

MAY 2024

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

The CGUA working group met on March 21st at Ridglea Christian Church. Eleven people were in attendance.

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

- Multiple garden-related jobs were mentioned during the meeting. It's great to see the increase in job opportunities in local agriculture!
- Lauren provided an update on TAFB's Garden Network, reporting that profiles are being updated, gardens are being visited, the website is up to date and they are updating their garden curriculum to be a series. WIC FMNP and SFMNP will begin in May at Cowtown Farmers Market.
- Many farmers markets are opening during April and May as the weather warms and produce is more abundant. Visit your favorite local market often!
- Anne mentioned enjoying garden time with students during recess since the students can't do garden class during STAR testing.
- Jesse reported that all Grow SE farms are doing well. TCC provided many transplants again this year for the farms and that there are volunteer opportunities at each location this spring. Grow SE has received a couple of grants. One grant is for policy work on the urban ag ordinance and the other is for the management and improvement of the Mindful Market.
- Lauren and Becca will take lead on the garden/farm tours beginning in June. All are welcome to help if interested! Stay tuned for updates.
- Everyone enjoyed a tour of the Giving Garden after the meeting.

Throughout the meeting, Dave led the group in three contemplative practices which provided everyone a chance to meditate and welcome spring into our lives.

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.

The next CGUA meeting will be on May 16th at 3pm. Location UNT Health Science Center Community Garden.

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

- USDA highlights a local urban farmer and chairman of an urban agriculture committee <https://www.farmers.gov/blog/be-link-part-conversation>
- Fort Worth group plans business to promote sustainable agriculture <https://fortworthreport.org/2024/04/21/fort-worth-group-plans-living-lab-to-teach-staying-power-of-sustainable-farming/>
- David Howard discusses his plans for Stop Six, including an urban farm and grocery store <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/fort-worth/article287725305.html>
- Civil Eats outlines issues with the recent study citing higher carbon output in urban farms <https://civileats.com/2024/04/03/despite-recent-headlines-urban-farming-is-not-a-climate-villain/>

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

May 16th, 3pm

Location: UNT Health Science Center Community Garden

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting
Time & Location TBD

CGUA GARDEN TOURS

Ridglea Giving Garden
Sunday, June 2nd
11am-1pm, Open House
3251 Sappington Pl. FW 76116

FW BOTANIC GARDEN

Events & Activities

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

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Garden workdays and local workdays are posted!

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

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

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

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

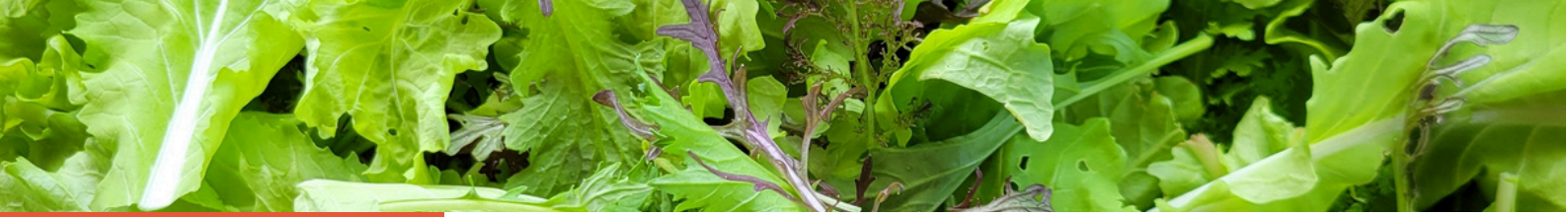
MINDFUL MARKET

May 4th, 11am to 2pm

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

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

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



“The word May is a perfumed word.... It means youth, love, song; and all that is beautiful in life.”

**HENRY WADSWORTH
LONGFELLOW**



Featured Farm **TURLEY'S FRUITY & VEGGIE FARM**

Owner: Craig Turley

Location: Venus, TX

TYPE OF OPERATION:
Small-scale family farm

GROWING METHODS:
Row cropping

**TYPES OF PRODUCTS
GROWN/RAISED:** Vegetables,
including peppers, tomatoes,
squash, purple hulled peas,
okra, onions and more

WHERE TO FIND THEM:
Cowtown Farmers Market
@Turleysfruitandvegetablefarm



TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN MAY!

BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

May is another busy month for growing food in North Texas! Crops that were planted earlier in the year are ready to harvest and our summer crops will experience huge growth. We may even see some first harvests of tomatoes, peppers, squash and cucumber!

In May, I also notice a transition of the types of tasks I have on my list. January through April involves a LOT of bed prep, planting, weeding, caring for seedlings and working through erratic weather. Once May rolls around, my list involve more “heavy lifting” tasks like harvesting, trellising, pruning and fertilizing.

- **Harvest potatoes, garlic, leeks and onions** - The crops that were planted earlier this year (and even last fall) are going to be ready to harvest this month! I usually plan to harvest these crops around May 15th but some things may be ready earlier. Dig down a little in the soil to see if your potatoes are forming and your onions & garlic are bulbing. The leaves of these crops will begin to fall over or yellow to indicate they are ready to harvest.
 - Potatoes can be harvested and used as “new” potatoes right after harvest. They can also be “cured” for storage by allowing them to rest in a cool, dark, well-ventilated space for a week or more before use.
 - Onions may be harvested for fresh green onions, cebollitas or fresh large onions. They can also be cured for storage by hanging them in a dry, well-ventilated space for a week or more.
 - Garlic can be harvested and used fresh. It can be cured for storage in the same way as onions.
 - Leeks should be harvested to use fresh.
- **Continue to plant some summer crops** - The window for planting summer crops extends into May - it’s not too late! While late-planted tomatoes may need some shade to thrive, other crops like cucumber, squash, sweet potatoes, peppers, eggplant, beans and southern peas can still be planted. I even find it beneficial to have a later harvest of these items to help fill any gaps the sweltering summer heat causes.
- **Tend to your tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings** - Keep an eye on your tomatoes, peppers and eggplant to see if they need to be fertilized and/or staked.
- **Harvest and enjoy your final rounds of cool weather crops** - Crops like radishes, lettuce, leafy greens, cilantro and dill will start to struggle as the weather warms. It’s time to move on from these crops until the weather cools down again in fall.
- **Plan for irrigation and watering** - Make sure you have a watering plan in place as we approach the hot summer. Whether you are hand watering or have timed irrigation, consistent watering will help your crops survive the upcoming 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 coming in June. 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.



Sauteed Spring Alliums

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

This is a non-recipe recipe. The fresh, green alliums at the farmer's market were so beautiful that I simply had to use them in whatever I could. This recipe is a simple instruction for how to prepare them and add them into many different dishes: top a pizza, stir them into a quiche, fold them into a pot of brothy beans.



INGREDIENTS

4 spring onions
3 onion scapes
Olive oil
Salt, pepper



PREPARATION

- Wash your spring onions and onion scapes well
- Separate the flowers from the scapes and set them aside
- Chop into 1-2 inch pieces
- Heat olive oil in a sauté pan
- Add your prepared alliums into the sauté pan, season with salt and pepper to taste
- Cook until the greens become fragrant and start to get a hint of color
- Allow to cool, then add to the dish of your choice. Add the onion scape flowers at this time as well, to avoid burning the delicate flowers while sautéing.
- Enjoy!



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](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

- Yardlong Beans
(Python & Red Noodle)
- Melons
- Purple Hull Peas
- Pumpkin



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

May is upon us. It's hard to believe. This time of the year is always crazy for Opal's Farm. There never seems to be enough time in the day to shorten the "To Do" list. Tomatoes in – check. Peppers in – check. Eggplants – check. Squash – check. The list goes on. We average about twenty varieties of produce every Spring and always leave space to try new cultivars that might work better for us in North Texas.

The hotter summers pose new challenges to gardeners and urban farmers in North Texas who use regenerative, organic methods for growing. It's a constant search for varieties of vegetables that are more drought and heat tolerant.

One of the veggies we tried last year was the Yard-long Bean. The beans are native to Southeast Asia and are extremely heat tolerant. They will even produce in August when most everything in the garden is barely hanging on. Yard-long beans are basically real long green beans with a wonderful full flavor. Because of their length they do have to be trellised like a pole bean, but the rewards are worth the extra attention. We planted two twenty-five-foot beds last year and averaged thirty to fifty pounds of beans per bed each week. They sold well enough to make many repeat customers for the market and farm stand. Plus, you get to harvest them standing up which is fantastic if you're tall like Joey and me.

I purchased the Yard-long beans from Johnny's Select Seeds in Maine. They've provided the best germination rates and yields. I grew the Python variety last year and have added the Red Noodle variety to Python this year. Both are coming along well.

We generally use Johnny's Select Seeds for most of our seed purchases. We also use Wilhite's Seed Company in Poolville for our melons, pumpkins, and purple-hulled peas to be planted this month on a second acre. We expanded two years ago to the second acre but left it in cover crops to prepare the soil for the melons, pumpkins, and peas. Terminating our winter peas and cereal rye is time consuming but planting veggies for the first time there is exciting.

I'm sitting here at my desk watching the rain coming down once again. It gets to be a bit frustrating when it's on a five-day rain cycle. It doesn't dry out enough to get planting done on time, but I'm not complaining. After all, it's only a month before we start worrying about the dry summer. I hope you all are inside enjoying the Spring evening. Have a great May!

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

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

