

NOVEMBER 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 September 23rd at 3pm. 18 people were in attendance.

Meeting Notes:

- Deborah Ray from IDEA Public Schools gave a presentation on their school farm model that is being implemented at several of their campuses. A new school farm will be added to their Haltom City location in the near future and they are hiring a farmer to manage that campus. These farms engage the students through the Jr. Master Gardener program and help provide food for the school cafeterias. To learn more, visit: <https://ideapublicschools.org/farm/>
- Mary Jo gave an update on the school garden data project. She has a complete list and will have it added to TCFPC's web-based Local Food Map. The group discussed what else to do with this info and how to use it to advocate for a FWISD Garden Coordinator position.
- Lauren Hickman provided an update on the TAFB Community Garden Network. They have helped 6 gardens go from "planning" to "operational" in the last year and look forward to helping more gardens grow going forward. Volunteer opportunities are available at www.tafb.org/volunteer.
- Charlie provided the Grow Southeast update. Opal's Farm is having trouble with their pump. Black Wall Street is working on getting irrigation installed. Greater Mt. Tabor is waiting for electrical service and needs to clear some trees. Mind Your Garden Urban Farm won the Latinx Business Pitch competition from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
- Finally, the group shared their favorite fall gardening memories.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, November 18th at 3:30pm via Zoom. All are welcome to join!

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

IN THE NEWS

- A profile of an Urban Farm in Fort Worth <https://www.wfaa.com/article/life/food/fort-worth-couple-wants-to-help-others-through-urban-farming/287-ccb8ec2e-72ad-466b-91c6-986676854dcb>
- A new community garden opens up in Frisco <https://communityimpact.com/dallas-fort-worth/frisco/parks-recreation/2021/10/25/the-harvest-at-frisco-commons-ribbon-cutting-signifies-a-dream-come-true-for-city-parks-staff/>
- A local gardener starts a non-profit to help share seeds and encourage gardening <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/the-little-seed-library-stocked-with-fruit-and-veggie-seeds-for-all/2766914/>
- A look at partnerships in urban farming in Dallas County <https://today.tamu.edu/2021/10/27/growing-the-role-of-urban-farming-in-dallas-county/>

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

November 18th, 3:30pm

Zoom Meeting ID:

920 0750 2123

Password: 721898

FWBG | BRIT

Identifying Birds in Your Garden - November 3rd

Connecting Gardening and Health - November 6th

Slow Garden Experience - November 13th

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

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Trees for Texas - November 11th

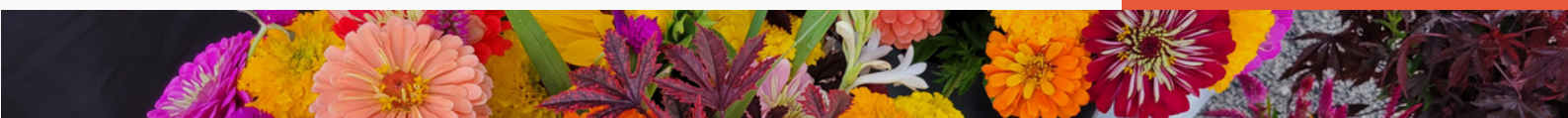
<https://savetarrantwater.com/events/>

SATURDAYS

8AM-12PM

Cowtown Farmers Market

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD





TIPS FOR SPROUTING FALL SEEDS SUCCESSFULLY

By Becca Knutson

If you're anything like me, you struggle to get fall root crops to germinate and survive in your garden. I face attacks from many angles - cats looking for a restroom or a comfy place to lay, squirrels saving nuts for winter, slugs and snails having a midnight snack, lack of time to keep the soil moist, and fall leaves smothering the garden beds. I bet some of you even face other challenges as well. Below are some tips to help improve your fall crop success and get ahead of some of those annual nuisances!

Physical Barriers - Setting up the infrastructure of your garden with critters in mind is one way to increase your chances for a successful crop. Luckily, most physical barriers are easy to add on to existing garden beds.

- Raised garden beds or containers can help keep critters from digging in your dirt. A wooden or concrete border can help our domesticated animals know to keep out.
- Fencing around each garden bed or around your whole garden can also ward off unwanted digging. I have chicken wire fences around each of my garden beds.
- Chicken wire added as a cover to your raised bed can be a great deterrent for squirrels and cats. I usually do this as a last resort, but it makes a huge difference. The cover also helps stop fall leaves from smothering your new plants!

Peat Moss - Adding a layer of fine soil (or soilless mixture) can give germinating seeds a better chance of survival. Farmer Charlie says that peat moss has worked well for him; I have decided to give it a try this year.

Consistent Watering - I know I get busy and forget to water my new seeds occasionally; however, consistent moisture really will help with germination and as long as the squirrels don't dig up your new sprouts, this is really the hardest step.

Diatomaceous Earth - Also called DE for short, Diatomaceous Earth is a fine powder made from crushed diatom (tiny, aquatic organisms) exoskeletons. Sprinkling a little of this around newly sprouted plants or freshly planted seedlings is a great deterrent for slugs and snails. You will have to reapply it almost daily for a little while, but it will allow your plants to become established without getting mowed to the soil level.

I hope these tips help you have a successful fall garden this year!



SEASONAL VEGGIE FUN FACTS - TURNIPS

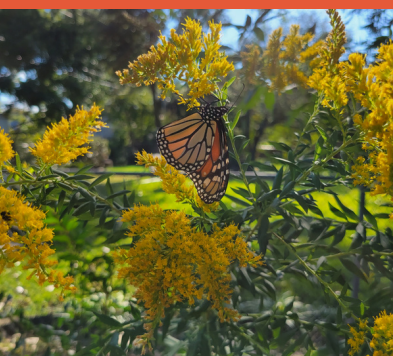
Turnips grow well during the cooler months in North Texas. The most commonly grown and eaten variety is the Purple Top turnip, but Hakurei Japanese turnips are more mild and are ready to harvest more quickly.

- Turnips are in the Brassica family with radishes, mustard, kohlrabi, broccoli and cauliflower.
- Turnips can be enjoyed several ways - in salads, soups, roasted, pickled, served whole or mashed. The greens are edible as well and can be eaten raw or cooked.
- In Ireland and Scotland, turnips are carved into lanterns instead of pumpkins at Halloween.
- In the 15th century, the term "turnip eater" meant you were a country bumpkin. Charles Dickens often used it in his writing to mean someone was a perfect idiot.
- In the Roman empire, turnips were the vegetable of choice to hurl at unpopular political figures.

Learn more cool facts about turnips at <http://justfunfacts.com/interesting-facts-about-turnips/>.

"The wind that makes music in November corn is in a hurry. The stalks hum, the loose husks whisk skyward in half-playing swirls, and the wind hurries on... A tree tries to argue, bare limbs waving, but there is no detaining the wind."

ALDO LEOPOLD



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.

Butternut Squash Risotto

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

Conjuring up the perfect risotto can admittedly feel like a tall task at times, but this simple recipe may help to make it an obtainable and delicious fall go-to dinner. It's a comforting, creamy, warming meal that utilizes few ingredients and few kitchen utensils as well. Plus, this recipe will keep throughout the winter alongside your winter squashes, so cook it up anytime to impress for a winter date-night or even as an easy weekday standby. We used butternut squash here, but try out other squash varieties and see what you like best!

INGREDIENTS

- Butternut squash
- 2 cups arborio rice, barley, or farro (I used barley)
- 6-8 cups of chicken or veggie broth
- Grated parmesan cheese
- Salt, pepper, Italian herbs



PREPARATION

- Chop the butternut into small cubes. Use as much as you want for a more or less squashy risotto. I put about 3-4 cups in.
- Roast the butternut with olive oil, salt, and pepper at 375 for about 30 minutes, until tender.
- While the squash is roasting, start the rice. I like to start by toasting the grain in the pan with a small amount of olive oil or butter until it starts to smell a little nutty. Stir while you cook it.
- When the grain is fragrant, pour in 2 cups of your stock. Leave the heat on medium to medium low; you want the liquid to be simmering & bubbly but not fully boiling. Stir occasionally so the grain does not stick to the bottom.
- When the first 2 cups have been absorbed into the grain, pour in 2 more cups. Repeat these steps until 6-8 cups of broth have been added and absorbed and the grain has softened enough, but is still slightly al dente. This should happen in about the same time as it takes your squash to roast.
- Turn the heat to low and stir the roasted butternut squash into your risotto rice. Stir it in so that the tender butternut breaks apart slightly into the rice, so it forms almost a sauce. Sprinkle in your grated parmesan (1/4 cup or so) while you stir. Add salt, pepper, and herbs to taste.
- Voila! Should be about 45 minutes to an hour with prep and cooking.



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-systems.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)



CHARLIE'S TOP CROPS

Hakurei Turnips
Alpine Daikon
Radishes
Rubicon Napa
Cabbage



SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

I am grateful for the chill of November. I have been sleeping with the window open under a big snuggly blanket. November is mostly about harvesting and “putting up” the harvest for winter. We have yet to have a frost, so my peppers, eggplants, and fall tomatoes are still producing well. The peppers get particularly large without the heat to ripen them. To store them for the winter, we chop them into 1-inch pieces and put them into a freezer baggie and directly into the freezer. They are still great for stir fry, soups, and stews. Most of my tomatoes are roasted with onions and peppers for salsa, and then canned. When the frost is impending, we’ll pick all the tomatoes and let them ripen in trays in the back room. Some we make into chow-chow, which is a delicious relish with cornbread and beans. My lovely wife is currently pressure canning the green beans that we picked and snapped today.

We’re harvesting loads of Japanese turnips, Easter Egg radishes, watermelon radishes, and bok choy for the farmers market, along with our usual salad mix and arugula. Saturday mornings are crisp and delightful, so go to your local market and meet some farmers. I am harvesting Napa cabbages for the market, and some to ferment into kimchi, a Korean staple. It’s great as a side dish, but really shines in Kimchi Jigae, a blazing hot soup that will warm you up, inside and out.

I have just finished planting our strawberries. They grow best here as an annual, planting in the fall, growing the plants over winter, and harvesting in early spring. The bigger I can get the crowns over winter, the larger the harvest will be in spring. They don’t mind the cold, even deep freezes like last February. I’ll be planting my garlic early next week. It also grows best over winter. If you can’t find any seed garlic, you can use the garlic cloves from the store, but you won’t know what variety they are. Some varieties don’t grow well here, but most of those in the store are California White, and they do fine.

Our soil temperature is still great for getting in some over winter root crops. Over wintering fills the gap in the middle of winter. Carrots started now will be easier to germinate because the soil stays moister during cooler temperatures and they’ll be ready to harvest in February. They keep really well stored in the cold ground. Turnips, rutabagas, and radishes are all great for overwintering. Garden on, my friends!

Charlie Blaylock - Shine’s Farmstand

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

FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Texas Organic Farmers &
Gardeners Association
tofga.org

Farm and Ranch Freedom
Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

USDA National Institute for Food
and Agriculture
<https://nifa.usda.gov/>

