

AUGUST 2023

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 May 22nd IN PERSON at the Tarrant Area Food Bank.

Meeting Recap:

This meeting was not as well attended as recent meetings and the conversation was more casual, but several typical topics were covered:

- Hyiat El-Jundi provided a presentation about the history and work of F.A.R.M.
- Lauren Hickman provided a TAFB Garden & Farm Program Update:
 - The new Sharepoint site is live for TAFB Community Garden Partners. It contains lots of resources for community gardens including links to grant funding, printable handouts on gardening topics and a calendar to share events and opportunities.
 - The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program is off to a great start at Cowtown Farmers Market with record amount of vouchers being redeemed by participants. Farmers are enjoying the increase in produce sales.
- Jesse Herrera had a few updates from Grow Southeast:
 - Opal's Farm is producing in record amounts and are looking for new sales outlets beyond Cowtown Farmers Market, the farm stand and neighborhood sales/donations. They have attended a few Sunday markets in the area.
 - Tabor Farms has a new parking lot and entrance to make it easier to access.
 - Jesse is searching for funding for a Market Manager for the Mindful Market.
- Farmers Market Updates
 - A discussion was had about how to help increase produce sales at some of the newer markets and if that's what customers actually want. Cowtown Farmers Market is established as a produce market, but other, newer markets might spend years convincing customers to buy produce rather than cookies and jarred goods.

The next CGUA meeting will be in September. Date and 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.

SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - Long Beans

Yard Long Beans is another great crop that can handle the heat of our summers here in North Texas because they are actually related to Black Eyed Peas, but look and taste like green beans.

- These neat looking beans can go by several different names, including Asparagus bean, dow gawk, Chinese long beans, Peru bean, and Snake bean
- Long beans can be up to three feet long, but are most tender when harvested between a foot long and 18 inches.
- Long beans grow similarly to pole beans and require a trellis for support and the most productive harvests.
- Long beans grow quickly and some may become too large or gnarly to eat. If you let the pod dry on the plant and then save those pods, you can have seed for next year!
- Prepare your long beans just like you would green beans. Luckily, long beans have fewer ends to trim and you can then cut the pieces to any size you prefer.

To learn more about long beans: <https://www.vegaproduce.com/long-beans-benefits/>

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

August Get-Together: TBD

September Meeting: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

No General Meetings Until

October 2023

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Common Ground Fall Gardening Seminar

August 12th, 9am-1pm

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

FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDENS

Learning About Herbs

August 25th, 6-8pm

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

AMERICAN COMMUNITY GARDEN ASSOCIATION

Annual Conference: Celebrating the Diversity of Growing

September 27-30

Houston, TX

<https://www.communitygarden.org>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays & Wednesdays

8am to NOON

www.cowtownmarket.com

National Farmers Market Week Festival - August 12th

Veterans Park, Grand Pavilion

8901 Clifford St.

White Settlement, TX 76108



NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET WEEK: AUG 6-12

BY SUSAN BARKER

National Farmers Market Week, first proclaimed in 1999, is an annual celebration during the first full week of August to highlight the vital role farmers markets play in our nation's food system.

This excerpt from 2021's National Farmers Market Week Proclamation by the United States Department of Agriculture Secretary, Thomas J. Vilsack, describes the factors that make recognizing and supporting farmers markets so important.

WHEREAS farmers and ranchers provide Americans with access to healthy foods produced locally and regionally through farmers markets, which are expanding and evolving to accommodate the demand for a diverse array of agricultural products; and

WHEREAS farmers markets offer low-income women, infants, children, and seniors participating in the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, respectively, the opportunity to redeem their benefits for fresh produce and increasingly offer electronic benefits transfer technology for use by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients in redeeming their benefits; and

WHEREAS farmers markets serve as significant outlets for small-to-medium, new and beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran agricultural producers to market agricultural products, in turn generating revenue that supports the sustainability of family farms and the revitalization of rural communities nationwide; and

WHEREAS farmers markets play a critical role in the Biden-Harris Administration's Build Back Better Initiative by connecting producers and consumers to strengthen nutritional security, and contributing to a fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient food system.

What can you do to support farmers markets and celebrate National Farmers Market Week this year?

1. Shop regularly at your farmers market – and tell your friends to do the same! Follow all directions and guidelines for safety while at the market. To find a farmers market near you, check out our April CGUA Newsletter article: [Why Shop Local](#).
 - a. Cowtown Farmers Market: <https://www.cowtownmarket.com/>
 - b. Funkytown Mindful Market: <https://coactntx.wixsite.com/funkytown-mindful-ma>
 - c. Saginaw Farmers Markets: <https://www.saginawmarket.org/>
 - d. Lake Worth Farmers Market: <https://lakeworthmarket.com/>
2. Local food fans are encouraged to share National Farmers Market Week on social media! Use the #LoveMyMarket and #FarmersMarketWeek to share the bounty of the season on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
3. Sponsor or directly fund initiatives at farmers markets that your business supports, such as staff to operate food access programs or next year's National Farmers Market Week celebration.

See you at the market!

"What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps me in a continual state of inelegance."

JANE AUSTEN



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.

Grilled Zucchini with Goat Cheese, Honey & Basil

Recipe Link: <https://www.walderwellness.com/grilled-zucchini-goat-cheese-basil-honey/>

Add this to your next cookout menu and grab the ingredients from the garden or the farmers market. You won't be disappointed!



INGREDIENTS

- 5 medium zucchinis
- Salt
- 1 Tbsp olive oil or avocado oil
- 1/3 cup goat cheese, crumbled
- 2 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 1.5 Tbsp honey
- Salt + pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

- Remove ends from zucchini and slice into 1/2-inch pieces, lengthwise. Spread sliced zucchini onto a plate or cutting board, and apply salt liberally. Set aside for 20 minutes to allow excess water to drain out of zucchini. Pat dry using a clean cloth or paper towel.
- Heat your grill or grill pan to medium-high. Brush olive oil or avocado oil onto both sides of each zucchini slice.
- Place slices of zucchini onto the grill. Cook for 10-15 minutes, flipping halfway. Zucchini is done when it is tender and grill marks appear. Be sure not to over-cook!
- Remove zucchini from the grill and serve on a large plate. Sprinkle with crumbled goat cheese and freshly chopped basil. Drizzle honey over top and season with salt + pepper, as desired. Enjoy

IN THE NEWS

- An Indigenous-Led Team Is Transforming a Minneapolis Superfund Site into a New Urban Farm <https://civileats.com/2023/07/18/an-indigenous-led-team-is-transforming-a-minneapolis-superfund-site-into-a-new-urban-farm/>
- Northside Fort Worth community center poised to transform through new garden <https://fortworthreport.org/2023/07/19/northside-community-center-poised-to-transform-through-new-garden/>
- Marketlink Offers SNAP Online Payment Solution for Direct Marketing Farmers <https://www.prlog.org/12969194-marketlink-offers-snap-online-payment-solution-for-direct-marketing-farmers.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

Paperpot Co Blog & Podcast

<https://paperpot.co/the-blog/>

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

Farmers
markets
don't just
happen.





GREG'S TOP CROPS

Okra: Clemson Spineless, Debbie's Mama's Okra

Winter Squash: Butternut, Delicata, Honeynut

Mustard Greens, Collards, Kale

NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET WEEK 2023

August 6-12, 2023

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/

OPAL'S PICKS

I've sitting here this evening (in the air conditioning!) thinking about where Opal's Farm has been and where we are going. The last couple of months have been hectic, but August is a time when things tend to slow down in the garden or at the farm. The Texas heat sees to that! Tomatoes begin to go dormant for the next few weeks, triple digit heat causes more casualties amongst the produce, and it seems like more farms are absent from the market each week as August goes on. Charlie Blaylock used to remind me that August is the time of year every farmer asks themselves why we do this. Texas summer tends to cause a crisis of conviction for even the best of us.

A friend emailed a quote the other day that put things back in perspective – "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seed you plant" (Robert Louis Stevenson). Opal's Farm moved to a smaller, more intensive means of farming this year. Increased yields on a smaller area have their benefits, but the pursuit of higher production comes with high opportunity costs – it's not always about production. It's about building community and helping our neighbors. It's about seeing volunteers and kids reconnect with the soil, see where their food comes from, and learn how much better a homegrown tomato tastes. It's about the folks who just come down to talk or just hang out. It's no coincidence that several creation myths place the first humans in a garden!

Production and community are not either/or situations, but should be both/and. To that end we are recommitting to our mission of providing just access to healthy food, education, and building through community engagement.

I mentioned in last month's newsletter that our Assistant Manager, Amber Carr, will be leaving at the end of the summer. We appreciate all that Amber has done over the last year and the skills she brought to the farm. While we're sorry to see her go, we wish the best to her in her future endeavors.

We're taking applications to fill the vacancy. Technical skill is always appreciated but not necessary. The most important qualities we're looking for are a willingness to learn, adaptability, and to pass that knowledge on to the kids, volunteers, and our neighbors. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact me at opalsfarm@unityunlimited.org. Keep on sowing those seeds you all!

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

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

