

FEBRUARY 2025

# WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

## CGUA MEETING NOTES - 1/16/25

The CGUA working group last met on January 16th at Timberview Farmstead. Eighteen people were in attendance.

Adam Cohen was our host and provided an overview for the group. Timberview Farmstead is a non-profit educational farm that aims to connect people back to agriculture. They have an expansive property that includes in-ground crops, hydroponics, aquaponics, livestock, a farm store, several meeting spaces as well as greenhouses and hoopouses. They are a fairly new operation that hopes to be a resource for other growers and a food hub for the community.

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

- Manny Herrera provided updates from TAFB's Community Garden Network.
  - The Community Garden Network newsletter has been sent out.
  - Manny will be hosting virtual "Grow & Tell" office hours for network members to ask questions and provide support for each other.
  - The garden calendar is in development.
- Greg Joel provided updates from the Grow Southeast group with a focus on the happenings at Opal's Farm.
  - The Mindful Market continues to operate on a monthly basis.
  - At Opal's:
    - Production continues to be above average in comparison to past years.
    - TCC Horticulture will be growing summer crop transplants again this year.
    - Taste for the CURE begins in January and runs through June. The first cohort has 25 participants.
    - Greg will be attending a discussion in Washington, D.C. regarding the inequitable distribution of USDA funds. He may get to meet President Trump.
    - They will have a produce stand at Archie's Gardenland every Saturday from 1-3pm.
- Becca Knutson reminded the group about the current, local farmers markets and encouraged everyone to visit their favorite one.
  - Watch for information about seasonal closings and what great in-season foods are available through the winter!
- MaryJo Greene and Anne Santana of the North Texas School Garden Network, Diamond Moss of AfroGreen'D, and Daniel Morgan of OutTeach shared news about school gardens:
  - School is back in session and educators are excited to be working with their students again.
  - Mary Jo and Anne have started a school garden podcast called "The School Garden Podcast" which can be found on Spotify.
  - NTX School Garden network has workdays and meetups on their website.
  - AfroGreen'd has workdays coming up on Feb. 14th and Earth Day.
  - Outteach has launched a sustainability initiative.

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](mailto:tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com).

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, March 27th at 3pm. Location, TBD.

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) or Lauren Hickman at [lauren.hickman@tafb.org](mailto:lauren.hickman@tafb.org).

## Events & Classes

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

March 27th, 3pm

Location: TBD

### TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting

Details TBD

### CONUNDRUM FARMS

Volunteer opportunities & events

<https://www.conundrumfarms.com/events>

### FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

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

### NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Meetups, workdays & classes!

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

### TIMBERVIEW FARMSTEAD

Events, classes & tours!

<https://timberviewfarmstead.com>

### COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

Azle Farmers Market

<https://azlefarmersmarket.org>

Saginaw Farmers Market

<https://www.saginawmarket.org/>

### MINDFUL MARKET

February 1st, 11am to 2pm

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

### COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

EVERY Saturday, 8am to NOON

[www.cowtownmarket.com](http://www.cowtownmarket.com)



“When the world wearies and society ceases to satisfy, there is always the garden.”

MINNIE AUMONIER



## Featured Community Garden

### JUBILEE GARDEN

LEADERS: Carolyn Sedinger and Janet Lanza

LOCATION: 6720 W Elizabeth Lane, Fort Worth

TYPE OF OPERATION: Plot rental, free food plots

GROWING METHODS: Raised beds, pollinator beds, fruit trees

TYPES OF PRODUCTS GROWN: Variety of fruit and vegetables

WHERE TO FIND THEM: [ridglechristian.org/ministries/garden-ministries](http://ridglechristian.org/ministries/garden-ministries)



# TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN FEB.!

BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

February is another active month for growing food in North Texas. It's not quite as busy as spring will be, but there are plenty of tasks to do. Perhaps we can hope for slightly warmer weather which will allow for plenty of time for soil prep and planting.

- **Get those potatoes planted!** - Traditionally, February 14th is the beginning of potato planting season in our area. Growers should aim to be finished planting potatoes by the end of the month. I usually get my seed potatoes from the local feed store and allow them to sprout for a couple weeks before I want to plant them. Be sure to purchase varieties suited for this area like Yukon Gold, Kennebec and Red LaSoda. For more information and tips on growing potatoes, check out this article from the [The Dallas Garden School](#).
- **Start summer crop seeds indoors** - In February, you can continue to start summer crops inside to transplant out in March and April. I plan to start my tomatoes at the beginning of the month. If I have any germination issues, I will start more eggplant and peppers as well. I may also start some more herbs like parsley, dill, cilantro and chives. I'll wait until March for basil. A general rule of thumb is to start seeds inside 6-8 weeks from when you want to transplant them outside. However, crops like squash, cucumbers and beans only need a few weeks to grow inside; don't start these crops inside until later, if at all. Typically these crops are better direct seeded.
- **“Bump up” your seedlings** - By the end of the month, some of your summer seedlings may be getting too big for their seed starting trays. A little disruption and shock can actually encourage more growth, too. Once your peppers, eggplant and tomatoes have a couple true leaves, you can repot them into 4-inch nursery pots which should be enough space until you are ready to plant them outside.
- **Plant quick growing crops** - Lettuce, fennel, kohlrabi, radishes, salad greens and arugula grow well and relatively quickly even during this time of year. If you'd like to keep a few other things growing in February, these crops are great choices.
- **Plan for irrigation and watering** - Continue watering crops and newly planted seeds and seedlings. As the weather cools, decrease the amount of water your plants receive. Monitor the forecast for potential rain and cooler nights. Be sure to protect your irrigation and water source during freezes.
- **Watch for crazy winter weather!** - Have frost cloth and mulch ready to protect your plants on cooler nights and if we get an extended freeze. Make a plan to protect your faucets, irrigation lines and automatic timers as well.
- **Prune your fruit trees** - Now is a great time to prune your fruit trees before they produce buds. Be sure to look up guidance on how to prune so you don't do more damage than good.

I hope you are surviving the cold snaps we've had this winter and are still making progress on planting for great harvests this year. The vibes are right for a productive and delicious year! Happy growing!



# CULTIVATING WELLNESS: MANAGING STRESS

BY NIKO HUNT

With so much chaos in the world sometimes it can be difficult to see the good things and manage the stress that results from trying to keep it all together. Making time for play can help you de-stress and give you the opportunity to have a little fun!

## Steps to Reduced Stress: Plan for Play!

- Instead of participating in your normal workout, make time to dance. Turn on the music and get moving!
- Occupy your mind with mind play. Set aside time to complete a word puzzle or learn a new language!
- Tap into your inner child. Do one thing that feels like play – paint a picture, climb a tree, watch a favorite childhood movie!

Different contributing factors including the weather, the economy, workloads, pest infestations, and other elements with changing conditions farmers and gardeners can experience high levels of stress. Growers can integrate self-care in a fun way throughout their day with intentional breaks that are engaging and non-work related. The benefits of taking time for yourself are reduced burnout, improved mental wellbeing, enhanced productivity, and a greater connection to the land!

## Mint Yogurt Sauce

Recipe by Yolanda Gutierrez

If you love herbs, this Mint Yogurt Sauce is just for you! It is a quick and easy recipe used as a dipping sauce, a dressing for salads, or drizzled over just about anything!

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, pressed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cumin



### PREPARATION

- Combine yogurt, mint, lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin in a bowl. Stir until well combined. Enjoy!

### IN THE NEWS

- **Farmers can begin enrolling in farm safety programs**  
<https://texasfarmbureau.org/usda-announces-sign-up-periods-for-safety-net-programs/>
- **Ensuring a new generation of farmers can have access to land**  
<https://foodtank.com/news/2025/01/a-new-path-to-sustainable-farming-an-agrarian-commons-model/>
- **Cultivating prosperity in South Dallas through innovative urban farming**  
<https://www.smu.edu/news/latest/restorative-farms>

## GARDEN RESOURCES

### Local Nurseries:

[Archie's Gardenland](#)  
[Calloway's](#)

### Free Seeds:

[TAFB Community Garden Program:](#)  
[communitygarden@tafb.org](mailto: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>

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS, AUDIO AND VIDEO

### The School Garden Podcast

By Mary Jo Greene & Anne Santana

### Charles Dowding's Skills For Growing

By Charles Dowding

### The Market Gardener: A Successful Grower's Handbook for Small-Scale Organic Farming

By Jean-Martin Fortier

### Diego Footer

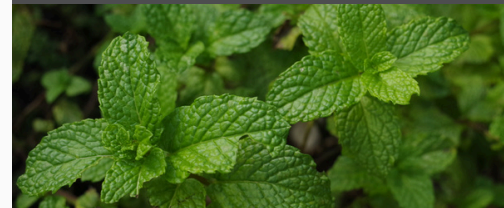
[Farm Small, Farm Smart Podcast](#)  
[YouTube Channel](#)  
[Books](#)

### Growing for Market

Free articles, email subscriptions, podcasts and MORE!

### Bootstrap Farmer

Articles, videos, podcasts and MORE!





## GREG'S TOP CROPS

Onions - Texas 1015, Texas White, Southern Belle, White Granex

Potatoes - Yukon Gold, Kennebec, Red LaSoda



## FARM RESOURCES

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance  
[farmandranchfreedom.org](http://farmandranchfreedom.org)

GROW North Texas  
[grownorthtexas.org](http://grownorthtexas.org)

Natural Resource Conservation Service  
[nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)

Texas Center for Local Food  
[texaslocalfood.org](http://texaslocalfood.org)

Texas Department of Agriculture  
[texasagriculture.gov](http://texasagriculture.gov)

Texas Health Resources Community Hope  
<https://www.texashealth.org/About-Texas-Health/Community-Hope>

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association  
[tofga.org](http://tofga.org)

USDA Farm Service Agency  
[fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov)

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture  
[nifa.usda.gov/](http://nifa.usda.gov/)

## OPAL'S PICKS

Greetings Growers! I hope everyone stayed bundled up through last month's cold spells and all is ready for February onion and potato planting. Our beds are ready, and the onions will arrive this week for us. It'll be great to be planting again.

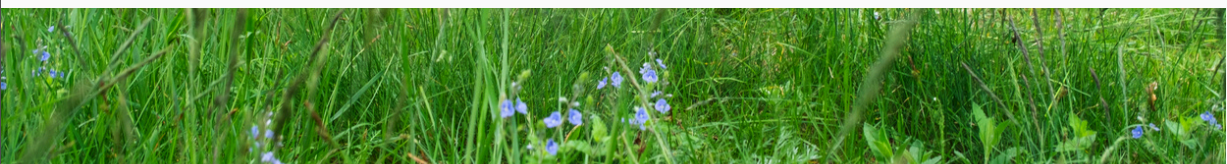
We launched our inaugural Taste the C.U.R.E. classes on January 25th at Tarleton State University's River Campus. We had originally planned for twenty-five people in our first cohort and we had 117 applications come in. It was fantastic to see so many folks want to learn urban farming and gardening and to hear the myriad reasons folks wanted to learn to grow their own food. For some it was better health through good nutrition, and for others it was the therapeutic value of reconnecting to the soil, but overall, it was to enjoy their homegrown tasty, fresh, and local produce. All agreed that the grocery store products just didn't cut it!

Everyone came to Opal's Farm after the morning class and laid out their own ten-foot by twenty-foot plots. They began working in earnest to build beds and clean out weeds and grasses. It was wonderful to watch and to see the excitement all had for growing their own garden.

February is a busy month for Opal's Farm. There are onions to plant, potatoes to go in, and new beds to be completed in our bio-intensive learning garden. We have to give a shout-out to the Dallas Wings WNBA team, the Texas Fence Association, and Texas Best Fence and Patio for the new fence around the learning garden. They accomplished a huge amount of work in a very short time to get us ready for Spring. The new tomato beds are ready for planting after our last frost date of March 17th. Most of the furrows are mulched and the new beds are ready to go. We finalized the layout of our Spring crops and are ready for a very busy Spring.

I would like to take a moment to say thank you to Joey Hughes. Joey was our Assistant Manager until last month when he left to pursue other opportunities with the Ridglea Giving Garden where he has been a Co-Manager for the last several months, as well as working with Mary Jo on school gardens, and part-time at Timberview Farmstead. We wish him the best and are grateful for the time he was with Opal's Farm.

Greg Joel  
Farm Manager - Opal's Farm  
<https://www.facebook.com/opalsfarm>





# THE NEED TO BE WHOLE BY WENDELL BERRY

A BOOK REVIEW BY BECCA KNUTSON

Growing up as an avid reader and employee of a couple different library systems, it has always frustrated me that my motivation to read on a regular basis eludes me. As I was working on my 2025 New Year’s Resolutions, I, once again, added “read more” to my list. Determined to make reading a habit again, I decided to see if audiobooks could be a viable solution to my motivation problem as I currently already listen to podcasts non-stop while working on the farm. I headed over to Audible, committed to the subscription fee and started browsing titles. After adding several to my wish list and failing to be captivated by the first title I tried to listen to, I clicked on *The Need to Be Whole: Patriotism and the History of Prejudice* by Wendell Berry. I was immediately interested in the content and quite enjoyed the narration by Nick Offerman.

February 2, 1968

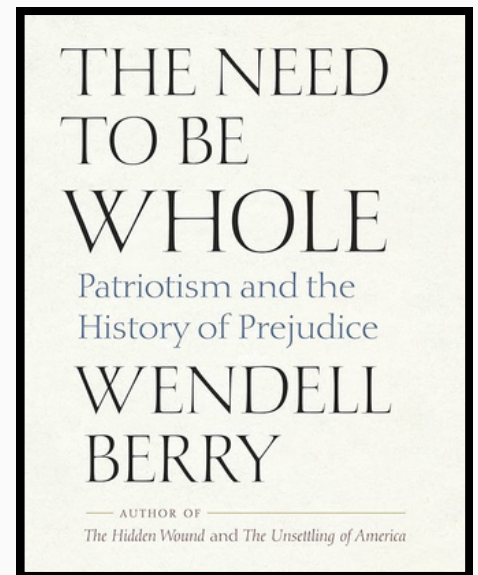
“

In the dark of the moon, in flying snow, in the dead of winter,  
war spreading, families dying, the world in danger,  
I walk the rocky hillside, sowing clover.

”

– Wendell Berry

I am very familiar with the name “Wendell Berry,” although, I don’t believe I have read many of his books, of which there are a lot. Some titles you may be familiar with include, *The Unsettling of America*, *The Hidden Wound*, *A Place on Earth*, *That Distant Land*, and *The Mad Farmer Poems*. Since it will provide insight into the perspective of this text, I believe it is important to learn a few things about Mr. Berry. Wendell Berry was born in 1934. He has seen and experienced more historical events and shifts in culture and economics than most people who are alive today. He is from Kentucky and grew up on his family’s tobacco farm in Henry County – a rural, agricultural community. According to several sources, he is an author, farmer, activist, pacifist, Christian, anti-capitalist and environmentalist who values sustainable agriculture, local economics, the interconnectedness of life, agrarian values and good work.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

[AfroGreen’d](#)   [Conundrum Farms](#)   [Grow North Texas](#)

[Grow Southeast](#)   [NTX School Garden Network](#)

[Southside Community Garden](#)

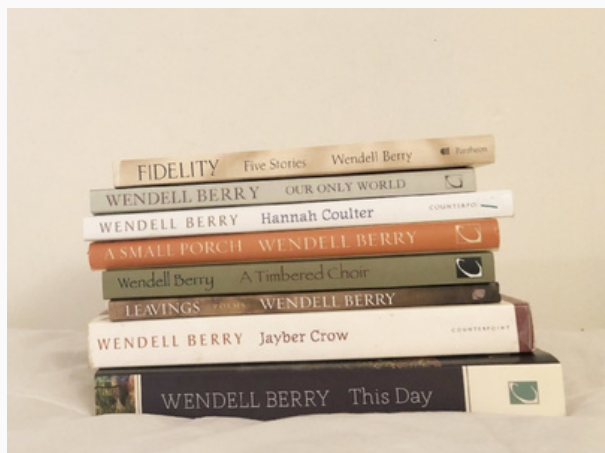
[Tarrant Area Food Bank Farm & Garden Programs](#)

[Timberview Farmstead](#)



## THE NEED TO BE WHOLE BY WENDELL BERRY (CONT.)

*The Need to Be Whole* covers a variety of different subjects and at times feels like the insightful ramblings of a wise man that may or may not be directly related to an overarching theme while remaining enjoyable and thought-provoking. Berry spends much of the first part of the book discussing the connections between slavery, the Civil War, agriculture and race relations. He provides a perspective that is more nuanced than the simplified narrative that we are familiar with today. You know the story: the North was moral, the South was not, Lincoln freed the slaves and the North won the moral victory and everything was fine. Berry reminds us that there was much more to the story than we usually hear. He tells us about how slavery was not the same throughout the country and while it was still objectively a repulsive system of human ownership, there was a range of experiences for both slaves and slave owners. He reminds us that the Civil War was not a war between good and evil, but a war between actual people; people who were fighting for a cause, for their land, for their families and for their country. He reminds us that ending slavery did not end racism and prejudice in our country. He reminds us that war and violence are not an effective or acceptable means to accomplish peace and solve problems. He reminds us that the human experience is often much more complicated and intertwined than we typically take the time to understand.



I could spend pages and pages diving into the numerous topics Mr. Berry touches on in this text, but I won't. Some of my favorites that he discussed include interconnectedness of the care of people and the care of the land; the division we currently feel in this country between political parties and rural and urban communities; the satisfaction of working for oneself and working the land and how that differs from work that comes with career jobs; and the importance of forgiveness and love and how that can potentially heal our divided country.

Overall, I thought this book was compelling, insightful and thought-provoking. There were times when I felt as if Berry was speaking to my experience, which provided me comfort and enjoyment. Throughout much of the book, however, I felt challenged to think about many different topics from a different perspective. I was uncomfortable sometimes because he had me questioning opinions I have that I thought were set in stone. I really enjoyed being challenged and feeling uncomfortable. At the end of the book, I didn't change all of my opinions to match Wendell Berry's but my mind was opened, I have other perspectives to consider and I also have a little more hope for humanity, our country and a future that includes more respect, understanding and forgiveness.

If you have read this book or end up reading it, I would love to grab a coffee sometime and chat about it. Please reach out to me and we'll schedule something! So, until then, please remember to work hard, care for your land and remember that people are often more complicated than we can see. Perhaps I'll meet you here next month if I continue to make progress on this New Year's Resolution.