

MARCH 2020

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

TCFPC Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group



CGUA PROJECTS FOR 2020

The Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Working Group has several ongoing projects that always need volunteer help. Join us today!

Support Grow Southeast Farmers - Grow Southeast is comprised of several farms in southeast Fort Worth. They are navigating the Urban Ag Ordinance and growing food for their communities. For more information about Grow Southeast, contact Jesse at: jesse.herrera@uttheory.net.

School Garden Mapping Project - CGUA is working update our Local Food System map to include active school gardens in the area. Adding these gardens to the map will help keep them successful and increase access to fresh food. To contribute to these efforts, contact Barb Ewen at: barbara.ewen@tafb.org.

Facilitate Community Partnerships - CGUA is helping community gardens and urban farms stay well-resourced with food scraps to compost, garden curricula, expert advice, and guidance on hot topics. To learn more, contact Becca Knutson at: becca.knutson@tafb.org.

The next CGUA meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19th from 3:00-4:30pm at Tarrant Area Food Bank (2525 Cullen St.) in the Rodriguez Room, 2nd floor. Join us! If you can't attend a meeting but would like to contribute, please send suggestions for new garden or urban ag projects to Dave Aftandilian at d.aftandilian@tcu.edu.



THE TANTALIZING TOMATO

By Becca Knutson

With spring quickly approaching, most gardeners have long been planning their arsenal of plants that will grow throughout the warm months here in North Texas. For many, the most sought after item is the tantalizing tomato; however, tomatoes are not the easiest crop to grow in our climate.

I have not always had the best production from my tomato crops, but I am always researching and trying to make my plants better than the year before. When researching, you will find a plethora of opinions and tricks on how to grow the best tomato plant. I have yet to find the method that works the best for me. While there are many methods to try, there are also some facts about tomatoes that will help guide you in your tomato journey.

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Events

3/4, 6-7:30PM

Kitchen Garden Cooking School Demo - Cabbage
TARRANTAREAFOOD
BANK.EVENTBRITE.COM

3/7, 10AM-3PM

Advanced Class: The Complete Guide to Vegetable Gardening in North Central Texas
BRIT.ORG

3/14, 10AM-12PM

Building Your Butterfly Garden
BRIT.ORG

3/20, 10AM-12PM

Hobby Greenhouse
TARRNATMG.ORG

3/21, 10AM-12PM

Compost, Compost Tea, and Worm Composting
TARRANTMG.ORG

3/21, 1PM-3PM

Drip Irrigation
TARRANTMG.ORG

SATURDAYS 8AM-12PM

Cowtown Farmers Market
3821 SOUTHWEST BLVD.





"The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

THOMAS EDISON



March To-Do

Finish planting short days-to-harvest cool-season crops in the beginning of the month. Soon it will be too warm!

Prune grapes, fruit trees, and blackberries.

Amend your soil with compost and phosphorus to increase organic matter and encourage strong root development.

Start planting tomato seedlings, corn, beans and cucumbers near the end of the month.

Be prepared to cover warm-season crops during a late freeze.

Feed young plants with an organic liquid fertilizer.

THE TANTALIZING TOMATO (continued)

Tomatoes plants fall into two categories - determinate and indeterminate. Determinate tomatoes grow in a "bush" form. They grow to be about 3'-4' tall and the fruit ripens all about at the same time. They only produce a set amount of fruit. Indeterminate tomatoes grow to be 7'-12' tall and will continue to produce fruit until frost or something else kills them. Knowing which type you have will help you determine spacing and production expectations.

Texas heat makes growing tomatoes difficult. Tomato plants will stop producing fruit when the daytime temperatures are over 90 degrees and the nighttime temps hover above 75 degrees. If you've experienced a Texas summer, you know that doesn't allow for very much fruit production. Many gardeners will plant their tomatoes as early as March 15th to extend the growing season as much as possible. When looking for tomato varieties, choose those with a short days-to-maturity - around 60 days. Varieties that grow more quickly tend to have smaller fruit. Look for Roma, cherry, pear, grape, and small slicing tomatoes.

Some gardeners have a lot of luck with tomatoes. I am still searching for my winner. After you've returned from the rabbit hole of tomato-growing research, let me know what you decide to try this year (becca.knutson@tafb.org). Good luck!

Check out these slides for great information on garden planning and specifics on tomatoes (starting at slide 41!):

<http://txmg.org/denton/files/2012/10/introduction-to-vegetable-gardening-web.pdf>.



IN THE NEWS

- Study finds that more grocery stores per city means less food waste - <https://www.theshelbyreport.com/2020/02/19/more-stores-reduce-food-waste/>
- Take an in-depth look at the City of Austin's composting efforts - <https://www.austinchronicle.com/food/2020-02-21/a-banana-peel-a-diaper-and-a-plastic-bag-walk-into-austins-composting-program/>

Roasted Turnips and Glazed Whole Carrots

Recipes from: *Hannah Lamar and Harrison Gibson*

Here are two low-effort recipes for those winter veggies that we want to use, but don't always know how to. Each recipe can be easily combined with other seasonal vegetables and mixed into a dish with your favorite grain. For a bit of extra fun, try to use the entire vegetable, utilizing the greens in sauces paired with the dish.

ROASTED TURNIPS

- Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.
- Wash your turnips and cut off the greens. Save the greens and saute them or throw them into a pesto sauce!
- Chop your turnips into relatively uniform bite-sized pieces.
- Drizzle with olive oil and add salt, pepper, and whatever spices fit the profile of your dish.
- Roast for about 30 minutes, stirring at the halfway mark.
- Pull out when the turnips are fork tender.



GLAZED CARROTS

- Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.
- Wash and remove the greens from a pound of whole carrots. Save the greens and add them into a pesto or chimichurri!
- Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper, and roast your carrots for 30-40 minutes. Give them a stir every 15 minutes or so.
- When your carrots are fork tender and have browned a bit, pull them out.
- Make a glaze: Mix one tablespoon of melted butter, one tablespoon of honey, and one tablespoon of balsamic vinegar.
- Coat the carrots in their glaze, 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:

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>

