

FEBRUARY 2024

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group



The CGUA working group met on January 25th at Ridglea Christian Church. Eleven people were in attendance.

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

- Ridglea Christian Church provided an update on the transfer of TAFB's Learning Garden to their control which they have renamed as the Giving Garden, RCC has hired a part-time garden manager to lead volunteers. They are still looking for another part-time person to help and have funding to run the garden through the rest of this year, to begin with.
- TAFB has officially transferred ownership of the Learning Garden to RCC; they will be able to offer the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) along with WIC FMNP at Cowtown Farmers Market this year; Cowtown FM and TAFB will host Thursday morning markets during the summer at the new Ag Hub.
- Grow SE reported that Tabor Farms had a rough year last year but is hoping for better growth this year; Mind Your Garden Urban Farm continues to thrive and provide Healthy Hours; Opal's Farm is looking forward to growing LOTS of tomatoes this year and was finally able to harvest some honey.
- The group brainstormed ideas for this year's garden/farm tours. See page 2 for more info.
- Everyone enjoyed a tour of the Giving Garden after the meeting.

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 March 21st 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.

IN THE NEWS

- University study measures carbon footprint of urban ag vs. conventional growing techniques https://phys.org/news/2024-01-food-urban-agriculture-carbon-footprint.html#google_vignette
- A look at Restorative Farms, their mission, their founders, and their achievements in South Dallas http://www.ntxe-news.com/artman/publish/article_136173.shtml
- Ron Finley, the "Gangsta Gardener", reflects on his past and discusses current work <https://civileats.com/2024/01/09/a-ted-talk-put-ron-finley-on-the-map-10-years-later-the-gangsta-gardener-is-going-strong/>
- A Canadian farmer's operation and book detail winter farming techniques for market growers <https://civileats.com/2023/12/18/jm-fortier-wants-to-help-more-small-scale-farmers-grow-vegetables-in-winter/>

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

March 21st, 3pm
Location: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting
Thursday, March 7th
Time & Location TBD

FW BOTANIC GARDEN

Microgreens
Feb. 17th, 10am-12pm

Native Bee Homes
Feb. 17th, 10am-11:30am

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

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Farm to School Professional Development
Feb. 10th, 9am

Garden workdays are posted, too!

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

MINDFUL MARKET

Feb. 3rd, 11am to 2pm

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

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

EVERY Saturday, 8am to NOON
www.cowtownmarket.com





“If I had a flower for every time I thought of you, I could walk through my garden forever.”

ALFRED TENNYSON



Featured Farm

FIRST EARTH FARM

Owners: Larry & Cassidy Goodson

Location: Bluff Dale, TX

TYPE OF OPERATION:
Small-scale family farm

GROWING METHODS:
Combination of organic, regenerative & conventional

TYPES OF PRODUCTS GROWN/RAISED: Annual vegetables, herbs, & cut flowers, salsa, pickles, relish, jelly, premium pork products

WHERE TO FIND THEM:
Cowtown & Clearfork Farmers Markets, Seasonal Farmstand in Bluff Dale
[@firstearthfarms](https://www.instagram.com/firstearthfarms)



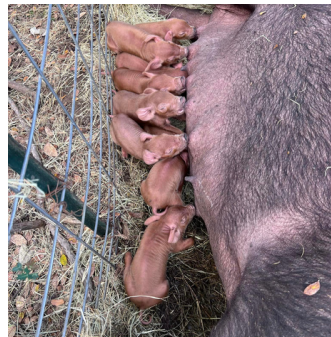
TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN FEBRUARY!

BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

January and February may seem like a slow time in the garden, but I am always surprised at how many tasks I want to complete to stay on track for a productive year. Below are several items that you may want to put on your to-do list as well!

- **Finish planting onions** - I always try to get all my onion slips planted before the end of January, but sometimes the weather or my list of tasks gets in the way. Aim to finish planting onion slips during the first half of the month.
- **Prepare for and plant potatoes** - Feed stores and nurseries should have seed potatoes in stock starting in January. Grab your favorite variety and store them in a cool, dark location for a couple weeks until they begin to sprout (chit). Prepare your ground for planting by pulling weeds, adding compost and other amendments. A day or two before you're ready to plant, cut the seed potatoes into smaller sections that each have an eye or two on them. Dust the sections in dusting, wettable sulfur and let the cuts dry before planting. Aim to plant your potatoes starting after Valentine's Day and complete the task before the end of the month.
- **Start and tend to tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings** - If you haven't started tomato, pepper and eggplant seeds yet, do so this month! Care for your seedlings and "bump" them up into bigger pots once they have a set of true leaves.
- **Prepare garden beds for spring plantings.**
- **Tend to your compost piles.**
- **Plant quick growing crops like lettuce, turnips, radishes, spinach and arugula as the weather allows.**
- **Be prepared to cover crops during a hard freeze.**



CGUA GARDEN & FARM TOURS 2024

BY BECCA KNUTSON

The CGUA working group has received a grant to provide garden and farm tours in 2024. The grant will provide a stipend to the host site and allow for free admission for those participating.

Host sites will be local farms and gardens that are willing to open their site to the public for a tour. Each site will select one aspect of their growing or organizational practices to feature and explain to visitors. (For example, during our first tour at Hollow Trace Market Farm we learned how to grow food intensively in a small space.) Hands-on activities and/or tastings are always welcome, but just showing and telling could work fine, too.

CGUA hopes to have tours planned starting in April, but could host the first one sooner if the site prefers.

If your farm or garden is interested in hosting a CGUA garden/farm tour, please reach out to Dave Aftandilian (d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) and Lauren Hickman (lauren.hickman@tafb.org) for more information.

Apple & Pear Galette

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

Are you looking to impress a special someone this Valentine's Day? Do you need a simple and impressive treat to cook for your sweetie pie? Look no further! This recipe uses just a few readily available fruits and spices, and it can warm anyone up on a cold February day. Serve as-is for a healthy dessert or sweeten it even more with a dollop of whipped cream or ice cream.



INGREDIENTS

- Single pie crust, homemade or store-bought
- 1 apple, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 pear, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 T flour
- 2 T sugar
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp cardamom
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- Pinch of salt
- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)

PREPARATION

- Make your favorite pie crust recipe and chill in the fridge for one hour. Alternatively, buy pie crust dough.
- In a large bowl, mix sliced apple, pear, flour, sugar, lemon juice, and spices. Let the fruit macerate in the mixture for 5 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 400* F and prepare a sheet pan with parchment paper.
- Roll out your pie crust into a large circle, transport it onto the prepared sheet pan, then top it with your fruit mixture leaving a 1-2 inch border.
- Fold the edges of your pie crust over the edge of the fruit filling, leaving most of the fruit topping exposed.
- Brush the exposed edges of folded over pie crust with your beaten egg to achieve a golden finish on the crust.
- Bake for about 30 minutes, remove from oven, and allow to cool.
- Serve with ice cream or whipped cream if you like.



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

Onions, Potatoes

Carrots, Beets, Radishes

Mustard Greens,
Collards, Kale, Lettuce



OPAL'S PICKS

Good Morning to all! I'm writing from the Texas Organic Farmers and Growers Conference in San Antonio this morning. We're getting to network and learn from organic growers across the state of Texas. I hope you all can join us at next year's conference. Later today I'll be on a panel about Agrotourism (aka Agritourism). I'd love to talk about it.

Agrotourism is growing throughout the country and Opal's has begun offering Agrotourism as well. It's a great alternative income stream for local, especially urban, farms. Agrotourism brings people to the farm for tours or educational activities for families and groups. There is a fee per person for the tours, which can last from one to four hours depending on the activity chosen. Our tours begin at \$15.00. People can learn how their food is grown and about the importance of locally grown produce and how it benefits the individual and the community.

One of the things that we enjoy the most is having the kids out for the day to learn about urban agriculture. Our Assistant Manager, Joey Hughes, has a background in education and has developed a curriculum for kids pre-K through high school. Many homeschoolers use the farm for field trips. There are opportunities for moms to have a day of activities provided for their small children, Mom gets to keep those active little ones busy enjoying the outdoors and learning about growing. It's a great win-win!

Agrotourism is a great way to capitalize on the growing interest in local food systems and agriculture. Getting the kids involved is paramount. The average age of a farmer or rancher in Texas is 62 (I'm finally above average at something!). Teaching kids and generating interest is essential to growing the next generation of farmers and securing our food future.

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

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

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/

