

OCTOBER 2024

# WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group

## CGUA MEETING NOTES - 9/19/24

The CGUA working group met on September 19th at Tarrant Area Food Bank. Eleven people were in attendance.

Lauren Hickman and Mark Quast provided a tour of TAFB's Ag Hub after the meeting. The Ag Hub currently helps TAFB receive and distribute more produce to those in need. In the future, the facility will also house an early learning facility, market and edible garden space.

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

- Lauren Hickman provided updates from TAFB's Community Garden Network.
  - They are currently working on gathering year-end data from their partner gardens to show the impact of the last fiscal year (Oct.-Sept.).
  - Three of the partner gardens are currently recruiting volunteers through TAFB's system.
  - TAFB would like to grow their garden network in the next fiscal year.
- Joey Hughes provided updates from the Grow Southeast group with a focus on the happenings at Opal's Farm.
  - All of the Grow SE farms are looking for volunteers!
  - Grow SE has begun some major work on suggesting updates to the current urban agriculture ordinance.
  - At Opal's:
    - There will be a 5k in November - they need volunteers.
    - They are currently in a good place for a nice fall harvest. Lots of crops planted already with more on the way.
    - Field trips will start up again in October.
- Becca Knutson reminded the group about the current, local farmers markets and encouraged everyone to visit their favorite one.
  - The Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program began in May at Cowtown Farmers Market and will run through October of this year.
- MaryJo Greene shared news about school gardens.
  - School is back in session and students are getting back out in the dirt.
  - Several area schools were awarded small grants for the school year which will help keep more gardens up and running!
  - MadeGreene is currently mentoring 30 different schools.
  - The shared space MadeGreene is occupying at the Ridglea Giving Garden is working out very well for professional development events and opportunities.

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 November 14th 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

November 14th, 3pm

Location: TBD

### TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting

Nov. 7th, Details TBD

### FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

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

### NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Garden workdays are posted!

Fall Meet Up

Saturday, Oct. 19th, 9am-11am

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

### COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

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

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

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

### MINDFUL MARKET

October 5th, 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)



“I’m so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers.”

LM MONTGOMERY



## Featured Farm

### CHEROKEE LAKES FARM

Owners: Paydon and Mariah Mercer

Location: Granbury, TX

TYPE OF OPERATION:  
Small biointensive farm

GROWING METHODS:  
No-till, biointensive, regenerative practices

TYPES OF PRODUCTS GROWN/RAISED:  
Focus on heirloom and open-pollinated varieties of fruits and vegetables

WHERE TO FIND THEM:  
Clearfork, Acton Local, and Hood County Farmers Markets @cherokeelakesfarm



# TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN OCT!

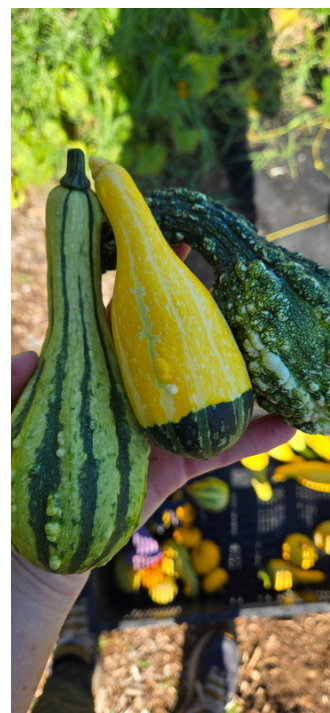
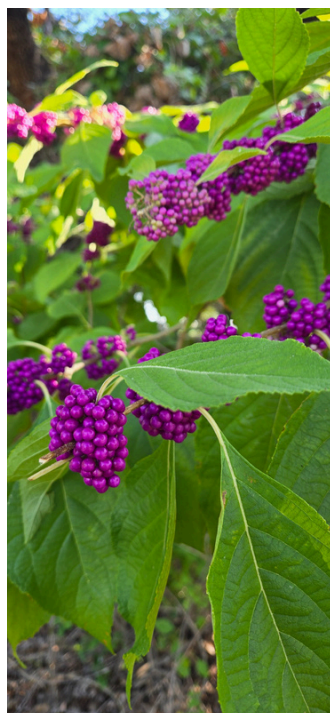
BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

October is another busy month in the garden here in North Texas! There is a lot to plant, a lot to harvest and a lot of things to do to prepare for winter. While the warm weather seems to be lingering, the forecast becomes less consistent this month and could change drastically in just a few hours.

- **Continue planting your fall crops** - So many different types of crops can be planted this month. Keep planting broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, mustard greens, kale, lettuce, kohlrabi and Swiss chard by transplant. Make sure to leave room for other crops like beets, carrots, radishes, peas and turnips to be planted by direct seeding. Garlic, strawberries, leeks, perennial herbs and artichokes get planted in October - get these established now for great spring harvests!
- **Harvest summer crops!** - Many of our favorite summer crops can be harvested until the first frost. So, you may be harvesting tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumber, okra, beans and more through the end of the month!
- **Continue with maintenance tasks** - If you're anything like me, you still have weeds growing all over the garden that can be cleaned up in preparation for fall crops.
- **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.
- **Begin planning for winter** - As you are putting in your crops for fall, begin thinking about preparations for winter. Will you plant all available space with crops or do you plan to let some areas rest for the winter under mulch or cover crop? Do you have frost cloth available to use as the weather begins to shift? Will you be using mulch, landscape fabric or greenhouse plastic at all in your winter setup and have it available? Will you even be growing winter crops or will you take a break until the new year?

There is a lot to do in the garden in October! Have fun and embrace the changing of the seasons and everything it brings. Happy growing!



# Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Recipe from Jeanine Donofrio

This 30-minute Broccoli Cheddar Soup recipe is the ULTIMATE comfort food! It's rich, creamy, super cheesy, and loaded with tender veggies!



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt and pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups of milk
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 3 cups chopped broccoli florets
- 1 large carrot, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon mustard
- 8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese, about 2 cups

## PREPARATION

- Melt the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.
- Add the onion, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes, or until softened.
- Stir in the garlic and cook for another minute, then sprinkle in the flour and whisk continuously for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the flour turns golden.
- Slowly pour in the milk, whisking continuously.
- Add the broth, broccoli, carrot, and mustard and stir to combine. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender.
- Gradually add the cheese, stirring after each addition, until all the cheese is melted, and the soup is creamy.
- Season to taste and serve with croutons, crackers, or toasted bread of your choice, if desired. Enjoy!

## IN THE NEWS

- Texas Department of Agriculture extends CACFP program to provide nutritious meals and agricultural education opportunities for children and adults <https://texasagriculture.gov/News-Events/Article/10145/CHILD-AND-ADULT-CARE-FOOD-PROGRAM-EXTENDS-ACCESS-TO-HEALTHY-MEALS-AND-NUTRITION>
- Restaurants are forging stronger bonds with regional food systems and regenerative farms in support of sustainability <https://civileats.com/2024/09/23/beyond-farm-to-table-how-chefs-can-support-climate-friendly-food-systems/>
- USDA awards \$10 million for 19 grant projects to increase access to locally grown food in underserved communities <https://www.ams.usda.gov/press-release/usda-awards-over-10-million-funding-strengthen-markets-us-agricultural-products-and>

## 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>

## 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

- Green Beans
- Salad Mix
- Mustard Greens
- Turnips
- Broccoli
- Kale



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

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

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 to you all and Happy Fall! The September Equinox has come and gone, bringing cooler weather (at night at least!) and the Fall crops are loving it. I hope everyone was able to plant their Fall crops in on a timely basis this year. Unlike the past two summers where the nighttime temperatures stayed high into September, the nighttime temperatures have begun to fall into the sixties and seventies. This helps cool the average temperature of the soil making seed germination more successful.

Optimal soil temperatures for germination are important and vary somewhat among plant varieties. If you're new to urban farming or gardening I would suggest going to Johnny's Select seeds website ( <https://www.johnnyseeds.com/> ) for information on optimal soil temperatures for your veggies. Click on the seed type you're planting, and a chart will come up on the left-hand side of the page that shows a temperature scale. Most veggies have an optimal range between 77 and 95 degrees. Johnny's also has a great Growers Library for help in growing your garden.

We still get some hot days, but we try to cool the soil with frequent irrigation. Some Fall crops, like beets, don't like as much water as others "(like say, carrots)" once they germinate. However, all newly planted seed should be watered daily in the beginning. Not only does water feed the plant seed, it helps keep the average soil temperature down for a great vegetable bed.

We are back into full production of winter greens and root crops. Everything is doing well and we have already taken collards, curly-leaf kale, lettuce, and salad mixes to market. Haukeri turnips, a market favorite, is already going strong and tomatoes are starting to set again.

Fall is such a great time to be farming or gardening. The days feel absolutely wonderful after the long, hot Texas summer. August is the month where everyone I know says I'm not doing this anymore. September begins cooler weather and we tend to think maybe it's not so bad. By October we begin harvesting the results of our labor. Suddenly, August is forgotten, and we remember why we love this so much.

Thanks for hanging in there with us and being a vibrant part of our farming and gardening community. Have a great Fall!

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

