

# HOW'S IT GROWING?

Community Gardens & Urban Agriculture  
Working Group Newsletter



## CGUA HAPPENINGS

The next CGUA meeting will be on **Thursday, November 30th from 3:00-4:30pm** at Tarrant Area Food Bank (2525 Cullen St. Fort Worth, TX 76107) in the Rodriguez Meeting Room-2nd Floor.

The last CGUA meeting held on September 21st, hosted at Tarrant Area Food Bank, was attended by 14 people interested in bringing positive change through gardening in Tarrant County.

Becca Knutson presented the results of the Community Garden Survey put together by CGUA earlier this year. Seven different gardens responded to the initial request for responses. The group gave suggestions on ways to collect more answers. To take the survey, see [p.3](#).

Neale Mansfield brought an update about his most recent project, Tarrant County Backyard Garden Network. He wants to create a network of gardeners that are dedicated to donating to food pantries. He will have more updates after meeting with interested parties over the next couple of weeks.

For more information on how to be involved in the CGUA working group, please contact our chair Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu).

### EVENTS

**11/3, 10am-12pm**  
Tour TAFB's  
Learning Garden  
[TAFB Eventbrite](#)

**11/4, 10am**  
Worm Composting  
[brit.org/events](http://brit.org/events)

**11/4, 1pm**  
Grasses  
[brit.org/events](http://brit.org/events)

**11/9, 5pm & 6pm**  
Backyard  
Composting 101  
[Fortworthtexas.gov  
compostoutpost](http://Fortworthtexas.gov/compostoutpost)

**11/9, 5:30-7:30pm**  
Gardeners Happy  
Hour  
@ HopFusion

**11/17, 7pm**  
Friends  
Thanksgiving  
Farming The Sprawl  
[Facebook](#)

**11/18, 10am-1pm**  
Understanding  
Healthy Soils &  
Organic Gardening  
[TAFB Eventbrite](#)



## PROTECTING YOUR CROPS FROM FROST

Becca Knutson, TAFB

North Texas has experienced some early cold weather this year. The frosty temperatures are looming in the not-so-distant future, reminding us that it's time to let go of the last few peppers, tomatoes and eggplants. We need to finish planting for the rest of the fall and winter as well as prepare the garden for next round of cold weather.

Some gardeners take a break from gardening during the cool months while others press on and continue to take advantage of ideal winter weather we have for growing Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, etc.), root vegetables and leafy greens. The winter garden is almost easier to maintain than the hot, dry, insect-infested summer garden we are used to dealing with. The occasional cold day is the only formidable nemesis that the winter gardener faces.

Luckily, there are several tricks and tips that can help you have a successful winter garden.  
(continued on p.2)



## PROTECTING YOUR CROPS FROM FROST

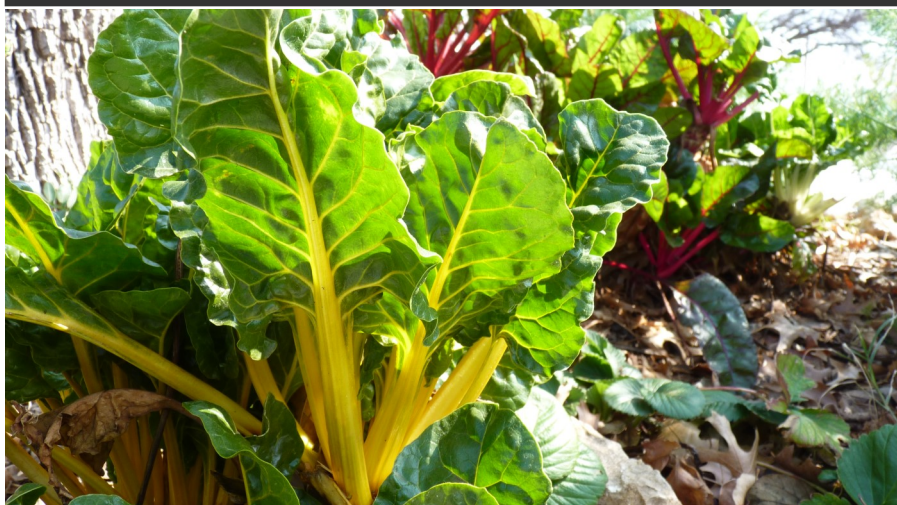
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The first thing the winter gardener needs to do is to watch the weather. Watch out for days or nights that will be under 35 degrees for more than an hour. If temperatures will be above 35 consistently, all of your cold-hardy, winter crops should be fine.

Once you know that cold weather is coming, water your garden well. Moist soil will help keep the plants' roots warm. Then, cover all of the exposed soil with straw, leaf or wood mulch. The mulch will help keep the soil moister and seal the heat in.

Next, cover your plants. For individual plants, use buckets, nursery pots or cloches. Secure the cover with a rock or brick. Remove any opaque covers once the temperatures warm. For large spaces or raised beds, cover your plants with frost cloth, plastic sheeting or old blankets and sheets. Make sure the plants are completely covered and the edges of your cover are tucked in and secure.

For more information and other ideas for frost protection, check out this article from Rodale's Organic Life: <https://www.rodaleorganiclife.com/food/fall-vegetable-garden>.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The USDA Hardiness Zones have changed over the last several years due to global warming. So what does this mean for our gardens?

The general trend is that the hardiness zones have shifted north slowly since at least 2012. Areas throughout the country are seeing fewer cold nights and warmer winter temperatures.

As you plan your garden and what trees to put in your yard, consult the most recent information about what zone you are in. Most of north Texas is in Zone 8a. Since we are in the middle of a zone, we may find that in the near future, we will be in 8b or even 9. This will allow for a wider variety of warm season crops to be grown, but maybe fewer cool season crops.

For more information, see this article and visit the USDA Hardiness Zone map: <https://www.rodaleorganiclife.com/garden/hardiness-zone-changes>.

## RESOURCES

### Local Nurseries:

- Archie's Gardenland
- Calloway's
- Redenta's

### Free Seeds:

- TAFB Community Garden Program
- Contact seed companies

### Bulk Soil/Compost:

- Living Earth
- Silver Creek
- City of FW Drop-off Stations

### Garden Curricula:

- CGUA-  
[www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/cgua-working-group.html](http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/cgua-working-group.html)

### Texas AgriLife Extension:

- [www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu](http://www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu)

### Community Food Systems Map:

- <http://www.tarrantcountyfoodpolicycouncil.org/community-food-systems-north-texas.html>





## NOVEMBER TO-DO

- Harvest any remaining cold-sensitive crops like tomatoes, eggplant and peppers.
- Plant cool-season crops like Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, peas, carrots, kale, radishes, mustard, turnips, beets and spinach.
- Plant more cilantro, parsley and fennel.
- Plant strawberries so the plants will be established by spring.
- Add straw or leaf mulch around all of your cool-season crops to help retain moisture and heat.
- Organize your frost protection to be ready for any low night temperatures.



Please take a moment to complete our surveys about community gardens in our area. They take less than ten minutes and will help us better serve you in the future. Thanks!

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2ZJF6RF>
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2W92SSY>

## Sweet Potato Cornbread

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Servings: 8

Serving Size: 1/8 wedge

Recipe adapted from: [budgetbytes.com](http://budgetbytes.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1.5 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 Tbs baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup plain, non-fat Greek yogurt
- 3/4 cup milk
- 2 1/2 Tbs canola oil, divided



### Preparation

1. Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into 1-inch cubes. Place in a sauce pan and cover with water. Bring water to a boil and boil the potatoes until they are tender, about 10 minutes.
2. Coat the inside of a 10" cast iron skillet with 1/2 tablespoon of oil. Place it in the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.
3. In a large bowl, mix together the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg until well blended.
4. Drain and mash the sweet potatoes. Put the sweet potatoes, yogurt, milk and oil into a large bowl and mix. Then add the eggs and mix again until well combined.
5. Combine the wet and dry ingredients and mix until no dry ingredients remain at the bottom of the bowl.
6. Carefully remove the skillet from the oven and scoop the batter into it. Smooth the batter until it is spread evenly.
7. Bake for 22-25 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.



**TARRANT COUNTY**  
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL