

DECEMBER 2024

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

CGUA MEETING NOTES - 11/14/24

The CGUA working group met on November 14th at Tarrant Area Food Bank. Eleven people were in attendance.

Talia McAllister, CEO of Econautics, gave a presentation on the non-profit's proposed projects at the old Woodhaven Golf Course in East Fort Worth. The proposal is for a "living laboratory" on the back nine of the course and will include an environmental field lab, an educational corridor and an urban farm with a community market. For more information, visit: <https://econautics.org/>.

During the meeting, we also received updates from several different groups:

- Lauren Hickman provided updates from TAFB's Community Garden Network.
 - The FY24 Impact Report for the Farm & Gardens Programs is now available. Not all partner gardens have reported data as requested.
 - Penelope (Americorps Member) completed the "Harvest Card" project that will help provide visual instructions for harvesting vegetables.
 - TAFB Community Garden Network partners will have an opportunity to apply to be part of the CGUA garden tours in the spring.
 - Gardens can update their network profile online now [HERE](#).
- Joey Hughes provided updates from the Grow Southeast group with a focus on the happenings at Opal's Farm.
 - The Mindful Market continues to operate on a monthly basis. Texas Health Community Hope is running a buy back program for produce at each market.
 - At Opal's:
 - The 5k run on November 9th was a success!
 - Opal's is currently selling at their farm stand, Cowtown Farmers Market and wholesale to the Mindful Market.
 - Check out Greg's article on page 4 for information about their certificate program with Tarleton State!
- Becca Knutson reminded the group about the current, local farmers markets and encouraged everyone to visit their favorite one.
 - Watch for information about holiday markets, seasonal closings and what great in-season foods are available through the winter!
- MaryJo Greene shared news about school gardens.
 - It seems the trend in the area right now is to rehabilitate existing gardens rather than start a bunch of new ones.
 - Mary Jo & Anne wrote a Pathways curriculum for gardening in schools!
 - Mary Jo won the Texas Children in Nature Champion award!

We are always looking for newsletter submissions, both big and small! If you have a poem, pictures, events or articles to share, please send them over to tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, January 16th at 3pm. Location, TBD.

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.

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

January 16th, 3pm

Location: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting

Details TBD

FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

<https://fwbg.org/calendar-events/main-event-calendar>

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Garden workdays are posted!

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

Azle Farmers Market

<https://azlefarmersmarket.org>

Saginaw Farmers Market

<https://www.saginawmarket.org/>

MINDFUL MARKET

December 7th, 11am to 2pm

<https://coactntx.wixsite.com/funkytown-mindful-ma>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

EVERY Saturday, 8am to NOON

www.cowtownmarket.com



“Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.”

HAL BORLAND



TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN DEC!

BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

December is here and it's really time to take a little rest in the garden while the rest of our time is packed full of family, friends and holiday foods. The garden demands less of us this time of year, allowing us a small break before planting begins again in mid-January.

- **Plant quick growing crops** - Lettuce, fennel, kohlrabi, radishes, salad greens and arugula grow well and relatively quickly even during this time of year. If you'd like to keep a few things growing in December, these crops are great choices.
- **Clear spent crops & prepare beds** - When the summer crops finally quit for the season, clear them from the garden to make room for the next set of plants. Onion slips get planted starting in mid-January. If you plan for a big onion crop, be sure to clear a space for them!
- **Continue with maintenance tasks** - If you're anything like me, you still have weeds growing all over the garden that can be cleaned up in preparation for a winter rest or for more cool season crops. If you're resting during the winter, this month is a great time to clean up your borders, tend to your compost pile and apply mulch where needed.
- **Plan for irrigation and watering** - Continue watering crops and newly planted seeds and seedlings. As the weather cools, decrease the amount of water your plants receive. Monitor the forecast for potential rain and cooler nights. Be sure to protect your irrigation and water source during freezes.
- **Make any final plans for winter** - Have frost cloth and mulch ready to protect your plants on cooler nights and if we get an extended freeze. Make a plan to protect your faucets, irrigation lines and automatic timers as well.
- **Organize & plan for next year** - Take some time to reflect on this year's garden. What went well? What would you change for next year? You may also want to do a seed and tool inventory and map out you planting plan for spring.

Enjoy some rest this month in between the holidays and events. It will be spring again before we know it! Happy rest and gardening!

Featured Farm

CONUNDRUM FARMS

Owners: Cort DeHart

Location: Crowley, TX

TYPE OF OPERATION:

Community farm cultivating crops and connections

GROWING METHODS:

Regenerative, no-till, organic

TYPES OF PRODUCTS

GROWN/RAISED:

Produce

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

Farm Stand Sundays at 5544 Rocky Creek Park Rd, Clearfork Farmers Market, and produce box subscriptions @ConundrumFarmsFWTX conundrumfarms.com





EXPRESSING GRATITUDE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

BY NIKO HUNT

Giving teaches us something that receiving doesn't. It allows us to look deep within ourselves and consider ways to give back and show appreciation for the people and things that we have. Encouraging ourselves and others to do something impactful this holiday season can create opportunities of inspiration and support.

Here are a few ways to show gratitude

- Appreciate others: write a thoughtful letter or choose a meaningful gift for a loved one
- Spend time in the kitchen: cook a meal for your family and friends
- Volunteer: volunteer at your favorite organization or an organization whose mission you support
- Help others: intentionally go out of your way to support someone else with a task or need
- Don't forget about yourself!
- Reflect on the things you are grateful for: find time to meditate use a guide if needed
- Eat mindfully: eat with intention and gratitude; savor your holiday favorites
- Enjoy time off: take time to focus on your self-care; do something you love
- Write about it: keep a journal for daily reflection; end each entry with a positive thought

Two-Minute, Two-Ingredient Peanut Butter Fudge

Recipe from Sarah Lossing

INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz peanut butter or alternative
- 16 oz of vanilla frosting (premade or homemade)

PREPARATION

- Combine peanut butter and melted icing in a bowl. Mix well and transfer to a pan. Let cool until set. Cut into squares (serving size 20).



IN THE NEWS

- **Prioritizing Fort Worth Environmental Issues**
<https://fortworthreport.org/2024/11/26/residents-demand-fort-worth-prioritize-environmental-issues-in-2050-plan/>
- **Declining Fruit and Vegetable Production in the U.S**
<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/business/money-report/why-the-u-s-is-growing-less-food/3704115/>
- **Raw Milk on Texas Grocery Store Shelves** <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/state/texas/article296414939.html>

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

- Radishes
- Beets
- Salad Mix
- Mustard Greens
- Turnips



FARM RESOURCES

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 Health Resources Community Hope
<https://www.texashealth.org/About-Texas-Health/Community-Hope>

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 hope you all had a great Thanksgiving with family and friends. Thanksgiving marks the beginning of eating all you want for the Holidays! I love Thanksgiving! I love it so much I almost forgot to let you all know about a farm education program starting in January that we are really excited about.

Opal's Farm, in partnership with Tarleton State University, is pleased to announce the first cohort of "Taste the C.U.R.E." – Community Urban Farming Resource Education. The emphasis is on bio-intensive regenerative growing which produces a large amount of organic produce on small amounts of land.

"Taste the C.U.R.E" is free, but a Participation Agreement is required. The program lasts from January until June 2025 and the first cohort will be limited to 25 people. It includes both a classroom component taught by Tarleton professors and a hands-on component at Opal's Farm.

Classes meet two Saturdays a month beginning January 25, 2025, at the Tarleton State/TCC River campus downtown. They include developing seasonal goals, bed building, soil science, water conservation /rainwater harvesting, and marketing to name a few of the many topics that will be discussed. Whether you simply want to learn how to be an effective gardener at home or you're pursuing career opportunities in urban agriculture, this program is for you.

Opal's Farm will give each of the participants a 10 x 20 plot to build from the ground up. The plots have been cover-cropped for the last year and rows are already made. We'll be working the plots through the Spring season with instructors available on Saturdays to answer any questions. Although the program is over in June, participants can keep the plots as long as they would like to continue growing, or they can return the plots to be used by future cohorts.

We are excited to bring this opportunity to our community. Starting a garden is a revolutionary act – a commitment to eat healthy because we know where our food comes from, a commitment to personal and spiritual growth (playing in the dirt can be a deeply spiritual experience!), and a commitment to family and friends. Whether you want to sell at market or simply grow for your family and neighbors, we invite you to be a part of "Taste the C.U.R.E."

A link to the application is available at www.unityunlimited.org.

Greg Joel
Farm Manager - Opal's Farm
<https://www.facebook.com/opalsfarm>

