

HOW'S IT GROWING?

Community Gardens & Urban Agriculture
Working Group Newsletter



CGUA Happenings

The next CGUA meeting will be on **Thursday, July 13th from 3:00-4:30pm**—location to be determined. tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/news---events

The CGUA meeting held on May 11th was attended by 11 people interested in bringing positive change through gardening in Tarrant County. Progress was made on the Youth Farm Curriculum Project and the Community Garden Survey. A new project on mobile market research is in the beginning stages.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT: TCFPC's food system's map needs updating. **Add your garden!** Submit info about community gardens to be added to the map: tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/community-food-systems-north-texas

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We need two volunteers to represent CGUA at Tarrant Area Food Bank's Dig Deep Conference on July 22nd. Free admission to the conference included. Email Dave at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu for more

EVENTS

7/12, 6-7:30pm
Kitchen Garden
Cooking School
Class—Eggplant
tafb.org/events

7/22, 8am-3:30pm
Dig Deep
Conference
tafb.org/events

7/27-7/30
ACGA Conference
communitygarden.org

7/29, 10am-1pm
Container Garden
Workshop
tafb.org/events



MULCH IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE LONG, HOT SUMMER

Dotty Woodson, Ed. D.

The heat of summer is here. July and August are the hottest, driest months in Texas. Many gardeners are not prepared for this extreme heat and lack of moisture in the soil. In fact, some gardeners just stop gardening. But there is still so much we can grow. Plus fall planting dates for some vegetables start as early as August.

Evapotranspiration is at its highest during July and August. Evapotranspiration is the loss of water from the soil due to evaporation and transpiration. Transpiration is a natural plant process by which the roots absorb water and nutrients from the soil. Excess water leaves the plant through microscopic openings on the bottom of the leaves called stomata. This is also where plant respiration occurs (plants breathe in carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen).

Mulch is a layer of organic matter placed over the bases of your plants to keep water from evaporating from their root zone. Add mulch to all your garden beds. A mulch layer will allow irrigation and rain to enter the soil more efficiently. Water goes through the mulch into the soil. Mulch is like icing on a cake. Icing keeps a cake moist and looks good; mulch keeps soil moist and looks good. Mulch will cut down on water evaporating from the soil. Mulch will eventually decompose and become part of the soil, releasing nutrients for the plants. Try to maintain 2 to 4 inches of mulch by adding mulch regularly. *(continued on p.2)*

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



Tarrant Area Food Bank is teaming up with UNT Health Science Center and the Tarrant County Food Policy Council to bring you their 4th annual **Dig Deep Conference** for anyone growing food in the North Texas region. Join us for a day of learning, growing and networking with like-minded people, meals made by local chefs from local produce and a captivating keynote session by **The Dirt Doctor, Howard Garrett**. Register at www.tafbdeep.eventbrite.com or email becca.knutson@tafb.org for more information.

DIG DEEP:

A Conference for Growers

featuring *The Dirt Doctor, Howard Garrett*

Saturday, July 22, 2017
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

UNT Health Science Center
MET Building
1000 Montgomery Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Register at tafbdeep.eventbrite.com

presented by



MULCH IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE LONG, HOT SUMMER

Continued from p. 1

Mulch with shredded bark, leaves, grass clippings, straw and nearly any other organic matter available. (But make sure there are no weeds in your mulch, unless you want to grow a healthy crop of them in your garden!) I like straw to place under my beds where I grow strawberries and melons. The straw keeps the soil from discoloring the fruit. The best mulch is your own garden waste partly decomposed. After all, no one rakes a forest. Everything that falls on the forest floor decomposes to become part of the soil and eventually breaks down into nutrients for the plants. You can do the same and more in your garden.

Most of us do not have a shredder to create mulch from our garden waste. But the City of Fort Worth picks up yard waste for composting and shreds it. This mulch is available for free at the City of Fort Worth Drop Off Stations: 2400 Brennan Ave., 5150 Martin Luther King Fwy., or 6260 Old Hemphill Rd. (see <http://fortworthtexas.gov/solidwaste/dropoff/>). This takes the organic waste out of the landfill stream, saving money. Mulch will make a huge difference for your garden during the long hot summer.

MULCH FACTS

- Mulch prevents loss of water from the soil due to evaporation
- Mulch moderates the soil temperature; keeps the soil cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter
- Mulch improves soil structure. As the mulch decays, the material becomes part of the soil. Decaying mulch also adds nutrients to the soil
- Mulch prevents erosion
- Mulch reduces the growth of weeds, when the mulch material itself is weed-free and applied deeply enough to prevent weed seed germination or to smother existing weeds. Weeds are much easier to pull from mulch than from soil.
- Mulch prevents soil splashing, which prevents plant injury and keeps soil-borne diseases from splashing up onto plants
- Mulch prevents crusting of the soil surface, thus improving the infiltration and movement of water into the soil
- Mulch helps prevent soil compaction
- Mulched plants grow more roots than plants without mulch

JULY TO-DO

- Set out fall tomatoes, peppers and eggplant late in the month.
- Plant pumpkins for Halloween
- Mulch any bare soil.
- Build, turn and water your compost pile weekly to have a fresh batch for the fall.
- Start broccoli, cabbage, collard, Brussels sprout and cauliflower seeds inside.



SAVORY TOMATO COBBLER

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 red onion
2 large cloves garlic
2 pounds cherry tomatoes
2 tablespoons basil leaves
1/2 tsp dried thyme

Biscuits:

1 cup whole grain flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons cold butter
1/2 cup full fat yogurt
2 tsp honey

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Finely chop the onion. Mince the garlic.

Heat olive oil in a cast iron skillet on medium-high heat.

Add red onion and garlic and sauté until tender.

Add tomatoes, basil and thyme and sauté until tomatoes are tender.

Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

To make biscuits, place the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl and whisk together.

Using fingers, mix in butter until it forms a sandy consistency.

Stir in yogurt and honey until combined.

Make four biscuits and dollop over the tomatoes.

Place in oven and bake for 20-25 minutes.



DID YOU KNOW?

Drip irrigation is an efficient and water-saving method of irrigation that can be applied to any vegetable garden. Drip systems can be professionally installed, made from parts found at the hardware store or created using materials like PVC pipe.

Drip irrigation is especially important in the summer to keep our crops alive until they start producing again without wasting water.

For more information, visit: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/drought/efficient-use-of-water-in-the-garden-and-landscape/>



TARRANT COUNTY
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL