

MAY 2023

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 23rd IN PERSON at the Water Works building and also toured the Master Gardener Demonstration Garden at the Resource Connection.

Meeting Recap:

- Tejas Rane from Tarrant Area Food Bank gave a presentation on two different agricultural projects happening at TAFB:
 - Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program
 - TAFB has \$5.1 million from the USDA to purchase local food at market price from socially disadvantaged producers
 - Will be working with local small farmers to purchase excess produce at the farmers market and directly from the farms.
 - Ag Hub
 - New facility on Vacek St. (by the other TAFB buildings) that used to be an Audi dealership.
 - Will be a produce hub, warehouse space, and community space for youth and families and will have a community garden.
- Lauren Hickman provided a TAFB Garden & Farm Program Update:
 - A new Sharepoint site will be live soon for TAFB's Community Garden Partners.
 - It will have gardening resources, handouts, a calendar of events, training modules and more!
 - The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program will begin again soon and planning is underway. WIC participants will be able to pick up and spend their vouchers at Cowtown Farmers Market this year.
- Greg Joel had a few updates from Grow Southeast:
 - Most of the farms have planted their seedlings grown by TCC Horticulture students.
 - Tabor Farms has figured out their irrigation issues and is beginning to see growth again. They have also received some shipping containers that will be used for storage.
 - Opal's Farm is getting help for Blue Zones Project to be able to accept SNAP/EBT at their new farm stand on Sylvania.
- New Projects: CGUA Speakers List
 - A shared Google Doc will be created so interested CGUA members can add known speaker resources to a list to be added to the TCFPC website.

The next CGUA meeting will be on Thursday, May 18th from 3:00-4:30pm at Tarrant Area Food Bank, 2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, 76107.

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

May 18th, 3:00pm
Location: Tarrant Area Food Bank
2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, 76107

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

No General Meetings Until
July 2023

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Edible Landscaping
May 6th, 5pm (Online)

Backyard Composting
May 10th, 5:30-6:30pm

[https://savetarrantwater.com/
events/](https://savetarrantwater.com/events/)

MINDFUL MARKET

May 27th 11am-2pm
[www.coactntx.org/mindful-
market](http://www.coactntx.org/mindful-market)

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Every Saturday 8am-NOON
www.cowtownmarket.com

Veterans Park, Grand Pavilion
8901 Clifford St.
White Settlement, TX 76108



AN UPDATE ON THE MINDFUL MARKET

BY JESSE HERRERA

Lack of access to healthy food can often be attributed to multiple factors. Transportation, lack of economic opportunities, lack of policies that support equitable food access, and racism are just the tip of a very large iceberg of relevant issues contributing to food disparities. Recognizing the lack of access to locally grown food in East Fort Worth, the Mindful Market was created in partnership with Texas Wesleyan University to reduce the gap in accessing locally grown food.

Our journey started in a small parking lot in 2021 adjacent to Black Coffee. After a very hot lesson about the heat island effect and a year of collecting community insights, we acquired a new location in front of the O’Neal’s Administration Building on the Texas Wesleyan campus and launched the Mindful Market in April of 2022. The Funkytown Mindful Market received its letter of designation in September 2022 and has been operating once a month since permitted. To date the market has attracted 45 local vendors and received over 700 customers.

The Mindful Market incites a positive and congregational vibe. A day is spent listening to the local vibes provided by DJ Jay Dee as guests come to reconnect with friends and explore their curiosities at each vendor table. Yoga is demonstrated gracefully by Enso on the lawn, and Mind Your Garden is enlightening guest about the untapped flavor profiles of plant-based cooking. Kids enjoy the natural playground provided by Out to Play, and adults can explore the perfuming soaps provided by Silky Radiance. The Milk and Honey Project is there to help customers find positive energy through jewelry or self-reflection props. Fresh greens are offered by Tabor Farms and Houston Homestead Heritage.

These unique vendors bring a depth of cultural responsiveness to mindfulness. East Fort Worth, similar to the majority of the city, is comprised of a diverse community coming from many backgrounds. However, it is often easy to overlook the unique cultural norms and traditions that often guide our day to day decisions.

To that end, the Mindful Market is more than just a farmers market. It is a space for us to invite our communities to explore, cultivate, and celebrate mindfulness. It is a space for us to celebrate our unique cultures and highlight the diverse vendors that call Fort Worth home. We are even exploring some mocktail activities to catalyze social gatherings without the lure of alcohol and support champions like Steven and Ursula Nunez in their long vigilante journey to a plant-based and alcohol-free life.

We look forward to growing the market over the next 18 months. Through sponsorship and individual community memberships, we aim to raise the funding needed to hire a full-time market manager that can promote vendors, recruit community participation, and help build effective sponsorship campaigns to elevate the market to a weekly event. The success of the market will be a first step to help address the inequities in food access and celebrate East Fort Worth as the renowned community for food, culture, and well-being for everyone, everywhere.

To help us in our mission, please:

- Like our social media pages, share our posts, and help us get the word out!
- Support us as a volunteer to help with setting up and breaking down the market.
- Support us as a customer and help make it a great day for each of the vendors that call the Mindful Market home.
- Join as a steering committee member and help us plan and develop the Mindful Market.
- Support us as a member and be a part of helping us build the next chapter of the Mindful Market.
- Support us as a sponsor, and take a pivotal step in addressing food disparities in East Fort Worth.

The Mindful Market operates every 4th Saturday (except major holiday weekends).

For more information: <https://www.coactntx.org/mindful-market>

To volunteer: <https://www.coactntx.org/events>



"Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire."

VIRGIL



MAY TO-DO

Harvest potatoes and onions mid-month.

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

Plant southern peas, peppers, squash, okra, melons and other summer crops.

Prune roses, vines, and trees after they have bloomed.

Feed, water and protect young plants/seedlings from pests and the elements.

Plant any and all of the warm season herbs like basil and lemon balm.

Spinach and Herb Quiche

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

This quick quiche recipe can highlight a variety of greens and herbs from your garden or farmers' market. We used cilantro, parsley, sage, and lemon thyme, and we used a lot of them, but the amount and variety is really up to you. Experiment and enjoy!



INGREDIENTS

- Single pie crust dough, your favorite recipe or store bought
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, finely diced
- 1 cup tender green herbs, roughly chopped
- 4-5 cups spinach, kale, or chard, roughly chopped
- 8 eggs
- 1/4 C milk or cream
- 1/4 C shredded cheddar or other preferred cheese
- Salt, pepper, olive oil

PREPARATION

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
- Roll out your pie crust dough and press it into a pie dish. Line with parchment paper and fill with dried beans or pie weights. Parbake the crust for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven.
- Meanwhile, sauté shallot and garlic in a sauté pan until fragrant, then add in greens and herbs and sauté until lightly wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- Whisk eggs, milk/cream, and cheese until well incorporated. Season with salt, then fold in your sautéed greens and herbs.
- Pour egg and greens mixture into the parbaked crust. Bake for 40 minutes. Cool and enjoy with a fresh green salad.

IN THE NEWS

- A look at HB 92 and its effects on homeowners and gardening and raising small fowl or rabbits <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/politics/texas-legislature/city-policies-regarding-gardening-and-raising-livestock/269-d61ae534-96e8-4aff-b228-6ade63904eea>
- FARFA's call to action for Texas legislature bill up for consideration regarding farm egg sales <https://farmandranchfreedom.org/support-small-farmers-increase-consumer-access-to-farm-fresh-eggs/>
- UTA proposes plan to launch community gardening and cafe project https://www.theshorthorn.com/news/uta-faculty-help-plant-the-seeds-to-launch-community-kitchen/article_b7b25976-de25-11ed-8723-fb4ce258d64b.html

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

Paperpot Co Blog & Podcast

<https://paperpot.co/the-blog/>

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)





GREG'S TOP CROPS

Tomatoes: Celebrity, Early Girl, Berkley Tie Dye & Cherokee Purple

Peppers: Jalapeno, Poblano, California Wonder, Shishito



FARM RESOURCES

Organizations & Associations:

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 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

April has been a busy “Earth Month” at Opal’s Farm. Each week brings a record harvest and tomatoes will be ready in two to three weeks. We have been blessed with Spring rains and avoided the severe storms that have plagued so many communities in North Texas. We hope your gardens and farms are doing well and growing strong. Earth Day was a time to reflect on the four and a half years that have passed since we broke ground for Opal’s Farm. From the very beginning we knew that commitment to organic, regenerative farming would be one of our core values. It’s simply not enough to be herbicide and pesticide free. We needed to leave the soil better than we found it. We were (and are!) committed to minimizing our carbon footprint, saying no to projects that generate waste, and turning food waste into healthy soil – healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy people.

We started on February 15, 2019, with little more than donated land, donated seed, donated tools, and a vision for what Opal’s Farm could become. There was no money for compost, so we began composting ourselves. La-Ti-Da Dairy donated several trailer loads of goat manure and stall shaving (my son says I’m the only adult he knows who gets excited about poop!). I brought a couple of big loads of horse manure from my own stable – I do not recommend horse manure as it has too many weed seeds; lesson learned! J. Davis Tree Company dropped their wood chips (and still do).

We made do with what we had until summer of 2020 when we began picking up culled produce from Elrod’s Grocery on NW 25th Street. We averaged 1000 to 1500 pounds of culled produce each Monday. The boxes it came in were used to lay beneath wood chips to suppress weed growth. The waste was less than a trash bag per week. The only thing that was left on the farm was the plastic wrapping that sometime covered the produce. That summer, Blue Zones Fort Worth and Carpool Compost arranged to pick up the culled produce from Elrod’s plus two other Food Land stores. We now average two to three tons of vegetable compost added each week. Over 50,000 pounds of produce has been saved from the landfill. Instead, it’s been used to increase the food grown for our community.

There are many other ways that farmers and community or home gardeners can be good stewards of the land and help our environment. Organic farming and gardening sequester carbon within the soil. It rebuilds weakened and dead soil to new possibilities. Each urban farm, community or home garden adds one small piece to caring for the global environment. One of my favorite quotes is from Mother Teresa, “If you can’t feed a hundred people then just feed one.” That’s what we’re doing and what you’re doing – one plot of land at a time. Happy farming!

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

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