

APRIL 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 March 18th at 3pm.

### Meeting Notes:

- **Southside Community Garden** - Alison Pope and Patrice Jones presented to the group about efforts to build gardens at people's homes in 76104. The gardens will help address a myriad of social and health disparities impacting the community. Donations and volunteers are needed. **Website:** <http://southsidecommunitygarden.com/> **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/southsidecommunitygardenftw>
- **Grow Southeast** - Jesse provided updates on Tabor Farms, Opal's Farm and Mind Your Garden. Volunteers are needed: <https://growsoutheastfw.wixsite.com/texas>
- **School Garden Mapping** - Mary Jo and Marsha provided an update on the project and the challenges facing FWISD gardens.
- **TAFB Community Garden Program** - Susan shared updates about new garden projects, the spring seedling giveaway and the internship opportunity: <https://tafb.org/careers/>.
- **Origin Stories:** Meeting attendees shared the story of how they each began gardening/farming.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, May 20th at 3pm. **Meeting ID: 931 9361 5735. Passcode: 947149.** All are welcome to join!

For questions and more information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) or Charlie Blaylock at [shinesfarmstand@gmail.com](mailto:shinesfarmstand@gmail.com).

## IN THE NEWS

- The struggles faced by small farmers after the unprecedented winter storm <https://civileats.com/2021/03/09/small-farmers-are-struggling-after-the-texas-big-freeze/>
- A Fort Worth project brings attention to the intersection of peace, justice, community, and gardening <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/san-antonio/news/2021/03/19/a-community-garden-grows-peace-and-justice->
- A look at how the winter storm affected one Austin farm's operations in particular <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/03/05/texas-farms-crops-winter-storm/>
- A consideration of how farm workers have been affected by the winter storm <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/latino-farmworkers-are-frozen-out-work-after-texas-storm-iced-n1259322>

## Events & Classes

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

May 20th, 3pm

Meeting ID: 931-9361-5735

Passcode: 947149

### TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK

How to Build a Raised Bed -  
April 14th, 2pm

<http://tafb.org/events>

### SAVE TARRANT WATER

Irrigation 101 - April 13th,  
6pm

DIY Rainwater Harvesting -  
April 17th, 9am

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

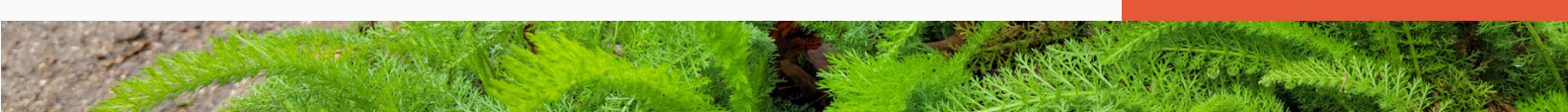
### BRIT | BOTANIC GARDEN

Native American Plant Uses  
in North Central Texas -  
April 24th, 1pm

<http://brit.org/events>

SATURDAYS 8AM-12PM  
Cowtown Farmers  
Market

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD





"The garden suggests there must be a place where we can meet nature halfway."

**MICHAEL POLLAN**



## APRIL TO-DO

- Plant tomatoes, eggplant and peppers by transplant/seedling.
- Plant zucchini, squash, green beans, cucumber and okra from seed.
- Plant fruit trees, shrubs and vines.
- Continue to add compost to each garden bed while doing your spring planting.
- Feed, water and protect young plants/seedlings from pests and the elements.
- Harvest and preserve residual winter crops.

# REFLECTING BACK: 2021 WINTER STORM

By **Becca Knutson**

Gardeners all across North Texas are preparing to plant their warm-season favorites like tomatoes, peppers, green beans and cucumbers. Some of the bravest have been planting tomato seedlings for several weeks now. Yet, it was not too long ago when we were all bundled up, bracing ourselves for Winter Storm Uri. I'd like to reflect back, as we plan to move forward with our spring gardening plans.

Luckily, for most of us, our livelihood doesn't depend on the food we grow. If you're anything like me, you protected what you could with a little extra mulch and a few frost cloths and left the rest up to fate. Others put in a considerable amount of effort to protect and save the crops they had growing. Some folks added extra mulch and watered in the soil well before the temperatures dropped. Other people used frost cloths to block the wind and snow while also insulating their crops. Palm trees were wrapped in blankets and cherished landscaping plants were covered with buckets to protect them from this once-in-a-decade storm.

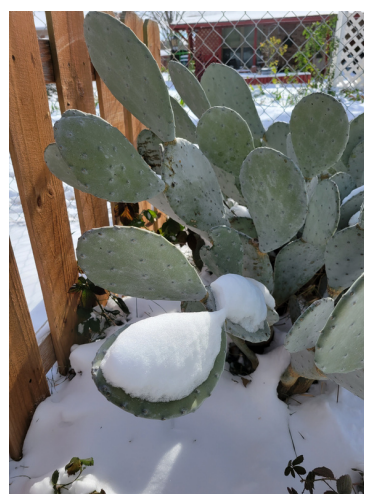
For some of our more tender plants, we are still waiting to see if they will produce leaves again or if we will need to replace them. All across the region, beautiful evergreen bushes are now full of leaves that display an odd copper color and will need to be removed. Many of our beloved palms, cacti, agave and yucca are browned and mushy. I am still waiting for my fig and pomegranate to produce leaves, but I may be waiting on a day that won't come.

A lot of things fared better than expected! Onions and garlic made it through alive, although somewhat delayed. I had kale and kohlrabi in my garden survive completely uncovered throughout the whole event. My mint patch appeared to be dead, but after a few days I saw signs of life again! At the TAFB Learning Garden, well-covered cabbages survived and are now thriving. Many of our native perennials are showing signs of life again.

It's hard to know the extent of the impact of Winter Storm Uri. I heard gardeners hoping for fewer bugs this season. I know people are worried about the crepe myrtles and live oaks. Let's not forget that farmers have lost weeks of production as well as income.

Weather events like we've faced this year will certainly help inform some of our growing practices as we plan for future seasons and crops. Is there something systematic we can do to make our gardens, farms and soils more resilient to dramatic weather events? Are there crops that will become more reliable as the weather does not? What do we need to do to adapt and protect our food system?

As you plan and plant this spring, don't forget about these recent events. And always remember, "If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant." (Anne Bradshaw).







# Roasted Brussels sprouts

Recipe by: **Hannah Lamar**

This recipe uses olive oil, lemon zest, red pepper flakes, and nutty Parmesan cheese to enhance the tastiness of these tiny treats. They are full of fiber, vitamin K, vitamin C, folate, and flavor. Mix them into a hash, add them to a frittata, or eat them just as they are!

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts
- 2 tablespoon Olive oil
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Salt, to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 1-2 tablespoon Parmesan (shredded), feta, or goat cheese



## PREPARATION

- Preheat the oven to 375F. Prepare a sheet pan with parchment paper.
- On each Brussels sprout, cut off the rough bottom edge. Quarter all of the sprouts.
- Arrange the prepared sprouts on your parchment paper. Dress with olive oil, lemon zest, red pepper, salt, and pepper.
- Cook Brussels sprouts for thirty minutes, stirring occasionally for even cooking.
- When the sprouts are done, take the sheet pan out of the oven and sprinkle your chosen cheese on top.
- Serve and enjoy!



## SEASONAL VEGGIE FUN FACTS - BEANS & PEAS!

We can grow many different kinds of beans & peas in North Texas! Fava beans and snap peas like to grow in the cooler months while green beans, pinto beans, black beans, black-eyed peas, long beans and lima beans like the warmer weather. Days to harvest will vary widely between different types; some can be ready as soon as 60 days, but others will take up to 120 days!

- The tallest bean plant was grown in the USA and got to be over 45 feet tall!
- Various species of bean and pea plants have been some of the first cultivated by people on multiple continents. Evidence of peas has been found as far back as 9,750 BC in Thailand. Evidence of beans has been dated back to 7,000 BC in Mexico and Peru.
- The world genebank holds about 40,000 different varieties of beans.
- Bean and pea seeds come in almost every color: green, white, yellow, tan, red, pink, brown, purple and black!
- Beans are a great source of nutrients. They contain fiber, protein, vitamins, complex carbs, folate and iron - all with little to no fat!
- Bean and pea plants create their own nitrogen during the growing process. Some even produce enough to contribute back to the soil.
- The beans and peas of which we typically eat the dried seed are classified as *pulses*. They are so cool they get a world holiday every year on February 10th!

For more fun facts about beans and peas, visit:  
[http://www.clovegarden.com/ingred/bp\\_legumev.html](http://www.clovegarden.com/ingred/bp_legumev.html)

## 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/garden-2.html>

### Community Food Systems

#### Map:

<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/local-food-systems.html>

## VIRTUAL GARDENING CONTENT

### Tarrant Area Food Bank

[youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank](https://www.youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank)

### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

[youtube.com/c/txextension](https://www.youtube.com/c/txextension)

### BRIT | Botanic Garden

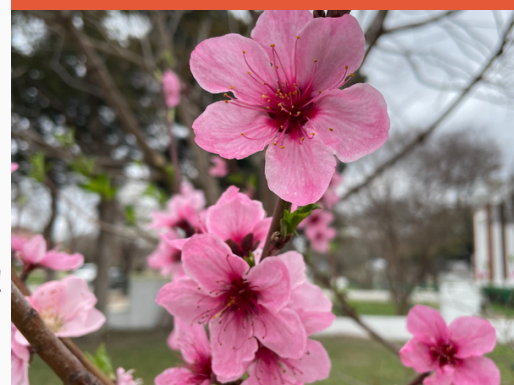
[youtube.com/user/BRITplanttoplanet](https://www.youtube.com/user/BRITplanttoplanet)

### Tarrant County Master Gardeners

[youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners](https://www.youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners)

### Dig Deep Conference 2020

[tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020](http://tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020)







# SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

April showers, I hope! Even when we water our gardens, the growth is never quite as amazing as with a good warm spring shower. Now is our best planting time of the year. It's time to plant out those tomato, eggplant, and pepper seedlings! We have had frosts as late as April 15th, so keep an eye on the weather when you do. They are big plants that stay in the garden a long time, so give them plenty of room. Each of my tomato plants gets 4 square feet of room, and need a tall trellis. The small wire cages are pretty useless, except for the smallest tomato plants. Eggplants and peppers need about 18 inches of space in every direction, but don't require trellising. An inch layer of compost around each plant, and then at least 2 inches of mulch, hay, straw, or a mix of grass and leaves, will protect and encourage the soil food web to feed the plants and maintain consistent soil moisture. I always leave space between the mulch and the seedlings, and sometimes I leave a big enough space to plant some small, quick-growing, plants around the base, like radishes or turnips. They help keep away some of the pests that are coming with this beautiful weather, too.

If you are new to gardening, or your garden beds are in their first year, it's a great time to plant beans. There are a LOT of varieties of beans and peas to fill a garden. Green beans can be bush plants or vining plants, and make the fresh green bean. Dry beans can be black, red, pinto, lima, or a multitude of other varieties. Before you skip growing Lima beans, consider that Butter Beans are a large dry variety, if you don't like the fresh green ones. Purple hull peas and black-eyed peas can handle our heat, and can be planted all the way through summer. All the others need to be planted before May, because they won't be productive when the heat comes on. They can be planted later for a fall crop, but we'll get to that in a future chat. I absolutely love Blue Lake pole beans. I make my trellises 6 ft tall, and they still get taller than that. I use a cattle panel on t-post, and raise the panel about 18 inches off the ground. I don't know of another plant that makes us feel as successful as beans! They germinate well, and take nitrogen from the air and store it in the ground, and stimulate the soil food web. Win, win, win!

Summer squash is notoriously difficult to grow here. The squash bugs and multiple soil diseases are a hard fight to win. If you are up to the challenge, I find that growing them under a shade cloth, like Agribon AG-19, until they flower is a great way to protect them from the bugs. The plants do not do well with overhead watering. Drip irrigation is great for healthy plants and water conservation. I have also found that lightly misting the leaves with compost tea does wonders to fight the different blights that affect squashes.

Cucumbers, pumpkins, winter squashes, cantaloupes, watermelons, and other melons are all vining plants with the same challenges as summer squashes. The varieties cantaloupe-size and smaller grow very well on trellises, which helps save space but also keeps good air flow and fewer places for bugs to hide around the base of the plants. Larger varieties are best to let sprawl all over, but keep them in an out of the way area, because accidentally stepping on a stem will invite disease overnight.

The most important thing you can do for your soil, and all of your plants, is to mulch around them. Wood chips are a good mulch for pathways, but can make small plants struggle for nitrogen. It's best to have the mulches that I mentioned before near the plants.

Mulch on, my Friends!  
Charlie

Visit Shine's Farmstand on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/shinesfarmstand>



## CHARLIE'S TOP CROPS

Blue Lake Green Beans  
(Pole or Bush)

Jade, or Nokya,  
Cucumbers

Purple Hull Peas

Celebrity Tomatoes

California Wonder Bell  
Peppers

Barbarella Eggplants

Waltham Butternut Squash

