

HOW'S IT GROWING?

Community Gardens & Urban Agriculture
Working Group Newsletter



CGUA HAPPENINGS

The next CGUA meeting will be on **Thursday, March 22nd from 3:00-4:30pm** at Tarrant Area Food Bank (2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, TX 76107) in the Rodriguez Meeting Room-2nd Floor.

The last CGUA meeting held on January 25th, hosted at Tarrant Area Food Bank, was attended by 12 people interested in bringing positive change through gardening in Tarrant County.

Becca Knutson presented the first draft of the vandalism handout that the group will provide as a resource to the community. All other attendees gave feedback and suggestions. The final copy will be posted on the TCFPC website and will be available for download.

The group will also be collecting garden stories to share in this newsletter and on social media to promote the benefits of gardening. See p. 3 for more information.

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

2/3, 10am-12pm
Permaculture Basics
brit.org

2/10, 11am
Crape Murder & Other Pruning Crimes
marshallgrain.com

2/10, 9-11am
Growing Place Community Garden Grand Opening
growingplacegarden.com

2/17, 10am-1pm
Planning Your Spring & Summer Garden
[TAFB Eventbrite](http://TAFB.Eventbrite)

2/17, 1-4pm
Garden Leader Gathering
[TAFB Eventbrite.com](http://TAFB.Eventbrite.com)

2/22-2/24
Master Composter Course
Fortworthtexas.gov/compostoutpost

A DAY IN THE GARDEN

LISA MANSFIELD

If you don't garden, you should! You never know what kind of life experience you will have. I experienced a scare, joy and extreme shock all in 60 seconds. It's a day I will never forget.

It was a hot summer morning, I was enjoying my alone time at the Community Enrichment Center gardens in North Richland Hills. My music was on and I was deep in thought pulling weeds. I noticed a plant with big leaves growing some type of melon that we did not plant. I decided to let it be and pull the weeds from around it when suddenly something jumped out at me from the shelter of the leaves. My heart was pounding as I jumped back only to notice it was a baby bunny. He was so little and cute, I could only laugh at how bad he scared me. I grabbed my phone to take a picture. I was maybe two feet away. Then without a sound came a vicious hawk from behind me. The hawk swooped down, grabbed the bunny with his sharp talons and flew off to the top of a light pole, the poor baby bunny screaming the entire way. All I could do was stand there with my jaw dropped in shock, unable to move. Never in my life had I witnessed a scene like that! I never got to take a picture of the sweet, innocent bunny but I did get a picture of his assailant.



SEED STARTING 101

Becca Knutson—TAFB Community Garden Coordinator

Spring is just around the corner! It is time to get ready to plant tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and all of our other favorite warm-season crops. A great way to save money, if you have a large garden, is to grow your own seedlings at home. What a rewarding experience to raise your vegetable and herb plants from seed to delicious harvest. Follow the tips below to have happy and healthy seedlings.

1. Choose your seed-starting soil. Most nurseries and garden centers sell a lightweight mix that is perfect for fragile seedlings. Once you are ready to plant, moisten your mix before filling your containers.
2. Almost any small container can be used to start seeds. Most gardeners like to use small-celled seed-starting trays which can be purchased online or at garden centers. However, you can also use 4" nursery pots, milk cartons, eggshells or biodegradable pots. Make sure your container has good drainage and doesn't dry out too quickly.
3. Fill your containers with your moist starter mix. Plant 2-3 seeds in each container at the depth recommended on the seed packet. Read your seed packet to make sure each specific crop transplants well—some plants don't!
4. Loosely cover your containers with plastic wrap or plastic lids that come with seed-starting trays. This will help retain moisture.
5. Place your finished containers under fluorescent or "grow" lights. See below for an example of this setup. Make sure the light is 2-3" above the containers.
6. Water from the bottom and allow the moisture to wick up into the soil, if possible. If not, gently water each pot of soil every 2-3 days or as they dry out. Seeds need a moist environment to sprout.

Most seeds sprout within 3-15 days of planting under the proper conditions. For more details and what to do with your seedlings as they grow larger, visit: <https://www.rodaliesorganiclife.com/garden/a-simple-step-by-step-guide-to-starting-your-own-seeds>.



DID YOU KNOW?

By now, you may have learned the two different kinds of tomato plants: determinate and indeterminate. But did you know there are also determinate and indeterminate POTATOES?

Determinate varieties of potatoes grow to a certain height and then set tubers at the base of the plant when grown in raised beds or in the ground. These are usually "early varieties" that are ready to harvest in 70-90 days. Common varieties include Yukon Gold, Red LaSoda and Kennebec.

Indeterminate varieties will continue to grow and will put off tubers along the stem of the plant when it is grown in a tower. These are "late varieties" and will take 90-110 days to produce. Common varieties include Russet Nugget, German Butterball and Elba.

For information on how to set up a potato tower, visit: <https://commonsensehome.com/growing-potatoes-easy-way/>.

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>

FEBRUARY TO-DO

- Feed the soil by adding compost before planting and around existing crops.
- Plant potatoes 4-inches deep in warm soil, by the 3rd week in February.
- Continue to plant onion slips.
- Direct seed carrots, radishes, beets and lettuce to fill in empty spaces in the garden.
- Finish planning your spring and summer garden.



GARDEN STORIES

Do you have a 100-200 word garden story to share? Has gardening impacted your life in a meaningful way? Send us your garden stories and experiences along with a couple pictures and we will share them in our newsletter and on social media.

All stories and pictures can be sent to our chair, Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu.

Simple Roasted Cabbage

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 6-8

Serving Size: 2 slices

Ingredients

- 1 medium green cabbage
- Non-stick canola oil or olive oil spray
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder



Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Wash the cabbage; remove outer leaves.
3. Slice the cabbage into large disks or semicircles.
4. Spray a baking sheet with non-stick spray.
5. Arrange the cabbage slices on the baking sheet so they lay flat and are not overlapping.
6. Brush cabbage lightly with olive oil.
7. Sprinkle the salt, pepper, onion powder, and garlic powder evenly over the cabbage.
8. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until edges are lightly browned.
9. Remove from oven and serve immediately.

Substitutions

- Use a savoy or Chinese cabbage for a variety in texture.
 - Canola oil may be used instead of olive oil.



TARRANT COUNTY
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL