

MAY 2020

# WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group



## CGUA Updates

The Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group is on hiatus like most other things right now, but we'll be back. For questions, please reach out to our Chair, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu).

You can also follow Tarrant County Food Policy Council on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for food system news and resources.



## LOCAL GARDENS GROW DURING COVID-19

Becca Knutson

Each spring, the Botanic Garden, Master Gardeners and Tarrant Area Food Bank team up to provide vegetable seedlings for area community and school gardens. The Botanic Garden provides the materials and greenhouse space. The Master Gardeners provide volunteer labor to tend to the plants. Tarrant Area Food Bank coordinates the requests from all of the gardens and takes the lead on communication. This year, we were fortunate to receive funding from the Arlington Men's Garden Club that paid for the materials and overhead costs involved in the project.

Seedling distribution usually happens during the last week of March and with COVID-19 shutting everything down, we had to come up with a creative solution. Since the Botanic Garden was closed to the public, City of Fort Worth staff trucked over 100 flats of seedlings over to the TAFB Learning Garden early one morning. TAFB staff sorted the plants into different "orders" based on the requests from each garden. Gardeners arrived and loaded their own plants in a safe, socially distant manner. The event didn't have the reunion-like feel to it that it usually does, but 27 gardens were able to pick up vegetable seedlings to plant in their gardens this spring. Many of the gardens provide produce donations to local pantries or serve those in need in other ways as a part of their garden model.

"We always look forward to the arrival of the seedlings and never take the generosity for granted." - Mike Goode, FUMC Village Garden.

## Garden Project Ideas

Learn how to dehydrate herbs, fruits and vegetables for long-term storage.  
<https://nchfp.uga.edu/>

Propagate your indoor plants and perennials to share with others.

Maintain that active compost pile you've always dreamed of!

Save and catalog seeds from your favorite crops.

Make your own Hugelkultur bed with branches, leaves, and other yard waste.  
<https://morningchores.com/hugelkultur/>

Make a creative container garden with old buckets, baskets, and boxes.  
<https://tinyurl.com/ubmxcyz>

SATURDAYS 8AM-12PM  
Cowtown Farmers Market  
3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD.





"Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets, but humbler folk may circumvent this restriction if they know how. To plant a pine, for example, one need be neither god nor poet; one need only own a good shovel. "

**ALDO LEOPOLD**



## May To-Do

Continue to plant peppers and eggplant by seedling or transplant.

Plant melons, southern peas, and okra from seed.

Plant sweet potatoes from slips grown at home.

Continue to add compost to each garden bed while doing your spring planting.

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

Add a layer of straw or leaf mulch around new plants and sprouting seeds.

## IN THE NEWS

While COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on many aspects of life, this rings especially true for our food system. With the increased media coverage shining light on our gardens, farms, and food web, we've included a larger news section than normal so everyone can peruse and stay informed:

- Local farmers adapt methods of selling produce in changing food system: <https://www.dallasnews.com/food/2020/04/16/long-live-the-farm-box-north-texas-growers-are-finding-new-ways-to-get-food-directly-to-consumers/>
- Community Gardens figure out how to operate during a pandemic: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/dining/community-garden-coronavirus.html>
- The Oak Cliff Veggie Project and Mobile Food Market strive for food equity in Dallas: <https://urbanagnews.com/blog/exclusives/bringing-food-equity-to-dallas/>
- Local urban farmer notes "90% drop in business" due to coronavirus: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/already-struggling-farmers-hit-hard-by-coronavirus-pandemic/>
- Plant nurseries note growth in sales as at-home gardening increases: <https://www.tpr.org/post/fearing-shortages-people-are-planting-more-vegetable-gardens>
- Central Texas farmers see ups and downs in operations due to COVID-19: <https://www.statesman.com/news/20200424/central-texas-farmers-survive-selling-directly-to-customers>
- A look at the national picture and the farm's role in the future of the food supply chain: <https://qz.com/1829558/covid-19-is-about-to-reach-us-farms/>



## CULINARY SCHOOL WINS STATEWIDE AWARD

**Becca Knutson**

Keep Texas Beautiful gives out awards each year for individuals and organizations that have made a positive impact in their communities by working to keep Texas clean and beautiful. This year, the Culinary School of Fort Worth (CSFTW) was nominated for their efforts to reduce food waste and contribute to local gardens and farms.

CSFTW has been collecting food waste produced in their kitchen to help teach their students about how they can reduce the amount of food going to the landfill. Since starting this program, CSFTW has diverted over 5,000 gallons of waste. This food waste is donated to TAFB's Learning Garden, Opal's Farm, and Jubilee Garden where it is turned into compost. We estimate that over 40 yards of compost has been produced from the fruit and veggie scraps collected from CSFTW.

The Culinary School also volunteers their time at TAFB's Learning Garden making compost. They have presented at TAFB's Dig Deep conference and have created garden-fresh recipes for some of the more unusual garden produce, as well.

Congratulations to the Culinary School of Fort Worth for winning Keep Texas Beautiful's "Outstanding Program" Award for 2020. There were many entries from across the whole state of Texas. Thank you for teaching your students how to be good stewards of the earth and for giving back to your community!



# Kitchen Clean-Out Grain Bowl

Recipe from: Hannah Lamar

Whether you are sheltering-in-place or an essential worker, we are all doing our best to make do with the food we have at home in order to minimize outings. We all need to nourish ourselves and our families, but it can be hard to pull together specific ingredients for a recipe as our groceries run low. This is the perfect time for a kitchen clean-out grain bowl! It's a no-recipe recipe; all you have to do is grab the odds and ends in your fridge, pantry, and garden and put them together for a healthy, hearty meal.

## INGREDIENTS

- Any dried grain (rice, quinoa, farro, barley). 1/2 cup per person
- Dried or canned beans (garbanzo, pinto, cannelloni, black)
- Whatever vegetables you have on hand, about 1 cup per person
- Salt, pepper, and your favorite spices
- Olive Oil



## PREPARATION

First, cook your grains. This is the base of your dish, so make sure you have enough to go around. While your grains simmer, prepare your vegetables and beans. At our house, we had a few turnips and herbs from our garden, and the last few stalks of kale and some radishes from the farmer's market, and frozen peas, a beet, and chickpeas from the store.

Any vegetables will do. Hardy vegetables like roots, cauliflower, or broccoli are great for roasting, and 30 minutes at 375\* should do the trick. For leafy greens, softer veggies like tomatoes or mushrooms, or small frozen goods, saute them in olive oil on the stove. Tender herbs like basil, parsley and cilantro or the leafy tops of carrots, turnips, or beets make a great pesto or chimichurri sauce (check out last month's newsletter for a carrot-top pesto recipe!).

Just as a grain bowl is a blank canvas for produce, your veggies are a blank canvas for flavor. Use your favorite spices to dress up any vegetable mix. We used herbs de Provence, lemon zest, salt, and pepper in our dish; choose any flavors that call to you to spice up your grain bowl.

Want to use leftover protein? Great, throw it on top! Want to top it with a fried egg? Sure, why not! Want to use your favorite salad dressing instead of a homemade pesto-I'm not stopping you! Whatever you have on hand, you can bring it together into a healthy meal in short order.



# Garden Resources

## Local Nurseries:

Archie's Gardenland  
Calloway's

## Free Seeds:

TAFB Community Garden Program;  
communitygarden@tafb.org  
GROW North Texas

## Bulk Soil/Compost:

Living Earth  
Silver Creek Materials  
City of FW Drop-Off Stations

## Garden Curricula:

CGUA-  
<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/garden-2.html>

## Community Food Systems Map:

<http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/local-food-systems.html>

