

AUGUST 2024

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

CGUA MEETING NOTES - 7/11/24

The CGUA working group met on July 11th at Texas Christian University. Twelve people were in attendance.

Jhamal Huckaby and Diamond Moss gave a presentation all about Tabor Farms. From the beginning of the story to the most recent updates, the group got to learn more about the beloved urban farm. Tabor Farms is a nonprofit farm located in Southeast Fort Worth. They collaborate with Grow Southeast, Afrogreen'd, Black Heart Association and other community organizations to help improve health and food access in the surrounding areas. Learn more about Tabor Farms at <https://coactntx.wixsite.com/grow-southeast/greater-mount-tabor> or on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#).

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

- Greg Joel provided updates from the Grow Southeast group with a focus on the happenings at Opal's Farm.
 - Blue Zones Project has been purchasing excess produce from the farms attending the Mindful Markets.
 - At Opal's:
 - There will be a 5k in November - they need volunteers.
 - Next year, they will be adding another acre to their production area.
 - The farmstand is currently not doing very well due mostly to weather.
 - They are getting an intern through Hope Farm.
- Becca Knutson reminded the group about the current, local farmers markets and encouraged everyone to visit their favorite one.
 - New markets include: Kennedale, Crowley, Azle and Alvarado. Most have Facebook pages or websites to visit for information.
 - The Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program began in May at Cowtown Farmers Market and will run through October of this year.
- Anne Santana reminded everyone that it is summer and school gardens are resting at the moment. School begins on August 14th.

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. See page 3 of this newsletter for an opportunity to join the newsletter as an editor!

The next CGUA meeting will be on September 19th at 3pm. Location, Tarrant Area Food Bank, 2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, 76107. Sid Richardson Meeting Room, 1st Floor.

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

September 19th, 3pm
Tarrant Area Food Bank
2525 Cullen St. 76107

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting
Time & Location TBD

FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

Preparing Your Fall Vegetable Garden
August 15th, 10am-12pm

Learning About Herbs: Basil
August 23rd, 6-8pm

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

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

Azle Farmers Market
<https://azlefarmersmarket.org>

Lake Worth Farmers Market
<https://lakeworthmarket.com/>

Saginaw Farmers Market
<https://www.saginawmarket.org/>

MINDFUL MARKET

September 7th, 11am to 2pm

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

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

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



“The month of August had turned into a griddle where the days just lay there and sizzled.”

SUE MONK KIDD



Featured Farm

RODRIGS FAMILY FARM

Owners: Jonathan and Samantha Rodrigs

Location: Bowie, TX

TYPE OF OPERATION:
Small-scale family farm

GROWING METHODS:
Greenhouses, field rows, and orchards

TYPES OF PRODUCTS GROWN/RAISED: fruits, vegetables, and flowers

WHERE TO FIND THEM:
Cowtown Farmers Market
rodrigsfamilyfarm.com



TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN AUGUST!

BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS



August is here and NOW we can expect some warmer weather! What a beautifully mild July we had. I hope your crops enjoyed the rain and cooler temps. Perhaps you saw a longer harvest period or bigger harvests than in previous years.

August is typically one of the slower months on the farm while I take time to clean up and plan for fall.

- **Harvest summer crops!** - It is normal to see a drop in production as the temperatures rise. Keep everything watered and healthy and most crops will continue to produce through the fall. You may still be harvesting crops like beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumber, summer squash, southern peas and okra. Check your crops every few days for items that are ready to eat.
- **Begin planning for your fall crops** - Fall is a great time to grow edible plants in North Texas! Plan for fall plantings of your favorite warm-season crops like green beans, cucumbers, zucchini, yellow squash and basil. Just make sure you will have time to harvest them before a frost in November. You can also start planting broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi and cool season herbs like parsley and dill as early as August 15th with a little shade cloth protection. Check out this [planting calendar](#) from Texas A&M Extension for a full list!
- **Continue with maintenance tasks** - During the cooler parts of the day, continue to pull weeds, tie up tomatoes, stake peppers and eggplant and observe crops for pests and disease.
- **Plan for irrigation and watering** - Make sure you have a watering plan in place for the hot summer. Whether you are hand watering or have timed irrigation, consistent watering will help your crops survive the summer temperatures.
- **Plan for mulch & shade** - Many summer crops will benefit from straw or leaf mulch in the summer to retain moisture and help insulate the soil against the high temperatures. Shade cloth can also be used to extend the harvest and protect from sunscald on peppers and tomatoes. I prefer to use a 30% shade cloth.
- **Rest and reorganize** - It's hot out there! Be sure to plan time for rest and relaxation this month. Find tasks that can be done inside or in the shade like organizing supplies and doing seed inventory. You've worked hard all year; this is a chance to take a breath.



JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER CREW!

We're looking to add another contributor to our newsletter team! Harrison is moving on to his next adventure in life and we need someone to provide content for the sections he used to do.

Currently, Becca Knutson, Susan Barker and Greg Joel are contributing monthly to the newsletter. The time commitment is about 1-2 hours a month, typically between the 20th and 25th of each month.

If you would like more information or are interested in joining the newsletter team, please email Becca Knutson at becca.m.knutson@gmail.com.



IN THE NEWS

- Get inspired by this effort to scale up community composting to the national level <https://foodtank.com/news/2024/07/innovating-composting-to-combat-climate-change/>
- Denton County Master Gardener shares growing tips about a North Texas gardener's friend: basil https://dentonrc.com/life/agrilife_extension/growing-basil-in-north-texas-local-master-gardener-shares-tips/article_24b27cf6-4b65-11ef-8b37-7fb9ca96cf36.html
- Vote to help your favorite farmers market increase their impact <https://foodtank.com/news/2024/07/vote-now-to-celebrate-americas-farmers-markets/>

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>

TAFB Resources:

<https://tafb.org/community-garden/>

<https://tafb.org/farmers-market/>

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

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Peas
- Beans
- Kohlrabi



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

It's hard to believe that August is here already. We've enjoyed a comfortable summer considering the last two years. Our okra, black-eyed and purple hulled peas, yard-long beans, squash, and melons are loving the slightly cooler (and wetter – it rained in July!) weather. Even our tomatoes started blooming and setting little tomatoes over the last couple of weeks. The arrival of August and triple-digits will slow it all down. To be honest, we could use a break and hope you get one as well.

July has been a maintenance and harvest month at Opal's Farm. We've started preparing beds for Fall planting and hope to start getting Fall crops in the ground around August 15th. One of the biggest issues for germination of direct-seeded Fall crops is ground temperature. Last year, the soil temperatures remained high until September, and we were late with successful Fall planting. It looks like this year will allow us an earlier start. Nighttime temperatures have stayed below eighty degrees and that's a huge help. The number of triple digit days is forecasted to be at or below normal and there's even a chance for rain this August. Who'd have thought?

We were able to cover some of our tomatoes with "shade cloth" this summer. It's actually donated privacy fencing that shades heavier than we'd like (we couldn't afford real shade cloth this year). We staggered the shade cloth over the beds, so they'd still get sun in the morning and the evening. We also began spraying compost tea every week and calcium-magnesium as needed. We've noticed a big difference in plant health over the triple-digit days we've had so far.

Finally, the end of July also means the end of our time with our summer interns. I'd like to take a moment and say thank you for all the hard work Dmitri, Preston, Jeremiah, and Lucas put in over the last couple of months. We are far ahead of our usual readiness for Fall because of their efforts. Thank you so much for making our summer a great one!

Take it easy out there in the August heat and enjoy the summer fruits and veggies while you can!

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

