

SEPTEMBER 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 July 1st at 3pm.

Meeting Notes:

- A small, but mighty representation of the CGUA members met to discuss the group's ongoing projects via Zoom.
- The group received an update about the Grow Southeast farm projects. More information and volunteer opportunities can be found at <https://growsoutheastfw.wixsite.com/texas>.
- Efforts to make school gardening easier and more successful in Tarrant County continue. The group and school garden projects were well-represented in several different sessions at the Dig Deep conference.
- Tarrant Area Food Bank continues to support community gardening through their Community Garden Network.
- The group also discussed opportunities to participate at Dig Deep: A Conference for Growers which was held on July 17th at BRIT.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, September 23rd at 3pm. All are welcome to join! **Zoom Meeting ID: 962 7301 5441 Passcode: 810326**

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



IN THE NEWS

- A great article highlighting different groups from the area working against food insecurity <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/crossroads-lab/article252785238.html>
- Urban gardening gains momentum throughout the pandemic and instills resiliency in communities <https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-business-health-pandemics-coronavirus-pandemic-7286bc863467ef9d10db51bdd661b7d9>
- The City of Fort Worth rolls out a Fall garden box program with local plants and a focus on water conservation <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/news/2021/08/Water-Conservation-Go-N-Grow>
- The USDA highlighting the NRCS, their conservationists, and how they can be of service to urban farmers and gardeners http://www.ntx-news.com/artman/publish/article_125733.shtml

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

September 23rd, 3pm

Zoom Meeting ID:

962 7301 5441

Passcode: 810326

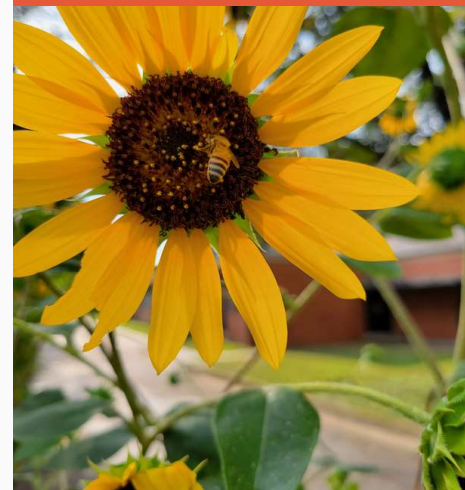
FWBG | BRIT

The World of Tea & Tasting -
September 9th

Papermaking with Plants -
September 18th

Bulbs for North Texas -
September 28th

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



SATURDAYS

8AM-12PM

Cowtown Farmers Market

3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD





FLIES: UNSUNG POLLINATOR HEROES

By Becca Knutson

A recent radio segment on KERA, the local NPR station, got me thinking a lot about our pollinator friends again. And while I often think about pollinators and speak up for the ever-feared wasp, I failed to recognize the work that flies do to pollinate our favorite plants. As most of us know, honeybees are essential for pollinating most of our food crops and they also face many threats in our changing world. Scientists have been working to find a solution to this problem. They are digging deeper into the lives of flies to find out just how much of a role these creatures play in pollination.

An experiment in Australia (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-much-do-flies-help-pollination-180977177/>) found that, after honeybees, hoverflies and blowflies visited the largest percentage of major food crops studied. They visited up to 52% of the 105 crops observed! Other creatures like ants, moths, butterflies, ladybeetles, wasps, houseflies and leaf beetles also provided significant amounts of pollination power.

This same study noted that flies are fantastic pollinators because they can live in a wide variety of environments, can tolerate a wider range of temperatures than bees, and can often carry more pollen while having no commitments to providing pollen to a hive. Attracting flies to our food crops may have other benefits as well. Some flies have predatory larvae that can help control pests like aphids and caterpillars. Further, many flies assist with waste management by recycling organic materials.

If flies are such great pollinators, how do we attract them to our crops? Some studies are using rotting animal flesh to attract the right flies which can make for a rather unpleasant smell. Studies will continue to determine the best ways to attract the right flies to the right crops.

Needless to say, I have been rethinking my opinion of flies lately and I hope you will, too. To learn more about flies as pollinators, check out the link above or listen to the radio segment that was the inspiration for this article:

<https://think.kera.org/2021/07/26/the-buzz-on-flies/>.



SEASONAL VEGGIE FUN FACTS - WINTER SQUASH

Winter squashes come in many different shapes and sizes. Some of the most commonly grown varieties are butternut, pumpkin, acorn, delicata, spaghetti and buttercup.

- Winter squash is named as such because it stores well over the long winter and many people enjoy eating it during the cooler months!
- In order to harvest winter squash for the cooler months, they need to be planted between May and July, like many other warm season crops.
- Winter squashes are typically harvested when completely ripe and can be stored for several months in a cool, dark place.
- Almost all parts of the squash plant can be eaten - the leaves, tendrils, shoots, stems, flowers, seeds, and fruit.
- Most orange squashes like pumpkin and butternut squash are full of Vitamin A. A single serving provides almost 4 times the recommended daily amount.
- Plants in the squash family may have been cultivated as early as 7000 to 5000 BC in North, Central and South America.
- Squash comes from the Narragansett word "askutasquash." This roughly translates into "eaten raw or uncooked."
- Squashes are commonly made into candies in Latin America.
- Big cats in zoos and animal shelters love to play with fall pumpkins!

Learn more cool facts about winter squash at <https://blog.aghires.com/15-facts-about-winter-squash/>

"Lord, it is time.

The summer was very big.

Lay thy shadow on the sundials, and on the meadows let the winds go loose.

Command the last fruits that they shall be full; give them another two more southerly days, press them on to fulfillment and drive the last sweetness into the heavenly wine."

RAINER MARIA RILKE



SEPTEMBER TO-DO

Begin removing spent plants to prepare for fall planting.

Plant broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage transplants starting mid-month.

Direct-seed spinach, lettuce, peas, arugula, radishes, carrots, turnip and beets at the end of the month.

Consider planting perennial herbs and fruit trees.

Add a layer of compost to cleared areas to refresh the soil nutrients.



Baba Ghanoush

Recipe by: **Hannah Lamar Gibson**

Baba ghanoush is a Levantine dish of smoky, pureed eggplant that I believe is the oft-overlooked and underrated cousin of hummus. When prepared with a delicious, seasonal eggplant, this dish is a delightfully creamy and savory addition to anyone's summer vegetable repertoire. I love to serve this as an appetizer with crackers and crunchy crudité or alongside falafel, tabouleh, and pita for a build-your-own gyro-style dinner.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium to large eggplant
- 1/4 C tahini
- 1/3 C olive oil
- Juice of one lemon
- 2-4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- Salt & pepper
- Paprika
- Fresh green herb, such as parsley or cilantro



PREPARATION

- Gather the ingredients and preheat the oven to 425 F.
- Roast the whole eggplant on a baking sheet for one hour, then allow to cool.
- Once cool, cut or peel away the eggplant's stalk and skin. Place the eggplant flesh into a fine mesh strainer and allow some of the juices to drain for 15-20 minutes.
- Add your eggplant, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic cloves (2-4 depending on preference) in a food processor. This can be mixed in a bowl, but if you have a food processor it will be a much quicker and smoother process.
- Season your mixture with plenty of salt and pepper, to taste.
- Spoon the baba ghanoush into a bowl and drizzle with olive oil, paprika, and fresh green herbs. Serve with pita bread, crackers, or fresh crunchy vegetables.

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

Green Magic Broccoli
Hakurei Turnips
Alpine Daikon
Radishes
Rubicon Napa
Cabbage



FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Texas Organic Farmers &
Gardeners Association
tofga.org

Farm and Ranch Freedom
Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.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/>

SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

September is upon us after a mild summer. It seems with the rain that we didn't used to get, came a respite from the consecutive hundred degree days. It was still worthy of escaping the afternoon sun, but certainly not what it has been in years past. I had Celebrity, Phoenix, and even Mortgage Lifter tomatoes set fruit through the heat, which is unusual. The peppers still preferred the shade cloth to stop some of the scalding.

The beginning of September is when we get started transplanting our Brassicas, like broccoli, cabbage, Napa cabbage, and kale. Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collards, mustard, and Swiss chard are all great plants for fall, for ripening in the cooler weather yet to come. If you didn't start your seedlings inside with air conditioning, take a look at the local feed stores for transplants. The big box stores seem to all sell the same seedlings, from the same national seedling company, for \$3-4 each. Local growers supply the local feed stores and usually charge \$1-2, with varieties that are more appropriate for our climate. Take a little extra care planting out your seedlings with shade cloth or fabric. Not only does this help the babies handle the sun, but the grasshoppers are still quite active and will clean a garden bed in a single evening.

The middle of the month is great for direct-seeding fall crops like carrots, turnips, beets, Sugar Snap peas, and radishes. I have known many folks who thought they didn't like these fall favorites, until they had tried newer varieties, freshly picked. Hakurei turnips are one of the best garden crops ever, but people avoid them because of bad experiences with purple top turnips. Diced, and sauteed with their greens in olive oil, is a delightful way to eat them over cornbread. Many people don't like the spiciness of our traditional salad radishes, so try Daikon radishes. They need more space, four inches in every direction, but their flavor is like a potato with a little nutmeg. I prefer the Korean variety because they are shaped more like a potato than a carrot. They're delicious in stews, roasted as cubes, or sliced and made into spicy pickles, especially lacto-fermented. Bok Choy also grows really well, and really quickly in the fall. It's a fantastic ingredient for a quick stir fry to keep from heating up the kitchen.

The farmers markets are still full of summer favorites like watermelon, cantaloupes, melons, tomatoes, sweet and spicy peppers, and interesting eggplant varieties. More diverse farmers markets have many Asian greens that handle the heat, are delicious, and unlike anything you've tasted before. One of our farmers at Cowtown brought Gongura, which she calls "lemon spinach." It's one of the most amazing greens I have ever tasted. I need to stop eating it all raw, and try to cook it, but it never seems to make it all the way home.

I'll talk to you soon,
Charlie Blaylock
Shine's Farmstand

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