

DECEMBER 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 November 18th at 3pm. Ten people were in attendance.

Meeting Notes:

- Kent Bradshaw of Funkytown Farm gave a presentation on their new farm project that will aim to employ and educate youth on farming practices. Their property is off of Sycamore School Rd. near the Chisholm Trail Parkway and they hope to welcome their first students in June 2022.
- We got an update about Fort Worth school garden advocate Mary Jo. She is recovering well after the accident but will need to have a couple more surgeries. Please keep her in your thoughts.
- Lauren Hickman provided an update on the TAFB Community Garden Network. They are accepting leaf donations at The Learning Garden and are looking for sources of manure for their partner gardens.
- Laura Miller announced that AgriLife Extension is hiring for a position that will focus on school gardens and nutrition education.
- Grow Southeast has started their Farm Apprentice Program. Mind Your Garden urban farm is looking to implement some Healthy Hours. Mt. Tabor has a long wish list and could use any help or support available.
- Finally, the group shared their favorite Thanksgiving dishes with associated memories.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, January 20th at 3:00pm via Zoom. All are welcome to join!

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu or Charlie Blaylock at shinesfarmstand@gmail.com.

IN THE NEWS

- An Urban Farm Development Proposal in Dallas is Stalled
<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/2021/11/04/dallas-cancels-vote-on-plan-to-lease-city-owned-land-for-nonprofit-urban-farm-redevelopment/>
- Texas A&M Agrilife Urban Agriculture Controlled Environment Conference is Being Held in Dallas in December <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/11/18/controlled-environment-conference-runs-dec-9-10-in-dallas/>
- "Barrio-Supported Agriculture" Increases Food Security in Urban Arizona
<https://civileats.com/2021/10/22/in-tucson-barrio-supported-agriculture-feeds-the-latino-community/>
- A Los Angeles Community Garden Allows Immigrants and Native Angelenos a Place to Grow Food and Community Together
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/18/travel/los-angeles-san-pedro-community-garden.html>
- A Look at How an Community Garden Project in Alabama will Utilize Federal Grants
<https://www.alabamane.wscenter.com/2021/11/15/federal-grant-will-support-urban-agriculture-and-community-gardens-in-birmingham/>

Events & Classes

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

December 2nd, 4:00pm

Registration Link:

<https://tinyurl.com/tuevxxkb>

NEXT CGUA MEETING

January 20th, 3:00pm

Zoom Meeting ID:

977 3969 8576

Password: 976486

FWBG | BRIT

Winter Herbs for Wellness -

December 6th, 10:00am

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

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Soils and Site Prep -

December 7th, 6:00pm

Make a Living Wreath -

December 14th, 6:00pm

<https://savetarrantwater.com/events/>

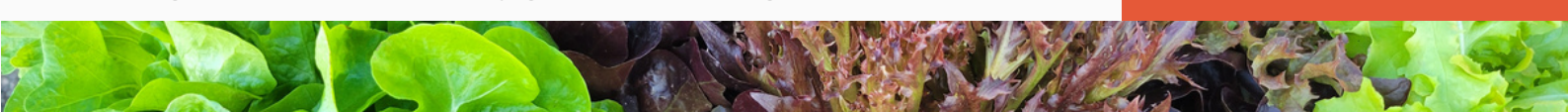
Cowtown Farmers Market

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD

SATURDAYS

8AM-12PM

HOLIDAY MARKET -
DEC. 18TH





"The color of springtime is in the flowers; the color of winter is in the imagination."

TERRI GUILLEMETS



DECEMBER TO-DO

Watch the weather forecast and prepare your frost protection for cold nights.

Finish planting cool season vegetable crops and herbs if the weather stays mild.

Plant bulbs for spring like tulips and hyacinth.

Mulch bare soil and beds.

Cut back spent perennials, leaving 6 inches of stem for critters to use as shelter.

Prepare for seed starting and garden planning.

ANTICIPATION **By Susan Barker**

We took this fall off from planting. Our fall crop bed, usually full of kales, cabbages, kohlrabi, lettuces, collard greens, broccoli, bok choy, parsley, and johnny jump ups, is now empty and covered with a thick layer of straw. We have no carrots, radishes, beets, or rutabagas sown in blocks along the pathway. Not even our annual bed of garlic or the splashes of cilantro or Swiss chard planted among the perennials.

I miss our beautiful, bountiful fall garden of deep greens and purples, perky and vibrant under the bare tree limbs, but I am glad for the break. It is the end of a hard year for our family on the back of another hard year, and pausing the garden production felt like a good way to take it a little easy on ourselves for a time. This fall, Jeff and I have found more time to read together and sip tea, watch the birds at the feeders and the baths, share meals with family, and wander through the garden without building a list of to-dos. We are taking time to recover and to cultivate gratitude.

There have been some unexpected perks to this break in growing, too - more frequent visits to Cowtown Farmers' Market, for one, where we get to support our local farmers, buy produce as delicious as our own garden goodies, and discover new crops to grow and eat, like bottle gourd and lemon spinach.

And then there is this: Spring planting is never something I need to mark on the calendar or set a reminder for. Instead, I sense the coming of spring and practice patience, knowing that the time will eventually come for sowing seeds of the crops and varieties I'd been reading about all winter into each of those tiny cells of plug trays and then watch them emerge - precious cotyledons; delicate, yet fierce sprouts and their first leaves, bursting through the soil before spring has really sprung outdoors. With our fall break this year, Jeff and I are luxuriating in this day-dreamy phase of being growers - flipping through the Baker Creek seed catalogue (www.rareseeds.com) together page by page and selecting our favorite seeds to grow next year. We sit or stroll through the garden, share our visions of where spring crops will grow, which spaces we'll shift, what extraordinary beauty there is and will be. Together we plan slowly and joyfully for spring.

Leaving soil fallow has its own benefits, anyway. While the same can be accomplished with cover cropping or pasturing livestock, fallowing, too, gives the soil time to replenish nutrients which can be leached from certain plants through regular irrigation and can even cause potassium and phosphorus from deep below to rise toward the soil surface where it can be used by crops later. Other benefits of fallowing soil are that it raises levels of carbon, nitrogen and organic matter, improves moisture holding capacity, and increases beneficial microorganisms in the soil.

The soil rests, and we rest. By doing nothing, everything is done. And as we cultivate gratitude and patience, eagerness melts into a long and enjoyable anticipation of the beautiful springtime ahead.



SEASONAL VEGGIE FUN FACTS - SPINACH

Spinach grows well during the cooler months in North Texas. Spinach is usually ready to harvest 4-6 weeks after germination.

- Spinach is in the Amaranthacea family and is related to beets and quinoa.
- Spinach typically comes in three different types: savoy (dark, crinkly leaves), flat or smooth-leafed, and semi-savoy (slightly crinkled).
- Spinach is an excellent source of nutrients, especially vitamin K, vitamin A, folate, iron, fiber and omega-3 fatty acids.
- In Crystal City, TX there is a statue of Popeye the Sailor because they grow a lot of spinach there!

Learn more cool facts about spinach at <http://justfunfacts.com/interesting-facts-about-spinach/>.



Roasted Honeynut Squash with Fried Sage

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

The honeynut squash is the brainchild of chef Dan Barber and breeder Michael Mazourek, who came together to create this sweeter, more tender grandchild of the widely known butternut squash. This recipe puts the spotlight on the robust flavor that the squash was created for and makes for a special highlight for a holiday table. If you can't find honeynut squash at your local farmer's market or grocer, you can substitute thin-skinned delicata or kabocha squash.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 honeynut squash, cut in half vertically and de-seeded
- 8 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- Optional: dried herbs such as rosemary, thyme, oregano
- Fresh sage leaves
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter



PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- Arrange your honeynut squash halves on a baking sheet, cut side up.
- Drizzle olive oil over the squash, approximately 1 tablespoon per squash. Use your fingers to coat the entire squash, skin and flesh, with the oil.
- Season evenly with salt, pepper, and dried herbs, if using.
- Bake honeynut squash for 25-35 minutes, until the flesh is tender and the top is just starting to caramelize.
- While the squash are baking, make your fried sage leaves!
- Heat butter on low in a skillet, stirring frequently, until it starts to brown and emit a nutty aroma.
- Add individual fresh sage leaves into the butter and cook for approximately two minutes, then flip and cook for a minute more. Salt lightly, and turn off the heat.
- When your squash are cooked, remove from the oven and arrange on a serving plate. Pour the browned butter and fried sage leaves over the top of the squash dish and serve!

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

Hakurei Turnips
Alpine Daikon
Radishes
Rubicon Napa
Cabbage

FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom
Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.org

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Texas Organic Farmers &
Gardeners Association
tofga.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/>



Holiday Break!

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](https://www.facebook.com/shinesfarmstand)