

AUGUST 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 July 1st at 3pm.

### Meeting Notes:

- A small, but mighty representation of the CGUA members met to discuss the group's ongoing projects via Zoom.
- The group received an update about the Grow Southeast farm projects. More information and volunteer opportunities can be found at <https://growsoutheastfw.wixsite.com/texas>.
- Efforts to make school gardening easier and more successful in Tarrant County continue. The group and school garden projects were well-represented in several different sessions at the Dig Deep conference.
- Tarrant Area Food Bank continues to support community gardening through their Community Garden Network.
- The group also discussed opportunities to participate at Dig Deep: A Conference for Growers which was held on July 17th at BRIT.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, September 23rd at 3pm. All are welcome to join!

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



## IN THE NEWS

- A look at gardening mentors growing equity in communities around the country <https://civileats.com/2021/06/11/these-garden-mentors-are-growing-equity/>
- A complex and ongoing example of what can happen when farms at the edge of cities go on the market <https://civileats.com/2021/05/12/the-race-to-transform-a-wisconsin-farm-into-a-justice-focused-agrihood/>
- Local urban farm has bill named after it for its work with the formerly incarcerated <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210712005699/en/Bonton-Farms-Bill-Removing-Inequitable-Standards-for-the-Formerly-Incarcerated-Signed-Into-Law-by-Texas-Governor>
- A Texan non-profit seeks to transform lives and gardens by distributing garden knowledge <https://www.kxxv.com/brazos/the-reach-project-holds-family-farm-day-helps-families-build-their-own-container-garden>

## Events & Classes

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

September 23rd, 3pm

Via Zoom

Details \*Coming Soon\*

### FWBG | BRIT

Topics on Texas Aquatic Ecosystems - Aug. 3rd

In Defense of Plants - Aug. 16th

Bulletproof Plants! - Aug. 19th

<https://brit.org>



SAT. & WED.

8AM-12PM

**Cowtown Farmers Market**

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD



I hope you remember today that the sky is not humiliated by its vastness, and the mountains remain unashamed of their height. Mother Earth and her oceans are not afraid of their size, and the sun is not concerned if someone has to squint their eyes - it will shine. And it will not apologize for its light. And like the trees teach us that it's ok to lose our leaves as seasons change and then come back to life, I hope that nature teaches us to look at ourselves and be kind.

**SOPHIE DIENER**



# DIG DEEP: A CONFERENCE FOR GROWERS RECAP

A special thing happened this past month: the community came together for "Dig Deep: A Conference for Growers" at the Botanic Research Institute of Texas near the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. We saw people from across the metroplex and a bit beyond come together to talk about gardening and growing in all of its complexities. There were hour-long breakout sessions led by local experts on a host of items, ranging from Black Land Loss to School Gardening in Fort Worth.

The conference took all of Saturday, but I found myself wishing it was longer. I could've easily stood for another session or two, and my only regret about presenting that day is that it prevented me from attending a session on spirituality in agriculture. Thankfully, many presentations from that day will be made available virtually in case anyone wants to revisit one or see one they couldn't attend.

The sessions I did get to attend, one on crop rotation and another on market farming, were incredibly informative and well presented. Between all the learning, it was impactful to see friends and the community come together, in person! While Zoom has been a boon throughout this pandemic, this gathering drove home just how nice it is to get to see one another and share a space and passion for growing food. Speaking of food, Dig Deep had some of the best conference food I've ever had. Here's to hoping the caterer, TAFB's Mission Kitchen, sticks around for next year. All in all, I give the conference two green thumbs up and look forward to attending next year. Hope to see y'all there, too.



## AUGUST TO-DO

Plant another round of warm season veggies like squash, beans and corn.

Prune spent flower heads to encourage more blooms.

Add a layer of straw or leaf mulch to help retain moisture and inhibit weed growth.

Continue to start broccoli, cabbage, mustard, kale and cauliflower seeds inside for fall planting.

Take time to map out your fall garden plan.

Harvest okra, eggplant, peppers, cucumbers, squash and melons as they are ready.

## SEASONAL VEGGIE FUN FACTS - OKRA

Okra does not exist in as many different varieties as some of our other favorite vegetable crops, but there are several different types to look for. You may be able to find old-fashioned heirloom varieties, spineless types, dwarf okras, giant okras, round-pod okras, star-pod types, and red okras!

- Okra is a species of the Hibiscus genus and is related to hollyhock, cotton, Rose of Sharon and hibiscus.
- Okra can be grown in most hardiness zones in the United States, but it is most popular in the southern part of the country. Most gardening and recipe books produced elsewhere may not even include okra!
- Okra seeds can be used as a caffeine-free substitute for coffee that tastes surprisingly similar!
- Experts cannot seem to agree on the origins of okra, but it likely came from East Asia, West Africa or Ethiopia.
- Okra is a mucilaginous plant which is why it can get slimy when cooked certain ways. Some folks don't care for this slimy texture, but it can be really useful. The slime can be used to thicken soups, create biodegradable packaging and treat waste water!

Learn more cool facts about okra at <https://facts.net/lifestyle/food/okra-facts/>

# Savory Summer Fruit Salad

Recipe by: **Hannah Lamar Gibson**

In July and August as the summer heat saps our energy, beautiful summer fruits can brighten our plates, palates, and days by being a refreshing and cool treat. When I am aiming to avoid turning on a stove or oven at all costs during hot Texas summers, these summer salads come together nicely and allow us to enjoy the literal fruits that our surroundings have to bear. All of these recipes come together in less than five minutes, require no cooking, and highlight a summer fruit in a new way. Enjoy as a side dish or an appetizer for 3-4 people; easily scalable for larger groups.

## PREPARATION

- Assemble all cut fruit, cheese, and/or herbs on a platter. Season with extra virgin olive oil, pepper, and salt to taste. Enjoy!

## Plum and Parmesan (Pictured)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 plums, any color, thinly sliced
- Thinly shaved Parmesan or Grana Padano cheese, to taste
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Sea salt



## Watermelon and Feta

### INGREDIENTS:

- Two cups of watermelon, cubed or in wedges
- Crumbled Feta cheese, to taste
- Fresh mint leaves, roughly torn
- EVOO
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Sea salt



## Peach and Burrata

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large or 2 small peaches, thinly sliced
- Burrata or fresh Mozzarella cheese, to taste
- Fresh basil leaves, roughly torn
- EVOO
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Sea salt



## 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

- Purple Hull peas
- Gita Yard Long Beans
- Early Girl Tomatoes
- Waltham Butternut
- Sugar Pie Pumpkins
- Green Magic Broccoli



## 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/>



# GONE FISHING!

Farmer Charlie is out on a well-deserved vacation this month. He'll be back next month with more great information about growing food in North Texas. Stay tuned!

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