

JULY 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 May 22nd IN PERSON at the Tarrant Area Food Bank.

### Meeting Recap:

This meeting was not as well attended as recent meetings and the conversation was more casual, but several typical topics were covered:

- Hyiat El-Jundi provided a presentation about the history and work of F.A.R.M.
- Lauren Hickman provided a TAFB Garden & Farm Program Update:
  - The new Sharepoint site is live for TAFB Community Garden Partners. It contains lots of resources for community gardens including links to grant funding, printable handouts on gardening topics and a calendar to share events and opportunities.
  - The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program is off to a great start at Cowtown Farmers Market with record amount of vouchers being redeemed by participants. Farmers are enjoying the increase in produce sales.
- Jesse Herrera had a few updates from Grow Southeast:
  - Opal's Farm is producing in record amounts and are looking for new sales outlets beyond Cowtown Farmers Market, the farm stand and neighborhood sales/donations. They have attended a few Sunday markets in the area.
  - Tabor Farms has a new parking lot and entrance to make it easier to access.
  - Jesse is searching for funding for a Market Manager for the Mindful Market.
- Farmers Market Updates
  - A discussion was had about how to help increase produce sales at some of the newer markets and if that's what customers actually want. Cowtown Farmers Market is established as a produce market, but other, newer markets might spend years convincing customers to buy produce rather than cookies and jarred goods.

The next CGUA meeting will be in September. Date and location, TBD.

For questions and information about CGUA, contact our co-chairs, Dave Aftandilian at [d.aftandilian@tcu.edu](mailto:d.aftandilian@tcu.edu) or Lauren Hickman at [lauren.hickman@tafb.org](mailto:lauren.hickman@tafb.org).

## SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - Tomatillos

Tomatillos are cousin to the tomato and can be grown in the summer - the plants love the heat! Learn more about these delightful, husked fruits below:

- Tomatillos are native to Mexico. Records of cultivation date back to 900 BC. This is likely before tomatoes were cultivated.
- Tomatillo plants sprawl very wide and do not like to be trellised. Plan for plenty of space for at least two plants because tomatillos are self-incompatible. This means they need another plant to pollinate and make fruit.
- Tomatillos grow with a thin husk surrounding the fruit. The fruit can be eaten at any size, but it is best when the fruit fills the husk and starts to break through. Yellow fruit can indicate over-ripeness, but it is still fine to eat.
- Tomatillos are great in salsa verde, roasted for soup and used in enchiladas!

To learn more about tomatillos: <https://foodprint.org/real-food/tomatillos/>

## Events & Classes

### NEXT CGUA MEETING

NO JULY MEETING  
August Get-Together: TBD

### TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

No General Meetings Until  
October 2023

### SAVE TARRANT WATER

DIY Drip Irrigation  
July 25th, 6-7pm

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

### FORT WORTH BOTANIC GARDENS

Learning About Herbs  
July 28th, 6-8pm

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

### GROW NORTH TEXAS

Fall Gardening Basics  
July 15th, 9-10:30am

<https://grownorthtexas.org/events>

### MINDFUL MARKET

July 22nd 11am-2pm

[www.coactntx.org/mindful-  
market](http://www.coactntx.org/mindful-market)

### COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays & Wednesdays  
8am to NOON

[www.cowtownmarket.com](http://www.cowtownmarket.com)

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



# URBAN FARM STAND OPENS IN FORT WORTH

BY SUSAN BARKER

Fort Worth has a new Farm Market Stand, y'all! Tabor Farms, located at 3400 Village Creek Road in Southeast Fort Worth, is now open on Saturdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm selling produce as farm fresh as it comes! This season you can buy potatoes, onions, garlic, squash, and tomatoes, and soon there will be purple hulled peas.

Cultivating food and community transformation, Tabor Farms is a project of Greater Mt. Tabor Christian Center. Senior Pastor Elvis Bowman has seen the dream of starting an urban farm through for the past eight years with determination, patience, and hope, overcoming a host of barriers in converting raw land covered in dense vegetation to a productive market farm with power, water, and parking.

Pastor Bowman collaborated with Grow Southeast to schedule volunteer workdays and to apply for grant funding for the improvements. Grow Southeast recently completed its second year of a farm apprenticeship program. Year one graduate, Jhamal Huckaby, joined the Tabor Farms team a year ago as Farm Manager, and year two graduate, Diamond Moss, is now the Farm Assistant. Together they operate the farm and lead volunteers who learn how to grow food while serving the mission of Tabor Farms to provide healthy food to the community. Volunteers are vital to their success! You can register to volunteer through the Grow Southeast events page [here](#).

While selling healthy food directly to the community from the farm marks a huge step in the success of those efforts, Pastor Bowman and Jhamal aren't stopping there. Their vision is of a community market farm hosting educational activities and gatherings, providing more jobs as the farm grows, and increasing their markets to offer produce subscriptions and a produce box delivery program for seniors.

Central to that vision is making healthy food more accessible in their community. Jhamal and his friend, Funky Town Fridge founder, Kendra Richardson, agreed that Tabor Farms would be an ideal site for the installation of a Funky Town Fridge. As a mutual aid organization, Funky Town Fridge feeds food apartheid neighborhoods across Fort Worth by installing refrigerators at select locations filled voluntarily by members of the community and accessible for free to any members of the community experiencing food insecurity. The Funky Town Fridge was installed at Tabor Farms on the day of their Farm Market Stand ribbon cutting last month and is ready to accept donations. For more information, check out <https://www.funkytownfridge.org/faq>.



"Do what we can, summer will have its flies."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



## JULY TO-DO

Plant pumpkins in order to harvest at Halloween

Set out fall tomatoes, peppers and eggplant late in the month

Start broccoli, cabbage, collards, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower seeds inside later in the month

Add a layer of straw or leaf mulch to help retain moisture and inhibit weed growth.

Harvest okra, eggplant, peppers, cucumbers and squash as they are ready.

Catch up on garden tasks or preserve some of your harvest during the hottest parts of the day!

# Savory Plum Salad

Recipe from Hannah Lamar Gibson

Enjoy one of Texas's most delicious summer fruits with a deeply flavorful, savory twist without turning on your stove or oven. This dish would make a great snack, BBQ side dish, or appetizer with cocktails.



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 small or 1 large ripe plum
- Parmesan or other hard, salty cheese, shaved
- Olive oil
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## PREPARATION

- Thinly slice your plum; arrange on a plate
- Thinly shave Parmesan and layer over plum slices
- Drizzle with olive oil and season with flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

## IN THE NEWS

- San Antonio considering Food Forests for underutilized land to cut food insecurity <https://www.tpr.org/news/2023-06-07/study-food-forests-on-underutilized-land-in-san-antonio-could-reduce-food-insecurity>
- The city of Kyle, Texas launches new, large community garden <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/community/kyle-post-oak-community-garden/269-3cfd8a82-20d9-4dfd-b289-843a8e940c74>
- Farmers celebrate the Texas legislature's passing of a meat share bill <https://farmandranchfreedom.org/we-made-it-now-what/>
- Market farmers adapt to hotter summers in unconventional ways <https://civileats.com/2023/06/27/some-farmers-are-skipping-tomatoes-and-eggplants-their-reasons-may-surprise-you/>

## GARDEN RESOURCES

### Local Nurseries:

[Archie's Gardenland](#)  
[Calloway's](#)

### Free Seeds:

[TAFB Community Garden Program:](#)  
[communitygarden@tafb.org](mailto: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

Okra: Clemson Spineless, Debbie's Mama's Okra

Winter Squash: Butternut, Delicata, Honeynut

Long Beans, Black-Eyed Peas



## FARM RESOURCES

### Organizations & Associations:

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance

[farmandranchfreedom.org](http://farmandranchfreedom.org)

GROW North Texas  
[grownorthtexas.org](http://grownorthtexas.org)

Natural Resource Conservation Service  
[nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)

Texas Center for Local Food  
[texaslocalfood.org](http://texaslocalfood.org)

Texas Department of Agriculture  
[texasagriculture.gov](http://texasagriculture.gov)

Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association  
[tofga.org](http://tofga.org)

USDA Farm Service Agency  
[fsa.usda.gov](http://fsa.usda.gov)

USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture  
[nifa.usda.gov/](http://nifa.usda.gov/)

## OPAL'S PICKS

If you're reading this, then I got my article in just under the wire for the newsletter! This summer has been a bumper crop of great-tasting Celebrity and heirloom tomatoes. We've spent the last few weeks harvesting up to 150 pounds every day. We've spent as much time delivering tomatoes as we've spent growing them. I'm falling behind on planting other crops because of the "Tomato Madness." I'm not complaining but I am getting a little tired of tomato sandwiches....

Summer is finally here in full force. The "feels like" temperature has stayed in the triple digits for the last several days. It's the time of year when we find out who is serious about farming. I was thinking about this as I'm searching for a new Assistant Farm Manager for Opal's Farm. Amber has been such a blessing to us! Tomatoes are one example. We're yielding the same number of tomatoes as last year with half the plants and space. We are producing far more on less land than ever. Biointensive farming has truly made a difference for Opal's.

That being said.... We are looking for someone who is willing to learn biointensive methods of farming. Urban farming using these methods can be hard work on the front end - building infrastructure and constantly improving soil health - and starting in a Texas summer isn't easy. Opal's Farm has some unique challenges as well (for one thing, we don't have any shade on the farm other than a canopy we set up on summer mornings to take water breaks and cool down!). Unlike other farms that usually include the owner's farmhouse, we can't just go into the house to take a break....

Production is extremely important to us. More produce means more access to fresh food for the communities we serve. However, more food without building community around Opal's Farm is inconsistent with our overall mission. Food makes it possible to build community just as community makes it possible for Opal's to grow more food! The ideal candidate for Assistant Manager will understand the need for community engagement as well. Food is what brings us together....

We are also partnering with Tarleton State University to start the "Time Served is Not Time Wasted" program for previously incarcerated individuals who want to work toward a college degree in Agricultural Science. Details and the start date are yet to be announced but should begin by Spring semester of 2024.

If you know anyone who might be interested in the Assistant Farm Manager position, volunteering, or being an intern, please call me at 817.333.8367.

Greg Joel

Farm Manager - Opal's Farm

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

