, the Junior Master Gardeners, and the new youth-focused Learn, Grow, Eat & Go curriculum
- Greg Joel provided an update on Opal's Farm, including two new exciting grants from SARE and Rainwater Foundation, which will allow them to hire a new employee and buy a new Kubota tractor!
- Mary Jo Greene gave an update on potential funding for school gardens that TCFPC and Blue Zones can pursue this fall
- Juleon Lewis shared about an exciting new partnership his Pura Vida Youth nonprofit will start with a new public charter school in Stop Six this fall; they are seeking volunteers to help establish and teach in a new onsite school garden
- Lauren Hickman provided a written update on TAFB's Growing Healthy Communities conference (see p.2 of this newsletter) and some needs expressed by community gardeners that we might be able to help with

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, September 22nd at 3:00pm via Zoom.

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.

IN THE NEWS

- Local groups work together to reduce food waste and help urban farms - <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article262366957.html>
- A profile of The Peach Capital of Texas's history and current challenges - <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/business/growth/article262462682.html>
- The national unionizing movement touches urban farming and CEA - <https://civileats.com/2022/06/01/inside-the-effort-to-unionize-square-roots-kimbal-musks-vertical-farming-company/>
- An organization that support cooperatives discusses their role and evolution across the food system <https://civileats.com/2022/07/07/how-the-cooperative-food-movement-is-evolving/>

Events & Classes

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

August 4th, 4:00pm
Meeting ID 839 9008 4183

NEXT CGUA MEETING

September 22nd, 3:00pm
Meeting ID 972-6309-6292
Password: 834106

FWBG | BRIT

Heirloom Plants -
August 10th, 6pm
AgriLife in the Garden: Affordable
August - August 31st, 6pm

<https://brit.org/calendar-events/>

SAVE TARRANT WATER

DIY Sprinkler Savings -
August 9th, 6pm

DIY Rainwater Harvesting -
August 23rd, 6pm

<https://savetarrantwater.com/events/>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Veterans Park, Grand Pavilion
8901 Clifford St.
White Settlement, TX 76108

National Farmers Market Week
Festival - August 13th 8am-12pm

Sat. & Wed. 8am-12pm
www.cowtownmarket.com



SUMMER PROJECT UPDATES

BY BECCA KNUTSON

The local food system is abuzz with activity this summer! So, I thought I would check in with some folks to see how their projects are coming along.

GROWING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE - TAFB

The Growing Healthy Communities Conference was a great success! TAFB is grateful for the incredible presenters, exhibitors and sponsors who created a space for education and meaningful connection in our community. TCFPC was well represented as an exhibitor and helped line up several of the excellent presentations. Many thanks for your continued involvement and support!

WIC FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Tarrant Area Food Bank, Cowtown Farmers Market, Blue Zones Project and Grow North Texas are about halfway through this year's program season. Turnout from WIC participants has been excellent at Cowtown's Saturday market and there has been slower, but steady turnout at the Wednesday and Thursday markets. The weekday markets have been fun and full of collaborations to provide nutrition education and cooking demonstrations along with produce for sale. www.tafb.org/farmers-market

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET - NEW LOCATION

The search for the new market location resulted in a beautiful new home for Cowtown. Starting on Saturday, August 6th, Cowtown Farmers Market will be at Veterans Park Grand Pavilion in White Settlement at 8901 Clifford St. White Settlement 76108! Continue to support your local farmers on Wednesdays (through August) and every Saturday from 8am-12pm. www.cowtownmarket.com

GROW SOUTHEAST FARMS

Tabor Farms has joined the list of member vendors at Cowtown Farmers Market and has been attending markets since the beginning of July. They have also recently hired on Jhamal as Farm Manager!

Also, planning is underway for the next Mindful Market which is slated to happen on September 24th on the Texas Wesleyan campus. <https://growsoutheastfw.wixsite.com/texas>

"Summer's lease hath all too short a date."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



AUGUST TO-DO

Plant warm season lawn grasses. Fertilize lawns and planting areas.

Plant zinnia, marigold, purslane, salvia, and wildflowers.

Plant fall vegetables, like broccoli, carrots, turnips, garlic, green onions, cauliflower, and cabbage.

Prune flowers and vines after they have bloomed.

Water planting areas deeply, but infrequently during dry periods.

Turn the compost pile and mulch bare areas.

Can and preserve any excess harvest.



Quick Stone Fruit Jam

Recipe by Hannah Lamar Gibson

Enjoy this quick stovetop jam that comes together in less than an hour with minimal ingredients. You can use any of summer's stone fruit bounty to make this jam - peaches, nectarines, plums, or apricots. Serve with freshly made zucchini bread to enjoy more of the season's produce.



INGREDIENTS

- 3 large (peaches, nectarines) or 4-5 small (apricots, plums) stone fruits, diced with skin on
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or paste, or one bean pod, scraped.
- Pinch of salt
- Juice of one lemon

PREPARATION

- Combine diced fruit and sugar in a heavy-bottomed saucepan or dutch oven. Allow to sit for 15-20 minutes; the sugar will draw out some of the fruit's juices.
- Heat the fruit and sugar mixtures over low heat and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10-15 minutes. The mixture will begin to boil rapidly.
- Raise the heat to medium-high and stir constantly for 5-10 minutes until the fruit mixture comes to a slow, tar-like boil. Add salt and vanilla.
- Decrease the heat to low, mix in the juice of one lemon, and stir occasionally until the jam mixture has thickened.
- Allow jam to cool. Store in a glass jam jar that has been sterilized in boiling water or your dishwasher.
- Store the jam in the refrigerator. Use within two weeks.

SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - PEACHES

There is almost nothing quite as good as a ripe peach on a hot summer day in Texas. In our area, they ripen from June-August depending on the variety and weather conditions. Peaches grow on trees and often take several years of growth to get a sizeable harvest.

- Peaches originated in China and have been cultivated since at least 1000 BCE.
- Peaches are in the same plant family as roses - Rosaceae!
- Peaches are classified as drupes, meaning they are a fruit with a hard stone.
- Peaches come in many varieties. They fall into two categories - freestone and cling. Cling peaches ripen earlier and the fruit "clings" to the pit. Freestone peaches are later-season varieties and the fruit pulls away from the pit as you cut or bite it.
- The history of the famous Parker County Peaches can be traced back to the 1910s when farmers in the area were trying to diversify the crops grown there. In 1991, Texas House Resolution 203 recognized Parker County as the Peach Capital of Texas. The Hutton Family now grows most of the peaches in Parker County.

Learn more cool facts about peaches at <https://fruitguys.com/2013/08/ten-tasty-facts-you-probably-didnt-know-about-the-peach/>.

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

Dig Deep Conference 2020
tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020

Tarrant Area Food Bank
youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank

Tarrant County Master Gardeners
youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
youtube.com/c/txextension





CHARLIE'S TOP CROPS

Purple Hull peas
Barbarella Eggplants
California Wonder Bell Peppers
Waltham Butternut Squash
Gray Zucchini



SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

My dearest garden friends, it's time for me to go off on another adventure, so this will be my last garden chat. I'm going to the mountains of New Mexico in the middle of a national forest for an off-grid adventure. Before I go, I'd like to ramble on about gardening one more time. August is a hot time of year. Everyone I talk to is feeling down, ready to quit, or just feeling malaise and not sure why. I'm of the opinion that it is the heat wearing us down. The most important thing we can do during the heat is support each other. I would like to do that by sharing one of my favorite quotes: "When the going gets tough, QUIT." It's hot, y'all. I haven't had measurable rain since April, and even then, it wasn't much. Early in the morning, take the weed eater to your garden, cut it all down, and cover it with mulch. Hay, cut grass (if you have any), and/or cardboard are all good options for mulching. I reserve wood chips for my walkways, but they work for the gardens, if you scrape it off before you use the beds for fall. Give it a good watering in, and then find a comfortable chair with a good book, snuggled up under an air conditioner. I recommend 2 great books I have read this year, Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer and Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden: Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians by Gilbert Wilson, an anthropologist who helped change anthropology, as we know it.

My life has been filled beyond my imagination over the past years by the people involved in gardening and local food. I'll try to be short-winded, unlike usual, but I really want to thank everyone! When I barely knew anyone around Fort Worth, I met Brenda Patton from Blue Zones Project Fort Worth, and Micheline Hynes from the Tarrant Area Food Bank. Together, over coffee and good food, we concocted a huge hare-brained scheme to push the local food movement forward. Thank you, ladies, for the inspiration, ideas, time, and dedication to the ideals that make you a joy to be around, and amazing parts of our community. Thank you to the majestic Ms. Dr. Opal Lee and Greg Joel, and all the amazing volunteers for the fun and hard work of building Opal's Farm. I'm very proud of being involved in this project, but the good kind of pride, not the bad kind. Susie Marshall from Grow NTX has been a phenomenal friend and resource for knowledge. Thank you, Susie, for everything you have done to help me, and everything you continue to do to help others in their farming careers. Thank you, David Aftandilian, for your caring, thoughtful leadership of the Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture working group. The majority of people that have made a difference, I met through you, and I really appreciate it. I want to thank Linda Fulmer and Jesse Herrera from Grow Southeast Fort Worth for all the work that has really helped us move the needle on food production in an area where people grocery shop at dollar stores. Your dedication to the mission in the face of tremendous challenges is a testament to each of your characters. Mary Jo Greene, the "charming nuisance" to FWISD, thank you for everything you have done for school gardens in our community. Kids with gardens become adults with gardens. Thank you, Susan Barker from TAFB, for your friendship and beautiful intention that has manifested in us getting local, healthy, fresh food to people who wouldn't normally have that choice. I also want to thank Amber, Diana, and Ericka for being interns that made me a better farmer. I feel like I learned more from you than I ever taught you.

I wouldn't be able to go on this new adventure if it wasn't for two more amazing women. Building this farm was an amazing time of my life, and I don't think I could leave it without someone as smart, energetic, and dedicated as Becca Knutson to leave it to. Not only is she the chair of the Tarrant County Food Policy Council, and market manager of Cowtown Farmers Market, but she's also taking my farm into her very capable hands and will continue to produce good, clean, healthy, fresh food for our community. You're an amazing Farmer and you're going to make a big impact! I also need to thank my life partner, Laura Blaylock, the love of my life. Without your support and dedication, none of these adventures would be possible. So, let's go have another one!

And thank you to all the readers of these chats, all the people who I wasn't able to thank in this chat, everyone who works in local food, and everyone who supports local food by shopping at the farmers markets. Let's all keep this momentum rolling to build a healthy, more verdant, community, when it cools off. Until then, drink water, lots and lots of water.

Charlie Blaylock
Shine's Farmstand
Cowtown Farmers Market

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

FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.org

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Natural Resource Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
tofga.org

Texas Center for Local Food
texaslocalfood.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

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