

FEBRUARY 2021

# 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 January 21st; 9 members were in attendance.

### Topics of Discussion:

- **Sharewaste App** - the group watched a quick video describing the app and its uses. Sharewaste.com is a resource that connects individuals with food waste (no meat products) to people and gardens that compost. Several people in the area have signed up to use it. The Growing Place in Hurst has received a few donations so far. The app could be a good resource for those looking for more consistent composting materials.
- **CGUA Resources Facebook Group** - the Facebook group has about 30 members so far. It may take some time to become a useful resource. We need others to share resources and invite more members to the group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cguaresources>
- **CGUA/Food Recovery Project** - Dave suggested we work on a joint project with the Food Recovery Working Group to divert more food waste from the landfill. CGUA can work on the composting aspect while Food Recovery looks to redistribute.
- **Guest Speaker** - Courtney Davis, Texas A&M AgriLife Tarrant County Extension Director, presented on the different programs and resources offered to the public. Discussion was had on how the groups can interact.
- **School Garden Mapping Project** - Mary Jo and Marsha have offered to reactivate the project in Barb's absence. They will also work on a list of school garden resources to add to the website.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, March 18th at 3pm via Zoom

For questions and more information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) or Charlie Blaylock at [shinesfarmstand@gmail.com](mailto:shinesfarmstand@gmail.com).

## IN THE NEWS

- A look at a metroplex community garden, how it has changed a neighborhood, and how it plans to grow. <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/something-good/dolphin-heights-garden-feeds-neighborhood-helps-food-pantry/2517562/>
- Art meets gardening at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden this Spring <https://fwtx.com/culture/artist-stickwork/>
- Cultivating community through agriculture and addiction recovery, Simple Promise Farms uniquely address several social issues <https://www.austin360.com/story/lifestyle/food/2021/01/08/recovery-house-elgin-uses-12-step-work-vegetable-farm-help-people-addictions-heal/4024381001/>

## Events & Classes

### TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

February 4th, 4pm

<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/news---events.html>

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

March 18th, 3pm

Meeting ID: 940-7952-12487

Passcode: 840374

### TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK

Understanding Healthy Soils & Organic Gardening - Feb. 17th, 2pm

<http://tafb.org/events>

### BRIT

Spring Pruning in the Garden - Feb. 6th, 9am

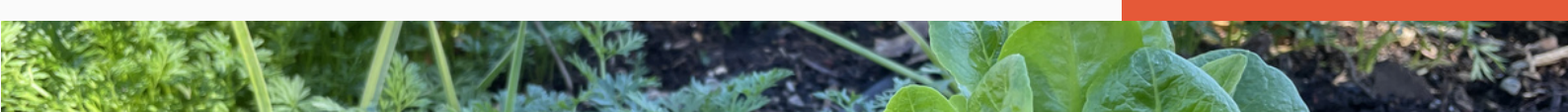
Vegetable Gardening & Planting Sites - Feb. 6th, 10am

<http://brit.org/events>

SATURDAYS 8AM-12PM

Cowtown Farmers Market

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD



Late February days; and now, at last, Might you have thought that Winter's woe was past; So far the sky was and so soft the air."

**WILLIAM MORRIS**



## FEBRUARY TO-DO

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

Plant cold-tolerant vegetables like asparagus, broccoli, carrots, onions, potatoes, and chard.

Plant trees, vines, and shrubs, as this is one of the best planting month for them.

Start tomatoes and peppers indoors at the beginning of the month.

Prune trees to remove dead, diseased, and crossing limbs.

# CELEBRATING OUR NEWSLETTER!

This February 2021 edition begins the 5th year of the CGUA newsletter. Originally called *How's It Growing?*, the newsletter has had a variety of contributors throughout the years along with many regular sections as well. Some of those regular sections include: events, local resources, recipes, notes on CGUA meetings and projects, and a monthly garden to-do list.

The first newsletters in 2017 featured gardening advice from former Dallas County Extension Agent, Dotty Woodson. Dotty had articles on growing different seasonal crops and provided insights on reliable varieties, growing methods and harvesting techniques. The first couple years also included stories that highlighted different gardens in the area. We heard from the HSC Community Garden, PolyWes Gardens, TA Sims Elementary School and Farming the Sprawl. In 2018, Dave's Food Justice students contributed by conducting interviews on location to help tell the stories of area garden projects. Soon, we were featuring recipes that included in-season produce for readers to try and at home and enjoy.

In August of 2018, the newsletter got a makeover using new software that provided a more modern look. The name of the newsletter was also changed to *What's Growing On?* at this time. A new section was added to the newsletter when the format changed. The section was called, *Did You Know?*

The 2019 editions of the newsletter featured several guest writers like Gregory Joel, Charlie Blaylock, Jade Fredrickson and another group of Dave's Food Justice students. The newsletter received another makeover in June of 2019 along with the addition of Harrison Gibson as co-editor. Harrison and Becca started splitting the responsibilities of the newsletter. Harrison began contributing recipes, feature articles and relevant quotes & news - two new regularly featured sections.

Harrison and Becca had a pretty good rhythm creating consistent newsletters throughout 2020. The newsletter continued to be filled with colorful pictures, seasonal recipes and pertinent gardening content.

In 2021, we welcomed Charlie Blaylock as a regular contributor on a newly added 4th page in his section *Shines's Garden Chats*. Charlie also provides variety recommendations in his section *Charlie's Top Crops*.

As we continue to produce newsletter editions, we are looking for your input on what you would like to see going forward. Please fill out our survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2NDGBZV> or email Becca ([becca.knutson@tafb.org](mailto:becca.knutson@tafb.org)) or Harrison ([harrison.gibson@tasteproject.org](mailto:harrison.gibson@tasteproject.org)) to provide further feedback.

## FUN FACTS ABOUT POTATOES!

Potatoes grow best in North Texas when planted around Valentine's Day and will be ready to harvest about 120 days later.

- Potatoes are in the same plant family as tomatoes, eggplant and tobacco.
- The average American eats about 124 pounds of potatoes each year while the average German person eats about twice that much!
- The Incans were the first to cultivate potatoes from 8,000 to 5,000 BC.
- Potatoes are a nutrient dense food. They contain carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C, iron, potassium, fiber, and vitamin B6.
- In 1995, potatoes became the first vegetable grown in space on the Space Shuttle Columbia.
- There are over 5,000 varieties of potatoes.
- The French Fry was first served by Thomas Jefferson at a presidential dinner.
- The potato is the fourth most important crop produced worldwide (after rice, wheat and maize).

For more fun facts about potatoes, visit:

<https://www.potatogoodness.com/potato-fun-facts-history/>

# Potato Galette

**Recipe by: Hannah Lamar**

A galette is a rustic and delicious French pastry that is round in shape and filled with savory or sweet profiles. On a gray winter's day, this flaky, savory take on a traditional flavor pairing - potato & leek - will warm you up and provide a new way to eat classic winter veggies. Serve with a leafy green salad or your winter produce of choice, and keep this tasty recipe in mind as you plant your crop of potatoes this February.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 single layer of your favorite savory pie crust dough, homemade or store-bought
- 4 oz soft goat's cheese
- Fresh dill, to taste (don't like dill? Leave it out or add rosemary instead)
- 2 tsp olive oil, separated
- 2 leeks
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 2 yukon gold potatoes or 1 large russet baking potato, thinly sliced into rounds



## PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 375°F
- Roll out your pie crust dough into a large circle, then transfer onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and refrigerate until ready to assemble and bake your galette.
- Wash and prepare your leeks: Cut off the dark green tops, then slice the light green and white remainder in half length-wise. Slice the leeks cut-side down, resulting in small half-circle pieces.
- Crush and roughly chop your garlic. Combine leeks and garlic in a heavy-bottom pan with 2 tsp olive oil, salt, and pepper and cook over medium heat until the leeks and garlic are fragrant, soft, and starting to brown. Remove from heat.
- In a stand mixer, or using a hand-mixer, combine goat's cheese with fresh dill, 1 tsp olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Whisk until the consistency is whipped and spreadable.
- To assemble the galette, remove your chilled pie crust dough from the fridge and spread your dill goat's cheese atop the crust, leaving 1 1/2 inches of a border.
- Next, evenly distribute the prepared leeks and garlic on top of the goat's cheese.
- Finally, arrange the thinly sliced potato rounds in a pattern of your choosing on top of the leek and garlic mixture. Fold the 1 1/2 inch crust borders over the edge of the filling.
- Drizzle the top of the galette with the remaining teaspoon of olive oil, then salt and pepper to taste.
- Bake your galette for 40-45 minutes, until the crust is golden and the potatoes are cooked through. Enjoy!

## GARDEN RESOURCES

### Local Nurseries:

Archie's Gardenland  
Calloway'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.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/garden-2.html>

### Community Food Systems Map:

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

### VIRTUAL GARDENING CONTENT

#### Tarrant Area Food Bank

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

#### Water University

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

#### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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

#### BRIT

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

#### Tarrant County Master Gardeners

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

#### Dig Deep Conference 2020

[tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020](http://tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020)





# SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

BY CHARLIE BLAYLOCK



## CHARLIE'S TOP CROPS

Sugarsnax & Mokum Carrots

Hakurei Turnips

California Wonder Red & Yellow Bell Peppers

Golden Detroit Beets

Green Magic! & Texas Superstar Broccoli

Joi Choi Bok Choy

Barbarella Eggplants



February is upon us, and it is time to get growing! It's also time for Valentine's Day. I have never understood a holiday centered around giving flowers during a time of year when very few flowers grow. Luckily, my wife is as pragmatic as I am, so to express our love for each other, we plant our potatoes on February 14th every year. It works for us because we are essentially Hobbits, and "taters" are one of our most beloved crops. My favorite, and most productive, variety is Red La Soda. I'm going to try a few Red Norland potatoes this year, since they have a shorter time to maturity. We're going to see if we can get some red "new potatoes" a little earlier than May.

Indoors, we are starting lettuce, peppers, and eggplants. You still have some time to start tomato seedlings, but it should be early in the month so they will have enough growth to transplant by April 1. I use heating mats for my tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants since they prefer 78F for germination and my shop is unheated. Outside, we transplant our onions from "sets" that we buy at the local feed store. The local nurseries should have them, too. I avoid the little dried bulbs in bags because they have a higher tendency to go to seed instead of making a big bulb, at least for me. My favorite is the Texas 1015 onions because of their sweetness, but I also grow Red Creole, and Texas Early White, for their ability to store longer and to have some different flavors. Whatever variety you try, make sure it is a short-day length onion, because that is what triggers bulb formation. We also grow perennial multiplier onions that you can leave in the ground for the whole year and harvest at different sizes all year long. February 15 to March 1 is a good time to transplant kale, chard, broccoli, cabbage, and Napa cabbage. Cauliflower and Brussels sprouts can be transplanted now, but I haven't had success with them in the spring. I transplant cilantro seedlings in, or near, all of my gardens. We eat a lot of it, but really they are to attract beneficial insects, since they make little white flowers earlier than other plants. Those beneficial insects keep the aphids and flea beetles from infesting our early greens.

I love that we can start seeding directly into the ground in February when colder climates are still waiting for the ground to thaw. We transplant a few beets, to harvest earlier, but most we direct seed. I absolutely love Detroit Golden Beets. If you don't think you like beets, you should try the golden (orange) beets. They don't have the earthy flavor that so many people dislike, and the greens are great for a quick sauté. We'll be seeding Japanese turnips, spring radishes, carrots, early kohlrabi, spinach, collards, and mustard greens. I don't grow big radishes, like Watermelon, Black Spanish, or Daikon varieties, in the spring because a surprise warm day will cause them to go to seed without forming a sizable root. My favorite carrot variety is Sugarsnax, the sweetest carrot I have ever had. They need deep soil, which in Texas, usually means a garden that has been around for a few seasons. I also grow early Mokum carrots which are a spectacular carrot from baby size at 36 days up to full size at 54 days. They mature a good 2-3 weeks earlier than Sugarsnax, and are 6-8 inches long. If you have a new garden and want carrots, these are a great way to go. I also like to seed some bok choy. It's one of the easiest greens to grow in the spring.

When I am seeding directly into the soil this early, I like to cover the beds with Agribon-19. It helps to maintain moisture, keeps the soil a little bit warmer, and hides the tiny seedlings from those pesky early pests. I hold it down with bricks every ten feet, or so, and I can water right through it. That's pretty much everything that's growing on around here.

Visit Shine's Farmstand on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/shinesfarmstand>