

JUNE 2022

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group



CGUA MEETING NOTES

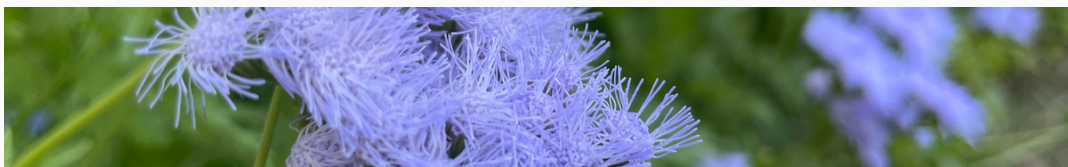
The Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture working group met on May 19th via at 3pm via Zoom to discuss current and ongoing projects. Nine people were in attendance.

Meeting Recap:

- John Wood from Econautics gave a presentation about their urban agriculture/sustainable architecture project that is proposed to begin in Beaumont, TX. They plan to have hydroponics, a farmers market, demonstration kitchen and commercial kitchen space. Future projects may be brought to Fort Worth.
- TAFB provided an update about their network garden, the Market Garden at TAFB West and the Growing Healthy Communities Conference (July 16th). Registration is open for the FREE conference; see sidebar for URL.
- Grow Southeast (<https://www.coactntx.org/grow-se>) updated the group about the Farm Manager Apprenticeship program, Tabor Farms, Mind Your Garden's Healthy Hour, Black Wall Street Farm and Opal's Farm.
 - They just received a large grant which will fund many of their wishlist items!
- TCFPC Good Growers Grant project: a subcommittee has identified a potential donor and has starting outlining grant guidelines with the help of the Fundraising Committee

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, July 21st at 3:00pm via Zoom.

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu or Lauren Hickman at lauren.hickman@tafb.org.



IN THE NEWS

- Texas A&M profiles the psychological and social benefits of gardening - <https://today.tamu.edu/2022/05/18/the-positive-effects-of-gardening-on-mental-health/>
- The USDA unveils renewed People's Garden Initiative, with a location in Dallas - <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/05/03/usda-renews-peoples-garden-initiative>
- Civil Eats' take on the USDA's People's Garden Initiative - <https://civileats.com/2022/05/05/the-field-report-we-asked-the-usda-about-its-new-garden-and-its-bigger-climate-goals/>
- A look at the landscape and future of indoor farming in rural and urban America - <https://civileats.com/2022/04/06/what-will-the-rise-of-giant-indoor-farms-mean-for-appalachian-kentucky/>

Events & Classes

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

June 2nd, 4:00pm
Meeting ID 839 9008 4183

NEXT CGUA MEETING

July 21st, 3:00pm
Meeting ID 914 0160 3698
Password: 316005

FWBG | BRIT

AgriLife Wellness in the Garden -
June 29th, 6pm

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

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Edible Landscapes -
June 5th, 6pm

Drip Irrigation -
June 21st, 6:30pm

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

TAFB

Growing Healthy Communities
Conference
July 16th

<https://tafb.org/growing-healthy-communities-conference/>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

3821 Southwest Blvd. FW 76116
Sat. & Wed. (starting 6/15) 8am-12pm

Summer Festival
June 25, 8am-12pm

<https://www.cowtownmarket.com/festivals>





FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

BY BECCA KNUTSON

The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is up and running in Tarrant County and is a collaboration of Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB), Blue Zones Project, Cowtown Farmers Market and Grow North Texas.

Qualifying WIC participants (pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum women and children ages 1-5) are eligible for \$30 worth of vouchers which can be spent on fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. These vouchers are an annual benefit on top of the regular benefits the participants receive. WIC participants should bring a printed copy of their WIC shopping list to a participating farmers market to receive the vouchers.

Participating markets for 2022 include Cowtown Farmers Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays along with Neighborhood Farmers Markets which are being coordinated by Tarrant Area Food Bank in Haltom City, Southeast Fort Worth, South Fort Worth and Arlington. For the full schedule of markets and location details, visit <https://tafb.org/farmers-market/>.

Along with WIC FMNP vouchers, SNAP EBT and Double Up Food Bucks will be a currency option at all of these markets. Blue Zones Project (<https://info.bluezonesproject.com/live-long-fort-worth>) is the community partner that makes the Double Up program possible which helps double the customer's purchasing power and provides more business for our local farmers. Customers looking to use cash or card are welcome at these markets as well.

Some markets will also include cooking demonstrations, produce demonstrations, kids' activities and recipe ideas to accompany the farmers' produce.

There has been a strong turnout for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program so far this year due to a variety of marketing efforts from all community partners involved and excellent communication and referral from our county's WIC clinics.

To stay in the loop on these markets and the activities involved, follow Tarrant Area Food Bank and Cowtown Farmers Market on Facebook and Instagram or visit your closest farmers market to chat with volunteers and staff on how to become involved.

If you would like to volunteer with this program, please visit <https://tafb.org/volunteer>. Bilingual volunteers are especially needed to help communicate the details of this program to the customers and help create a welcoming environment for all.

For information on how to sign up for SNAP benefits, visit <https://tafb.org/snap/>. For details about the WIC program, visit <https://texaswic.org/>. And, for information about the participating farmers market associations, visit <https://www.cowtownmarket.com/> and <https://grownorthtexas.org/>.

“To read a poem in January is as lovely as to go for a walk in June.”

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE



JUNE TO-DO

Plant warm season lawn grasses. Fertilize lawns and planting areas.

Plant color annuals like lantana, begonia, zinnia, and marigold.

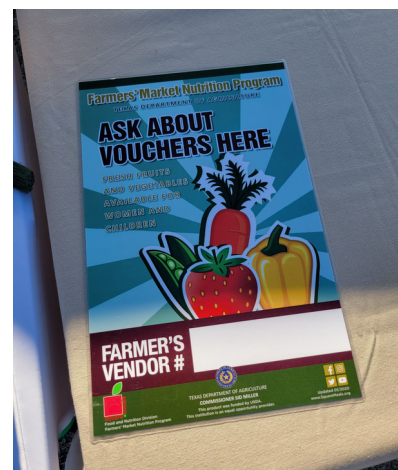
Plant southern peas, okra, squash, pumpkins, Malabar spinach and other warm season food crops .

Prune flowers and vines after they have bloomed.

Water planting areas deeply, but infrequently during dry periods.

Turn the compost pile and mulch bare areas.

Can and preserve any excess harvest.



Tomato Tartine with Lemon Basil Aioli

Recipe by Hannah Gibson



INGREDIENTS

- Aioli:
 - 1 egg yolk
 - 2 garlic cloves, minced
 - Sea salt
 - Juice of one lemon
 - 1/4 C olive oil
 - Bunch of fresh basil, thinly sliced
- Tartine:
 - Four slices of sourdough or preferred bread
 - 4 T unsalted butter
 - 2 large tomatoes, thinly sliced
 - Sea salt
 - Cracked black pepper
 - Olive oil

PREPARATION

- **Aioli**
 - Put egg yolk, garlic, salt, lemon juice in a food processor or blender.
 - Cover the processor or blender with its lid if there is a smaller opening on top for adding in other ingredients, otherwise leave the lid off.
 - Turn on the processor/blender and slowly pour the olive oil into the mixture, one drop at a time, until the mixture starts to emulsify, and then at a slow stream.
 - When the olive oil is added completely, mix for another minute or two. The aioli should be emulsified but creamy and not thick.
 - Transfer aioli into a small bowl and fold in basil. Set aside.
- **Tartine**
 - Melt 2 T butter in a sauté pan or cast iron over medium heat.
 - Add two slices of bread into melted butter in the hot pan, flipping occasionally to brown evenly on both sides. Cook until golden. Repeat with remaining 2 T butter and bread slices.
 - Allow bread to cool to the touch, then spread aioli on each slice.
 - Arrange tomato slices atop aioli. Drizzle with olive oil, season to taste with salt and pepper.

SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - POTATOES

Potatoes are one of the most commonly eaten produce items and they are really fun to grow in the garden. Potatoes are usually planted in mid-February and harvested starting around mid-May. Eat potato plant can produce between 3 and 8 pounds of tubers depending on the growing conditions.

- Potatoes are in the Solanaceae family along with tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.
- There are over 4,000 different varieties of potatoes! The varieties that do well in North Texas include: Red Norland, Red Lasoda, Yukon Gold, Kennebec, and Century Russet.
- Potatoes are very nutritious! They are about 99.9% fat free and contain vitamins B6, E, C and K along with minerals such as magnesium, potassium and phosphorous.
- Sweet potatoes and potatoes are not related. Sweet potatoes are in the morning glory family and are actually swollen roots, not tubers like potatoes.

Learn more cool facts about potatoes at <https://idahopotatomuseum.com/potato-facts/>.

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-map.html>

VIRTUAL GARDENING CONTENT

BRIT | Botanic Garden
youtube.com/user/BRITplanttoplanet

Dig Deep Conference 2020
tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/dig-deep-conference-2020

Tarrant Area Food Bank
youtube.com/user/TarrantAreaFoodBank

Tarrant County Master Gardeners
youtube.com/c/TarrantCountyMasterGardeners

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
youtube.com/c/txextension





CHARLIE'S TOP CROPS

Purple Hull peas
Barbarella Eggplants
California Wonder Bell Peppers
Waltham Butternut Squash
Gray Zucchini



FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.org

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Natural Resource Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
tofga.org

Texas Center for Local Food
texaslocalfood.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture
nifa.usda.gov/

SHINE'S GARDEN CHATS

I was just looking back at my notes from the previous years and the only thing I realized they had in common was that everything is always different. This year we have barely any rain and it was close to 100F for a full week in May. Which makes the lesson I'm learning all about diversity and flexibility. I had Harlequin bugs a month earlier than ever before and they decimated the kale crop. They didn't touch the Swiss Chard that was planted literally right next to the kale. Last year, we were picking 50 pounds of kale each week at this time. Some years one thing works, and other years, other things work. I just started picking our first ripe tomatoes, which doesn't usually occur until mid-June. We had such a mild spring that the potato harvest has been fantastic. I grew my favorites, Red Lasoda and Yukon Gold. Our last frost was in early march so the potato plants grew in perfect temperatures. If you have never had a potato straight out of the ground, you'll never know how creamy they are. Our supermarket-driven lifestyles prevent us from knowing what ultra-fresh produce tastes like. Try to get to a farmers' market with some fresh potatoes. The difference is as big as the difference between supermarket tomatoes and homegrown. We grew two new varieties of lettuce, Nevada and Muir. We are still picking it, after a week of very hot days, and it has no bitterness at all. The heat tolerance helps it germinate and grow in the heat but also protects the flavor. I'm not going to grow it into summer, but they will be the first lettuces I plant in September, and the last I plant in May, from now on.

We know the heat is coming. It does every year. There's really no use complaining about it, unless this is your first year in Texas. If that's so, saddle up, folks, this is shaping up to be a hot and dry one. For everyone who has migrated in during the last seven years of rain, get ready for terms like "Double La Niña" and counting consecutive days of triple digit heat coming from the National Weather Service. It's OK, we have plants for that! If you want something super easy, plant any kind of black-eyed peas. My favorite are purple hull peas. They are super creamy and delicious and the pods change colors to let you know when they are ripe. Sweet potatoes grow beautiful vines all summer long and shrug the heat off. With a tall trellis, you can put your sweet potatoes on the west side of your garden to give evening shade for the plants that don't handle 13 hours of Texas sun very well. Coincidentally, melons of all varieties love a good, moist soil to get started in, then hot and dry to finish ripening the fruits. One of the beautiful aspects of the hot time of the year is that the bugs can't handle the heat either. There will still be grasshoppers and leaf-footed bugs but many of the others have gone underground to stay out of the heat. It's a great time to grow squash! I have always had a bit of difficulty growing squash because I use so much mulch in my gardens that the roly-polies (a much cuter name than woodlice) tend to wreak havoc on the seedlings. We're experimenting with vermiculite, diatomaceous earth, and crushed eggshells on the ground above the seeds and it seems effective but too early to report on.

Back to contemplating my lessons, I have interplanted everything this year. Some plants help each other, and some just take advantage of unused space, above ground or below ground. Even as a market farmer, it's worth it to have the extra labor of working around other crops in a single bed. My productivity has increased possibly because I'm getting better at using all my space, or because this polyculture more closely resembles a natural system. I don't know, but I do know that I love ultimately embracing how true diversity seems to create a healthier environment for me to exist in.

I'm going to get back outside but here's my pro-tip before I go: physical barriers are the best protection against pests. Cover freshly planted squash and melon seeds with shade fabric. I like Agribon-19. When you put out your fall seedlings in the heat, make little hoops of bent wire and cover them with 30% knitted shade cloth. It's a little expensive but it keeps the grasshoppers off your new babies and gives them a little reprieve from the sun. Happy gardening, friends!

Charlie Blaylock

Shine's Farmstand

Cowtown Farmers Market

Visit Shine's Farmstand on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/shinesfarmstand>