

JUNE 2025

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group



CGUA MEETING NOTES - 5/22/25

The CGUA working group last met on May 22nd at Rosen Heights Community Garden. Twelve people were in attendance.

We started with updates about the Tarrant Area Food Bank's garden-related programs from Manny Herrera:

- TAFB started up the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) at Cowtown Farmers Market on May 3; it will run through Sept. 27. They will be giving out both WIC vouchers and senior FMNP vouchers to eligible folks at Cowtown. If you have time on a Saturday, they could use your volunteer help; please contact Manny at manny.herrera@tafb.org.
- TAFB will also be sponsoring an indoor farmers market at their new AgHub at 205 N. Vacek in Fort Worth (across from TAFB Admin building) on Thursdays from 4-6pm in June and July.
- Manny and the garden team are working on completing site visits to their garden partners. They currently have about 55 garden partners.
- Manny also reminded us that if your community garden needs volunteers, their volunteer website is available for use.

Jesse Herrera sent an update about Grow Southeast and Greg Joel gave an update on Opal's Farm:

- Tabor Farms is working on rebuilding and hopes to have produce by fall.
- All the Grow Southeast farms need volunteers.
- Opal's Farm is doing well and will have tomatoes to bring to the farmers market very soon!
- The first Taste for the C.U.R.E. urban farming class graduates in June. They are down to about 12 students from 25 and plan to charge a small fee to encourage commitment for the next cohort.

Becca Knutson reminded us to shop at our favorite local farmers markets (Cowtown, Azle, Saginaw, Benbrook, Clearfork, Crowley, Burleson and more!) and that summer produce is now available!

- Wednesday markets at Cowtown Farmers Market will be starting up in mid-June. Watch for announcements on social media and through the email newsletter.
- SNAP and Double Up are available at many markets and farmstands in the county.
- FMNP & SFMNP are available at Cowtown Farmers Market and the Thursday TAFB Markets.

Anne Santana and Joey Hughes provided an update about school gardens in the area.

- School is out for the year! Many gardens will be "sleeping" for the summer while others continue to have workdays. The end of the school year was filled with last minute chores and tearful goodbyes.

Following the meeting, AJ provided a tour of the Rosen Heights Community Garden as a part of the Growing Good Food grant provided by Texas Health Resources. Their garden focuses on herbs, pollinator plants and creating a welcoming community gathering space. See the garden feature on page 2 for more info.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, July 31st at 3pm. Location, TBD.

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.

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

July 31st, 3pm

Location: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting

September 4th, 5-7pm

Location TBD

FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDEN

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

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Meetups, workdays & classes!

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

TIMBERVIEW FARMSTEAD

Events, classes & tours!

<https://timberviewfarmstead.com>

COMMUNITY LINK MARKETS

Azle Farmers Market

<https://azlefarmersmarket.org>

Saginaw Farmers Market

<https://www.saginawmarket.org/>

MINDFUL MARKET

June 7th, 11am to 2pm

<https://coactntx.wixsite.com/funkytown-mindful-ma>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

EVERY Saturday, 8am to NOON

Wednesdays, Mid-June to Mid-August 8am-NOON

www.cowtownmarket.com

TAFB AG HUB MARKETS

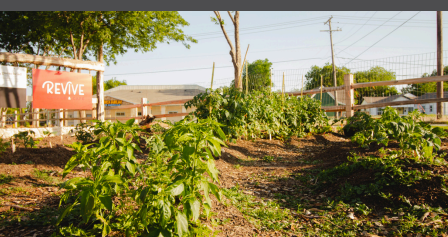
Thursdays in June & July, 4-6pm

<https://tafb.org/farmers-market/>



“Gardening is, by its very nature, an expression of the triumph of optimism over experience. No matter how bad this year was, there's always next year.”

WILLIAM ALEXANDER



Featured Community Garden

**ROSEN HEIGHTS
COMMUNITY GARDEN**
LEADER: Amanda Johnson (AJ)

LOCATION:

2503 Roosevelt Ave., Fort Worth

TYPE OF OPERATION:

Neighborhood Garden for demonstration, education, and community building

GROWING METHODS:

Raised Beds, Medicinal Herbs, Row Gardens, Pollinator Beds, Cut Flowers

TYPES OF PRODUCTS GROWN:

A wide variety of herbs, Tomatoes, Peppers, Wildflowers, Passion Flower

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

Facebook - Rosen Heights Community Garden



TO-DO TO GROW FOOD IN JUNE!



BY BECCA KNUTSON, HOLLOW TRACE MARKET FARM

TIPS AND TASKS FOR GROWING FOOD IN NORTH TEXAS

If you're anything like me, you've been BUSY in your garden in May and the outlook for June is just as busy. Hopefully you've seen the beginnings of your summer harvests and enjoyed the end of your spring crops.

- **Continue to plant summer crops** - Believe it or not, you can still be planting some of our favorite summer crops. Some of our heat-loving veggies like okra, black-eyed peas, long beans, edamame, and sweet potatoes will do well planted now through mid-July. It's also a great month to plant winter squashes and pumpkins. With a little shade, cucumbers will also continue to produce well if planted now.
- **Clear out your cool season crops** - Our lettuces, radishes, beets, carrots and other spring crops are likely done or a little stressed now that the heat is setting in. Do your final harvests and clear those plants out of the garden.
- **Finish harvesting potatoes, onions and garlic** - I know I'm a little behind on getting all my potatoes, onions and garlic out. Aim to get these crops out before it gets too hot!
- **Manage weeds and walkways** - We've had so much great rain this spring! All sorts of weeds are going to start popping up in the garden beds. Keep your new seedlings free from weeds to give them the best chance for survival.
- **Trellis your tomatoes** - Continue to tie up and trim your tomatoes throughout the season to increase harvest and keep your plants clean.
- **Add mulch around summer crops** - Adding mulch around your tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and cucumbers can help retain soil moisture during the hottest months. Straw or leaf mulches are your best bet. Woodchip mulch can be too dense for our tender veggie crops.
- **Enjoy your summer harvests!** - Get out there and enjoy your fresh tomatoes, peppers, squash, herbs, eggplant, beans and cucumbers! Do some canning or preserving and share with your friends and neighbors!

I hope your summer gardens are thriving and you can sit back and enjoy the fruits of your hard work! Be sure to take breaks, drink water and wear sunscreen during the summer as it starts to heat up.



IN THE NEWS

- **Farm Bill and SNAP cuts**
<https://www.statesman.com/story/news/state/2025/05/21/farm-bill-snap-cuts-food-stamps-texas-house-agriculture-committee/83642828007/>
- **Private funding directly sourced to farmers**
<https://fortworthbusiness.com/banking/fort-worths-harvest-returns-launches-second-private-credit-fund-to-fuel-american-agriculture/>
- **Water shortage impact and solution** <https://www.keranews.org/texas-news/2025-04-29/texas-farmers-water-shortage-mexico-drought>



@TARRANTCOUNTYFOODPOLICYCOUNCIL



CULTIVATING WELLNESS: RETRAINING YOUR BRAIN

BY NIKO HUNT

If you're constantly surrounded by the same environment there is a chance you could develop mental fatigue. We've all been there, especially while working. Following the same routine can cause stress and make it hard to stay focused. Taking breaks, getting fresh air, and allowing your brain to think about other things can improve your productivity and the impact on your personal wellbeing can be enormous.

If you spend the majority of your time working, treat your break like a mini vacation to let your mind wander:

- Visit somewhere new (for example: a coffee shop or a garden)
- Take a different route back to work
- Eat lunch picnic style or in a different space than normal
- Go for a nature walk

As small as this adjustment may seem the impact is enormous in relation to overall wellbeing. A new view can be inspiring and encourage you to make stoking your mental energy a priority throughout your busy day. If you feel refreshed, your attention span could increase and create the capacity to think outside of the box, generating innovative ideas. Try switching things up by intentionally changing your view; embrace an improved outlook and enhance your creativity!

Garlic Parmesan Melting Cabbage

Recipe by Chef Julia Levy

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head green cabbage, outermost leaves removed
- 4 tbs of oil of your choice
- ½ tsp salt of your choice
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- 1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
- 4 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced (about 3 tablespoons)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper
- 2 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups of broth
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 2 tsp water
- 1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- Chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

- Cut cabbage into 4 (2-inch) wedges.
- Heat 1 tbs of oil in a skillet and add wedges; cook until brown on both sides. Transfer to a plate; sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Reduce heat; add the remaining 2 tbs oil, 1 cup onion, sliced garlic, 1 tsp Italian seasoning, ¼ tsp crushed red pepper, 2 ounces cream cheese; cook, stirring constantly, until melted and creamy.
- Stir in 2 cups of broth until boiling.
- Stir 2 tsp of cornstarch and water together in a small bowl until smooth; add to pan.
- Remove pan from heat; whisk in ½ cup Parmesan until melted.
- Add cabbage wedges back to the pan and cook for about 50 minutes.
- Let stand for 5 minutes.
- Sprinkle the cabbage wedges with the remaining ½ cup Parmesan.
- Garnish and enjoy!

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>

RECOMMENDED BOOKS, AUDIO AND VIDEO

[The School Garden Podcast](#)

By Mary Jo Greene & Anne Santana

[Charles Dowding's Skills For Growing](#)

By Charles Dowding

[The Market Gardener: A Successful Grower's Handbook for Small-Scale Organic Farming](#)

By Jean-Martin Fortier

[Diego Footer](#)

[Farm Small, Farm Smart Podcast](#)
[YouTube Channel](#)
[Books](#)

[Growing for Market](#)

Free articles, email subscriptions, podcasts and MORE!

[Bootstrap Farmer](#)

Articles, videos, podcasts and MORE!



GREG'S TOP CROPS

Sweet Potatoes
Winter Squash
Long Beans
Okra
Melons
Southern Peas



FARM RESOURCES

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
farmandranchfreedom.org

GROW North Texas
grownorthtexas.org

Natural Resource Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

Texas Center for Local Food
texaslocalfood.org

Texas Department of Agriculture
texasagriculture.gov

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

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association
tofga.org

USDA Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

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

OPAL'S PICKS

It's raining outside once again as I sit down to write this. We have been fortunate to have a wet May and our plants, especially our tomatoes and peppers, are loving it. I hope everyone is enjoying the rain and harvesting lots of wonderful Spring produce.

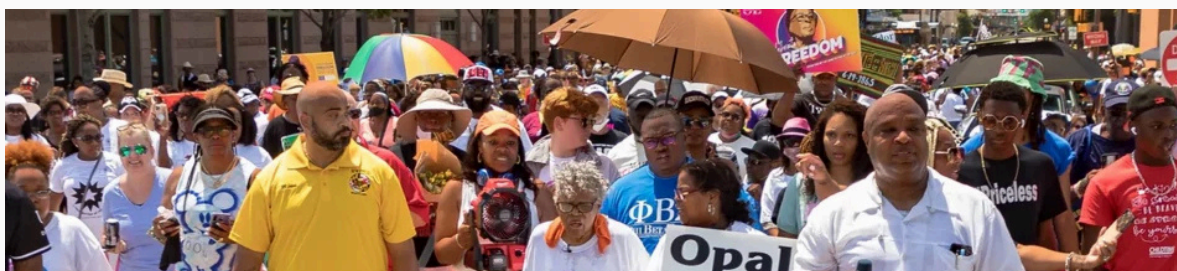
Our "Taste the C.U.R.E." student plots are filled with beautiful color and fresh veggies. They've worked super hard since the class started in January. Now they're seeing the results of their labor! It is our hope that many of our first cohort of students will be available to assist the next cohort as well as take what they've learned to their local neighbors, friends, and family. It has been a joy to work with them and we're looking forward to them "graduating" at the end of June.

I'd like to take a different tack this month to talk about Opal's Farm in a somewhat different light than simply growing. Our logo has the tagline "Freedom to Grow." Most of you probably know that the farm is part of Unity Unlimited, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing people together regardless of race, creed, religion, political affiliations, or cultural background. Our visionary and inspiration is Dr. Opal Lee, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and civil rights icon, who is known nationally as the "Grandmother of Juneteenth." This month holds a particular meaning for our "Freedom to Grow" and that freedom is to be celebrated on June 19th, 2025, with Ms. Opal's "Walk for Freedom."

It will start at Farrington Field with staging starting at 7:30 AM and the Walk starting promptly at 9:00 AM. The walk is 2.5 miles to symbolize the 2.5 years that it took for the enslaved people in Texas to learn of their freedom. The walk, like the farm, is about bringing people together to celebrate the freedom we all share. People all across the nation and even the world will be walking at the same time in three time zones—including in Tokyo, Japan—and in hometowns all across the U.S.. We hope you'll be a part of this amazing show of unity and celebration.

June is full of Juneteenth activities beginning with the Ecumenical Prayer breakfast on June 7th and ending with "Your Voice Unleashed" July 21st through the 25th. A full schedule can be found at www.unityunlimited.org or www.juneteenthftw.com. Opal's Farm will be closed on the 19th to walk with Dr. Opal so come and "get your 2.5 on!"

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





GROCERY: THE BUYING AND SELLING OF FOOD IN AMERICA BY MICHAEL RUHLMAN

A BOOK REVIEW BY BECCA KNUTSON

For this month's book selection, I've strayed away slightly from the focus on local food through the agricultural lens to learn more about the inner workings of the common grocery store. In Michael Ruhlman's *Grocery: The Buying and Selling of Food in America*, we gather insight into the history of grocery stores, the way our grocery stores have changed over time, and we get to walk through each section of the grocery store.

Since I am a huge fan of grocery shopping – finding the best deals, picking out the best ingredients, seeing the new products, and walking through a clean, bright, organized space – I knew I would enjoy this title, but I did not expect for it to make me cry. I finished listening to this book while I was making my weekly delivery of farm-fresh produce to a small, local grocery store. As it turns out, the author and I have something in common: we both had fathers who reveled in the joy of grocery shopping and have since passed away from cancer. Ruhlman explains in the opening chapters that his father's passing was his inspiration for learning more about grocery stores and writing this book.

“While Americans were increasingly interested in food-watching cooking shows on television, posting photographs of their meals to Instagram, turning restaurant chefs into media stars—we were also cooking less and less, a fact confirmed by food researcher Harry Balzer.

Michael Ruhlman”

Grocery: The Buying and Selling of Food in America investigates the typical American grocery store by using the Heinen's grocery store chain as his go-to example. Heinen's has a history that can be traced back to the 1920's in Cleveland, Ohio and has since spread to over twenty stores in Northeastern Ohio and several Chicago suburbs. Throughout the book, Ruhlman is able to get the inside scoop about the history and inner workings of Heinen's chain from the owners and even works as a bag boy in the checkout line for a while to get some hands-on experience.

In each chapter, Ruhlman walks us through every major section of the grocery store, explains grocery store layouts and how the sections of the grocery store have changed over time as trends and demands from customers have changed. In some chapters, Ruhlman will simply start listing different products that can be found in a particular section which is sometimes tedious but also very soothing. I kept finding myself needing to be snapped out of a trance-like state during these lengthy lists of delicious-sounding foods.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

[AfroGreen'd](#) [Conundrum Farms](#) [Grow North Texas](#)

[Grow Southeast](#) [NTX School Garden Network](#)

[Opal's Farm](#) [Southside Community Garden](#)

[Tarrant Area Food Bank Farm & Garden Programs](#)

[Timberview Farmstead](#)



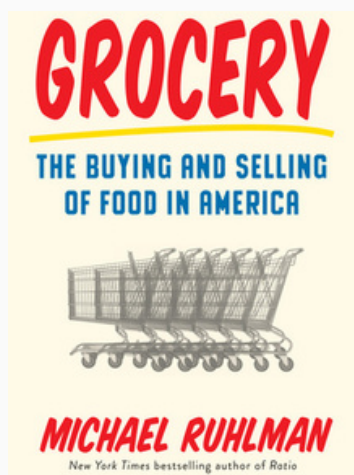
A photograph showing the top of grocery store shelves stocked with various packaged food items, including bags of snacks and cereal.

GROCERY: THE BUYING AND SELLING OF FOOD IN AMERICA (CONT.)

While I won't walk you through all the sections Ruhlman discusses in his book, since I'm sure you all are familiar with grocery stores, there were several "big picture" topics that I found fascinating that are more relevant to agriculture and foods systems. One discussion I enjoyed was the idea about how Americans are more obsessed with food and food culture than possibly ever before, but we may be cooking from scratch at home far less than any other time in history. We have cooking shows and competitions on TV, there are influencers on social media that do more and more with food, and we love to take pictures of the delicious meals we eat. Yet, much of the food we consume is still from restaurants, food trucks, meal kits and processed food. We are still so disconnected from our food sources and individual ingredients, but we are certainly obsessed with eating delicious food and using food as medicine.

Another particularly interesting section was when Ruhlman visited Heinen's grocery store with a dietitian as she shopped in her favorite sections and they discussed things to gravitate towards and things to avoid as you shop. They discussed the confusing and ever-changing messages we receive from the government, as well as scientific findings and popular culture views on what we should and shouldn't be eating. They visited about topics like the "low-fat" movement in the 1980s and 1990s, the chemicals and pesticides found in our favorite breakfast cereals, whether we should or shouldn't be eating eggs, and foods that get touted as being "superfoods." All these ever-changing findings and recommendations can be confusing and frustrating to the average consumer who just wants good tasting food that feels good to eat. The solution that was presented is probably the best one I've heard so far: cook at home with as many single-ingredient foods as possible.

One last chapter that I found exciting was the story about how Whole Foods influenced an increase in organic fruit and vegetable production. Before Whole Foods, few grocery stores had an organic produce section. There wasn't a mainstream market for organic produce at big grocery stores, so farmers weren't growing as much organic produce. When Whole Foods opened and decided to sell only organic and non-GMO produce, they created a market and farmers stepped up to fill this demand. When other grocery stores saw how popular Whole Foods had become, they also started adding organic sections into their stores. The demand for organic produce continued to increase and has impacted agricultural production in a huge way.



If you're a grocery store nerd like me and want to learn more about the history and inner workings of grocery stores, then definitely give this book a read or a listen. But don't say I didn't warn you about the tears you will find streaming from your face during the last chapter. Something I've noticed from the five books I've listened to so far this year is that each author quotes and references the same handful of men who tend to write on this topic: Michael Pollan, Dan Barber and Wendell Berry. For my next listen, I am aiming to find a different perspective that will provide insight into our food system and agriculture that strays from the typical rhetoric. I hope I will have something very interesting to tell you about next month! Until then, I am happy to have your suggestions and would love to chat with anyone who also enjoys the topics covered in these books. Happy reading!