

OCTOBER 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 is to be 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 or Lauren Hickman at lauren.hickman@tafb.org.

IN THE NEWS

- Blue Zones Project and Southside Community Garden team up to build garden beds for community members
 - <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/south-texas-el-paso/news/2022/09/19/fresh-produce-within-arm-s-reach--removing-barriers-to-access-healthy-food>
- Two articles on Food Forests helping their communities in Texas
 - <https://www.kvue.com/article/life/food/food-forest-central-texas-food-insecurity-sustainability/269-5f210120-067b-4e1e-b703-9eaf7bob10d>
 - <https://foxsanantonio.com/news/local/food-forest-on-the-southside-serves-as-a-model-for-urban-agriculture>
- "Can an Urban Farm Run by Police Create Jobs, Feed People, and Build Trust?"
 - <https://civileats.com/2022/09/14/urban-farming-law-enforcement-alameda-county-job-training-food-security-trust-communities-police/>

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

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

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

October 13th, 4:00pm
Meeting ID 839 9008 4183

FARM FRESH SUMMIT

December 6th, 8:30am-3:30pm
Registration:

<https://registration.esc11.net/catalog/sessions/30164/55435>

FWBG | BRIT

Fall Plant Sale: Oct. 6th-8th

Foraging for Native Edibles:
Oct. 15th, 10am

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

TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK

Wine in the Warehouse

October 24th, 4pm

RSVP [Here](#)

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Veterans Park, Grand Pavilion
8901 Clifford St.

White Settlement, TX 76108

Every Saturday 8am-NOON

www.cowtownmarket.com



GROW A LOVE OF GARDENING WITH OUR YOUTH

BY BRITTNAY MEYER, TEXAS AGRILIFE HOME HORTICULTURE EXTENSION AGENT, TARRANT COUNTY

"Gardens and children need the same things- patience, love, and someone who will never give up on them." – Nicolette Sowder

When asking a child where their food comes from, most likely they will respond with "the grocery store". Though the grocery store is where the majority of the population buys fruits and vegetables, children should understand the real source of those necessary items.

AgriLife Extension provides an amazing program to do just that, all while helping to grow (pun intended) a love for gardening and being outdoors. The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program is an international youth gardening program created for the university Cooperative Extension system by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for 3rd to 8th grade students. This program was developed not only by the amazing team from AgriLife but also with the help of our Texas teachers! We wanted to create a program that added benefits to current curriculum without adding more stress or work for our teachers. The mission of the JMG program is "Growing good kids by igniting a passion for learning, success, and service through a unique gardening education."

Children not only learn plant and garden basics but by participating in the lessons they also develop leadership and critical thinking skills. These lessons also align with TEKS math, science, language arts, writing, physical education, health, nutrition, and social studies standards, making these students better prepared for the STAAR assessment test. Students participating in JMG have scored higher on science achievement tests compared to students participating in traditional classroom methods.

Within the JMG program is the Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go (LGEG) curriculum that combines gardening with nutrition, vegetable exposure, healthy recipes, physical activity, that encourages family and community involvement. LGEG is designed for Pre-K through 5th grade with the new Early Childhood curriculum for teachers of 4- & 5-year-old students. Both JMG and LGEG have been reviewed, tested and presented to maximize age-appropriate learning, while encouraging positive behavioral changes for better health!

These programs are in many Elementary and Middle schools throughout Tarrant County with this Agent's goal being to focus on youth education and implementing these programs into all schools in Tarrant County!



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

ALBERT CAMUS



OCTOBER TO-DO

Remove warm weather crops as they finish producing. Cut them from the garden to let the root ball break down and return to the soil.

Continue planting broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage transplants throughout the month.

Continue to direct-seed spinach, lettuce, peas, arugula, radishes, carrots, turnip and beets throughout the month.

Broadcast wildflower seeds throughout perennial beds late in the month.

Eggplant Parmesan

Recipe adapted from *A Simple Palate*

I followed the baking method of this dual-use recipe for a nice weekday vegetarian dinner when I had a bit of time to cook, and I was impressed by its simplicity and ability to utilize the tasty, ripe eggplant from our garden. The cooking takes a bit over an hour, but the meal is well worth it!

INGREDIENTS

EGGPLANT

- 2 large eggplant
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour (see notes)
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup olive oil (for fried eggplant method)

TOPPINGS

- 1 1/2 cups marinara sauce
- 1 lb mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1-2 Tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh oregano, chopped

PREPARATION

- Slice eggplant: remove stem from eggplant, then slice into 1/4-1/2 inch thick slices.
- Sweat eggplant: arrange slices on pan and sprinkle with coarse salt on both sides. Let sit and "sweat" excess moisture for 10 minutes. Pat firmly with paper towels to dry eggplant thoroughly (wipe off salt as well).
- Breadcrumbs: toast slices of bread. Then chop in food processor until consistency is crumbs.
- Bread eggplant: arrange three bowls containing whisked eggs, flour, and breadcrumb mixture. First, coat eggplant in flour on both sides, then dip into eggs, and then dip into breadcrumbs – pack onto eggplant and then gently shake off excess crumbs. Wipe hands with paper towel then repeat. Tip: if baking eggplant instead of frying, brush a sheet pan with 1-2 Tablespoons of oil and arrange breaded eggplant onto pan as you coat them.
- Pan frying method: in a skillet pan, add 1-2 Tablespoons of oil at a time, and cook breaded eggplant for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown. Lay on paper towels to soak up excess oil. Repeat until all eggplant has been fried.
- Baking method: instead of pan frying you can also bake the eggplant to use less oil. Preheat oven to 350F and arrange breaded slices onto sheet pan that is brushed with 1-2 Tablespoons of olive oil. Bake for 25 minutes until golden.
- Assemble: in a large casserole dish, spread a generous layer of marinara on the bottom. Then layer: eggplant slices, mozzarella, a spoonful of marinara sauce, and shredded parmesan. Repeat an additional layer on top.
- Bake: Then bake at 400F uncovered for 30 minutes until cheese is browned and melted. Top with chopped fresh basil & oregano, and serve!

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

Dig Deep Conference 2020
tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020

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





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

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Natural Resource Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
tofga.org

Texas Center for Local Food
texaslocalfood.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture
nifa.usda.gov/

OPAL'S PICKS

This is a bit of a rushed article this month. There has been A LOT happening this month: it's mostly great news with some bad. I guess it's the bad news first...

As many of you may have already heard, our "barn" (what we call our shipping container) was broken into on September 20th. The thieves made off with our trailer, BCS tractor, generator, and other miscellaneous tools totaling between \$15k and \$20k. According to the Property Crimes Officer from the Fort Worth Police Department, there is a big increase in equipment thefts with much of the big stuff (tractors, construction equipment, etc.) going to Mexico. We're fortunate they didn't touch our new Kubota tractor (this time) and are so grateful for our friends and supporters that have reached out to help.

We had to pull all our tomato and pepper plants up because they became infected with a mosaic virus. Mosaic virus (a name for a group of viruses) affects many plants, but especially tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, cauliflower, and green beans. It often causes blotches and deformities on the leaves and fruits of these plants. If you notice this happening with your plants (like our tomatoes), it's best to get them out of the ground and get rid of them before it spreads. It tends not to spread through the soil if no hosts are available to feed it. I've talked to numerous farmers and gardeners, and mosaic virus has been a serious issue in late summer and early fall here in Tarrant County.

Now that the bad news is out of the way I'm thrilled to introduce our new Assistant Farm Manager at Opal's Farm, Amber Carr. Amber grew up on a farm and recently chose to change her career path to urban farming. She brings a wealth of experience and an amazing work ethic to Opal's. She interned with Charlie Blaylock at Shine's Farmstand for the past year and studied horticulture at Tarrant County College's Northwest campus.

Finally, Unity Unlimited, Inc., Opal's Farm, CoAct of North Texas, Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration, and Tarrant County Commissioner Roy Brooks hosted a watch party for the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health on September 28th. This was the first White House Conference on food policy since 1969! It has moved the conversation on food insecurity and food justice forward in new ways. We are thrilled to be a part of it.

In support of this initiative, Opal's Farm and the Community Food Bank will be having a Day of Service on October 8th. Volunteers and supporters will be at the Community Food Bank in the morning and Opal's "Walk to End Hunger" will start at 11:00 AM – walking a little over a mile to Opal's Farm. We'll also be celebrating Ms. Opal's 96th birthday and hopefully (fingers crossed and lots of prayers...) celebrating her Nobel Peace Prize (the recipient will be announced on Friday morning!). Please come out and join the celebration!

Greg Joel
Farm Manager
Opal's Farm

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