

NOVEMBER 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 September 25th via at 3pm via Zoom to discuss current and ongoing projects.

### Meeting Recap:

- Guest speaker Jeff Guidry from Green Oaks School Garden in Arlington provided an overview of their different horticulture programs for developmentally disabled students of all ages and their desire to partner with more local farms, gardens and businesses.
- Mary Jo Greene provided some updates about school gardens in the area.
- Lauren Hickman provided an update on TAFB's Community Garden Program.
- The group discussed the proposed farm tour event series. Potential dates, locations and tour activities were proposed. A request for approval has been drafted and sent to the TCFPC board for support and suggestions.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, December 8th at 3:00pm via Zoom. See sidebar for Meeting ID and password.

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) or Lauren Hickman at [lauren.hickman@tafb.org](mailto:lauren.hickman@tafb.org).

## IN THE NEWS

- Tips for gardening through climate change
  - <https://civileats.com/2022/09/01/how-to-garden-through-climate-change/>
- A look at the two candidates running for Texas Ag Commissioner
  - <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/10/20/sid-miller-susan-hays-texas-agriculture-commissioner-election-2022/>
- Agrihoods sought to address food access issues in planned communities
  - <https://civileats.com/2022/09/06/agrihoods-promise-fresh-food-and-community-can-they-add-equity-to-the-list/>
- Church seeks food sovereignty by building garden and a community-based method that others could follow
  - <https://civileats.com/2022/09/06/agrihoods-promise-fresh-food-and-community-can-they-add-equity-to-the-list/>
- "Controlled Environment Agriculture" Company expands vertical farming facility in Cleburne
  - <https://dallasinnovates.com/eden-green-opens-first-phase-of-its-planned-47m-vertical-farm-in-cleburne/>

## Events & Classes

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

December 8th, 3:00pm  
Meeting ID 968 2424 0036  
Password: 013486

### TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

December 1st, 4:00pm  
Meeting ID 839 9008 4183

### SAVE TARRANT WATER

Dirty Work  
Nov. 6th, 5:30pm

Building Insect Houses  
Nov. 12th, 12pm

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

### FARM FRESH SUMMIT

December 6th, 8:30am-3:30pm  
Registration:  
<https://registration.esc11.net/catalog/sessions/30164/55435>

### FWBG | BRIT

Nifty Gifty November  
Nov. 30th, 6pm

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

### COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Every Saturday 8am-NOON  
[www.cowtownmarket.com](http://www.cowtownmarket.com)

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

HOLIDAY MARKETS  
NOV. 19TH & DEC. 17TH





# GRATITUDE IN THE GARDEN

HARRISON GIBSON AND BECCA KNUTSON

There are communities around the world centered on every possible thing one can imagine - not a niche left unfilled. We're here together in this newsletter for a variety of reasons, but chiefly for our mutual love of food, gardening, urban agriculture, community, helping others, and a passion for sharing local knowledge about all of the above. We spend much of my time in communities built around food, in gardens, and serving others, those are some of our favorite spaces and they all come together really well in this most-excellent upcoming holiday, Thanksgiving.

Has there ever been a better reason to come together, eat good food, and go around the table giving talking about what we're thankful for? We submit that there has not. So, we decided we'd practice a little gratitude ourselves by writing about things we're grateful of in the garden this year. If you'd like to share your own thankfulness, please drop us a line and share at [tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you.

## Harrison's

- I'm grateful for the time amidst busy lives that we get to spend tending our gardens.
- In the summers, I'm glad for every day under 100 degrees.
- Awed and thankful for every seed that sprouts up out of the ground.
- I'm thankful for all the volunteers that have helped make the Taste Community Garden a success it's first year.
- I'm grateful for local farmers that sell to restaurants that care about serving guests fresh, local produce. Shout out to Hollow Trace.
- All of Charlie's contributions to this newsletter and the local farming and gardening community over the years.
- Greg Joel's joining the newsletter and for the good work done at Opal's.
- Dave Aftandilian's incredible edits (we can't sneak anything past him).
- I'm thankful for smart folks who share their knowledge with others, I wouldn't know a thing about gardening or anything else without them.
- Grateful for the sun, the rain, the miracle of life, and this sweet planet we call home.

## Becca's

- I am grateful for the opportunity to be a market farmer and grow food for our community.
- I am grateful to Charlie for providing me that opportunity and setting me up for success.
- I am grateful for the never-ending supply of lessons the garden provides us about patience, connectivity, perseverance and beauty.
- I am grateful for the CGUA working group and all the work we've done throughout the group's existence.
- I am grateful for the farmers market, the vendors and the customers who tirelessly work to make our food system better and more local.
- I am grateful for opportunities to work with like-minded people and organizations who work behind the scenes to strengthen the impact of each grower in our region.
- I am grateful for our predictably chaotic weather and the constant challenge of learning to work with the resources at our disposal.
- I am grateful for the privilege to be constantly nourished by the fruits of our labor and the support of our local food community.

"peering from some high window;at the gold of november sunset (and feeling:that if day has to become night this is a beautiful way)"

E.E. CUMMINGS



## NOVEMBER TO-DO

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

Plant cool-season and perennial herbs in the beginning of the month.

Cut back perennial herbs and flowers as they dry out.

Continue to direct-seed spinach, lettuce, peas, arugula, radishes, carrots, turnips, beets and rutabaga in any open spaces.

Continue to cover bare areas with mulch to conserve water and prepare crops for cooler weather.

Collect leaves from your neighbors for your compost pile.



# Beet and Carrot Salad

Recipe by Hannah Lamar Gibson

As beets and carrots come into season and start to sprout up and out, this salad highlights the warmth and comfort of fall while still offering a bright, fresh bite. The raw veggies also make it a quick dish to whip up on a weeknight or to bring along to a Thanksgiving feast.

## INGREDIENTS

- 4-5 small beets or 1 large beet, washed and peeled
- 1 large carrot, washed and peeled
- Handful tender green herb, such as parsley, roughly torn
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 T tahini
- 1 T olive oil
- Salt
- Sesame seeds, optional



## PREPARATION

- Thinly slice or mandolin beets horizontally into coins
- Thinly slice, peel, or mandolin carrots vertically into ribbons
- Place prepared beets and carrots into an ice water bath for 2-3 minutes to shock them for extra crunch, then drain and dry on a cloth or paper towel
- If using, lightly toast sesame seeds in a dry pan on the stove top, stirring or tossing frequently to avoid burning. Toast until lightly golden and fragrant, then remove from heat.
- Mix 1 T tahini, 1 T olive oil, and half of your lemon juice with a pinch of salt until smooth
- Toss fresh veggies in remaining lemon juice and a pinch of salt
- Dollop tahini dressing on a serving plate, then arrange your beets and carrots on top of the dressing.
- Roughly tear your tender green herb and top your veggies with herbs, sesame seeds, and a light drizzle of olive oil
- Enjoy!

## SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - ROMANESCO

If you visit a farmers market, participate in a CSA or grow vegetables at home, you may be familiar with the beautiful vegetable called Romanesco!

- Romanesco is part of the Brassica family and is related to broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage.
- It tastes like a cross between broccoli and cauliflower but has a notably more nutty flavor.
- When shopping for Romanesco seeds, check in the broccoli or cauliflower section of your favorite seed catalog.
- Romanesco's flowering head grows in a naturally occurring fractal pattern - it's so beautiful!

Pick some up at your local farmers market or consider growing some this winter!

## GARDEN RESOURCES

### Local Nurseries:

[Archie's Gardenland](#)  
[Calloway's](#)

### Free Seeds:

[TAFB Community Garden Program:](#)  
[communitygarden@tafb.org](mailto: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)

**Dig Deep Conference 2020**  
[tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020](https://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020)

**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

Waltham Broccoli

Siberian Kale

Sugar Snax Carrots

Napa Cabbage

Watermelon Radish



## FARM RESOURCES

### Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance

[farmandranchfreedom.org](http://farmandranchfreedom.org)

GROW North Texas  
[grownorthtexas.org](http://grownorthtexas.org)

Natural Resource Conservation Service  
[nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)

Texas Center for Local Food  
[texaslocalfood.org](http://texaslocalfood.org)

Texas Department of Agriculture  
[texasagriculture.gov](http://texasagriculture.gov)

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association  
[tofga.org](http://tofga.org)

USDA Farm Service Agency  
[fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov)

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture  
[nifa.usda.gov/](http://nifa.usda.gov/)

## OPAL'S PICKS

I've been mulling over what to call this section about Opal's Farm. All the marketing and copywriting pros talk about a catchy headline being the key. Quite frankly, I've drawn a blank. They all sound trite. So... I decided to let you all name it. Please send your ideas to the Opal's Farm Facebook page (linked below) and we'll announce the new title next month...

It's been a crazy busy month at Opal's Farm. Since my last article we have had the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health: Ms. Opal's Walk for Hunger: the Day of Service: and the Black Farmers and Urban Growers Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Now that Fall is beginning to peek around the corner the ground temperature has fallen enough to finish fall planting. We've also been building new biointensive beds to increase our variety of produce and have larger yields. Exciting, but very busy...

Our National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) representative, Michael Higgins, brought out the agronomist and engineer responsible for our fifteen-state region. They've been touring urban farms and trying to determine the challenges of urban agriculture. One of them made a comment that they've never been on anything less than twenty acres. They were amazed to see what we've done so close to downtown. NRCS and USDA are beginning to see the value of urban and small, more biointensive forms of farming. Urban farming is no longer trendy. It's here to stay. Ten cities were selected across the country to open urban agriculture offices and DFW is one of them. We hope that additional support and funding will be coming for our local farmers.

The USDA has also designated Opal's Farm as a "People's Garden," Applicants must meet four criteria to become a People's Garden. First, they must benefit the community by providing food, beautification, wildlife habitat, education site, etc. Second, they must be a collaborative effort. This can include groups working together with USDA agencies, food banks, schools, conservation districts, etc. Thirdly, they must incorporate sustainable practices. Opal's Farm goes one step further and practices regenerative agriculture, concentrating on soil health and leaving the land better than we found it.

Finally, and most important, is that applicants must educate the community about sustainable gardening practices and the importance of local and diverse sources of healthy food. It is part of our mission statement and everything we do is about building strong, healthy communities. You can check out People's Gardens at [www.usda.gov/peoples-garden](http://www.usda.gov/peoples-garden).

Greg Joel  
Farm Manager  
Opal's Farm

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