

HOW'S IT GROWING?

Community Gardens & Urban Agriculture
Working Group Newsletter



CGUA HAPPENINGS

The next CGUA meeting will be on **Thursday, November 30th from 3:00-4:30pm.**

Location, TBD. www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/news--events

The last CGUA meeting held on September 21st, hosted at Tarrant Area Food Bank, was attended by 14 people interested in bringing positive change through gardening in Tarrant County.

Becca Knutson presented the results of the Community Garden Survey put together by CGUA earlier this year. Seven different gardens responded to the initial request for responses. The group gave suggestions on ways to collect more answers. See the article **below** and on **p. 2** more information.

Neale Mansfield brought an update about his most recent project, Tarrant County Backyard Garden Network. He wants to create a network of gardeners that are dedicated to donating to food pantries. He will have more updates after meeting with interested parties over the next couple of weeks.

For more information on how to be involved in the CGUA working group, please contact our chair Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu.

EVENTS

10/6, 10am-12pm
Tour TAFB's Learning Garden
TAFB Eventbrite

10/6-10/7
Fall Plant Sale
FW Botanic Garden Facebook

10/7, 10am
Permaculture for Small Spaces
brit.org/events

10/7, 1pm
Seed Starting 101
brit.org/events

10/12, 5pm & 6pm
Backyard Composting 101
Fortworthtexas.gov/compostoutpost

10/14, 10am
Worm Workshop
Fortworthtexas.gov/compostoutpost

10/19, 5:30pm
Gardeners Happy Hour
Farming the Sprawl Facebook

10/21, 10am-1pm
Worm Composting Workshop
TAFB Eventbrite

10/21, 1pm-4pm
Garden Leader Gathering
TAFB Eventbrite

10/25, 4:30-6:30pm
Pick Your Own Produce
TAFB Eventbrite

COMMUNITY GARDEN SURVEYS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Becca Knutson, TAFB

The Community Garden and Urban Agriculture (CGUA) working group is a part of the Tarrant County Food Policy Council (TCFPC). Both groups work towards improving healthy food access and influencing policies related to food in Tarrant County and beyond.

CGUA has been active for several years and has developed gardening curricula available for free download (see p.2), worked with Blue Zones Project and the City of Fort Worth on the recently passed Urban Agriculture Ordinance and continues to serve as a resource for community and backyard gardeners in this region.

One of our projects in 2017 has been to create and distribute a survey to community gardeners that will give our group insight on what gardens in Tarrant County need to be successful and how those gardens can share their knowledge and resources with others.

After the first distribution, we have received feedback from seven of the most successful community gardens in the area. We've been able to come to a few conclusions:

- Most gardens would love to have extra volunteers or gardeners help maintain common areas in the garden and assist with larger building projects.
- Each garden has different strengths they are willing to share: knowledge about irrigation, tools and books; fundraising techniques; and Master Gardeners/Master Composters that are willing to teach classes.
- Many gardens would benefit from occasional access to some larger equipment that could be shared like chipper/shredders, tillers, wheelbarrows, etc.

(continued on p.2)

COMMUNITY GARDEN SURVEYS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Continued from p. 1

The answers to these surveys will help CGUA decide what projects to focus on in the future. We would love to hear from more gardens—new gardens, established gardens, community gardens, school gardens and any other sort of garden. We will continue to build this network of gardens to share resources and help each garden be successful in providing healthy produce for their community.

Please feel free to share this newsletter and these survey links with anyone you think might be interested:

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2ZJF6RF>
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2W92SSY>

To find a community garden in your neighborhood or to add your community garden to our map, please visit: <http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/community-food-systems-north-texas.html>.

For information on how to start a community garden or to learn more about free gardening workshops and other resources that are available in the area, please email me at becca.knutson@tafb.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

Adding dried molasses to your soil can help feed soil microorganisms and repels fire ants.

Dried molasses can be found at local nurseries and feed stores. Mixing dried molasses and compost together to put on your garden before each growing season will give microbes a quick feast of carbohydrates to devour. These microbes are important to building a healthy soil ecosystem and helping to deter pests and diseases from attacking our crops. With a healthy, active soil environment, pests like fire ants will have to find another place to live, since they prefer poor quality soils without much other life.

See what Howard Garrett, The Dirt Doctor, has to say about dried molasses and other soil amendments that will help your garden thrive: https://www.dirtdoctor.com/garden/Dry-Molasses_vq1884.htm.

RESOURCES

Local Nurseries:

- Archie's Gardenland
- Calloway's
- Redenta's

Free Seeds:

- TAFB Community Garden Program
- Contact seed companies

Bulk Soil/Compost:

- Living Earth
- Silver Creek
- City of FW Drop-off Stations

Garden Curricula:

- CGUA-
www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/cgua-working-group.html

Texas AgriLife Extension:

- www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu

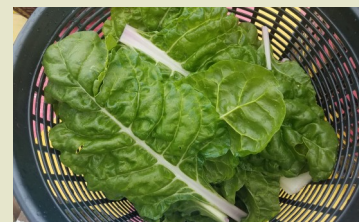
Community Food Systems Map:

- <http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/community-food-systems-north-texas.html>



OCTOBER TO-DO

- Plant lettuce, spinach, carrots, beets, peas, radishes, turnips and rutabaga by seed throughout the month.
- Plant strawberry plants at the end of the month.
- Sow cover crop seed in vacant beds. Visit your local feed store for a “cool season” seed blend.
- Broadcast wildflower seeds for spring blooms.
- Plant trees and shrubs to help them get established before winter.
- Harvest sweet potatoes after the tops wither, before the first frost.
- Harvest winter squash and pumpkins before the first frost.
- Continue to plant broccoli, cauliflower, mustard, Brussels sprouts and cabbage transplants.



Please take a moment to complete our surveys about community gardens in our area. They take less than ten minutes and will help us better serve you in the future.

Thanks!

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2ZJF6RF>
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2W92SSY>



Cajun Baked Okra

Recipe by BitesOfFlavor.com

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Servings: 2

Serving Size: 1/2 lb.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. okra
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- Juice of half a lemon
- 1/2 Tbs. salt
- 1/2 Tbs. pepper
- 1/8 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. onion powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Rinse okra and pat dry.
3. In small bowl, mix salt, pepper, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne pepper and cumin.
4. In Ziploc bag, add okra, olive oil, lemon juice and spices. Shake to coat okra with spices.
5. Spray baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray.
6. Place okra on baking sheet in single layer.
7. Roast in 450 degree oven for 10 minutes.
8. With a spatula, turn okra on other side and cook for another 5 minutes.