

OCTOBER 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 September 28th in-person at North Hi-Mount Elementary School. Eight members were in attendance.

Meeting Discussion & Announcements:

- Anne and Mary Jo provided an update on the grant that was awarded to the NTx School Garden Network and led the group in a brainstorming activity to gather insight from the group.
- The group also discussed potential meeting locations and guest speakers for the upcoming TCFPC Networking Meeting that will feature groups and discussion around community gardens & urban agriculture.
- Lauren provided a written update about TAFB's Community Garden Network.
- Becca provided updates on the Cowtown Farmers Market, their upcoming events and program activity.
- Dave announced that the working group has received grant funds from Texas Health Resources to provide garden and farm tours.
- A recap on the informal August 31st CGUA gathering was given.
- The meeting ended with a tour of the North Hi Mount school garden, led by Anne.

The next CGUA meeting will be on November 30th at 3pm. Location TBD.

Please plan to attend the TCFPC General Networking meeting on November 2nd in the evening. Details will be distributed as soon as possible. We would like to have a good showing from the CGUA working group to provide ample opportunities for networking and discussion.

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.

SEASONAL PRODUCE FUN FACTS - Mustard Greens

Mustard greens are a fantastic, spicy, cool season crop to grow in North Texas. They are generally very easy to grow, have few pests and can tolerate a wide range of temperatures. It is best to grow mustard greens in cooler weather because hot weather will encourage the plant to bolt. Bolting is when the plant will put out flowers to produce seed pods and end its lifecycle.

- Mustards are in the Brassica family along with broccoli, cauliflower, turnips, collards, cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts...and many other common crops!
- Mustard greens come in several shapes and sizes. There are varieties that are bright green and frilly. Others are purple with jagged edges. The Southern Giant variety is a deep purple with a crinkled texture and rounded edges. These beautiful leaves make a great addition to any garden!
- Mustard greens come from the same plant that produces mustard seeds used as a spice and to make the condiment and oil with the same name.
- Mustard greens are being used more often as cover crops to help combat soil-borne diseases and weeds. They have also been used in phytoremediation which is the use of plants to help remove toxins like heavy metals from the soil.
- Mustard greens can be enjoyed in several ways. They can be eaten fresh in a salad, added to soups, braised, sauteed, stir-fried or added to your favorite casseroles. They can also be pickled and frozen to preserve extra harvest!

Learn more cool facts about mustard greens at <https://facts.net/lifestyle/food/okra-facts/>.

Events & Classes

NEXT CGUA MEETING

November 30th, 3pm
Location: TBD

TCFPC GENERAL MEETING

TCFPC Networking Meeting
Nov. 2nd, Time & Location TBD

SAVE TARRANT WATER

Backyard Greenhouses
Oct. 19th, 6-7pm

<https://savetarrantwater.com/events/>

NTX SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

Fall Meetup

Oct. 14th, 9am-12pm

<https://ntxschoolgardennetwork.org/events>

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Organic Growers Conference
October 17th & 18th
Georgetown, TX

<https://williamson.agrilife.org/event/organic-growers-conference-2/>

COWTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays, 8am to NOON

www.cowtownmarket.com

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



NORTH TEXAS SCHOOL GARDEN NETWORK

BY LAUREN BUDENSKI

School is back in session, and that means that school gardens are, too! Here at North Texas School Garden Network, we are back in the swing of things: teaching, and supporting school garden teachers through meetups and events. We are a school garden support organization with a vision of a future where every school in Texas has a thriving garden.

In the past few months we moved closer to that future. Please celebrate with us while we take a moment to share our good news. The NTx School Garden Network has been selected as a recipient of a prestigious \$45,050 Farm to School grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)! The grant will be used to fund our meetups and keep them free for attendees, to establish a comprehensive online hub dedicated to edible gardening practices that will be accessible to educators across the region, as well as identify four Title 1 elementary campuses that will receive personalized onsite school garden support, including mentorship, lesson modeling, and garden development. We are extremely grateful to the USDA for supporting the mission of the NTx School Garden Network.

We are also hard at work creating our next round of free meetups! Mark your calendar! If you haven't been able to attend a NTx School Garden Network meetup, we hope that this will be the year! Meetups are fun, and packed with useful information and opportunities to meet gardeners from across the DFW area! Dates and themes for this year's meetups are below. We look forward to seeing you!

Saturday October 14
[Growing Connections](#)

Saturday, October 28th
[Farm to School Professional Development Workshop](#)

Saturday February 3
[Winter in a School Garden](#)

Saturday April 13
[Earth Day Every Day](#)

We are also excited to announce that we will be returning to the Growing School Garden Summit in San Diego, CA from March 15-18, 2024. We are excited to meet school gardeners from across the United States and learn from inspiring garden leaders. The Summit will take place overlooking the ocean at the Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines. We had a great time in 2022 and learned so much, we are excited to attend again!

Most importantly, fall planting has finally arrived and we are so excited. The students were finally able to plant their favorite seeds this last week of September, and they are thrilled to be able to stand outside without melting! We are all so excited for those cooler temperatures, and to grow all our favorite herbs and veggies again.



"There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October."

**NATHANIEL
HAWTHORNE**



OCTOBER TO-DO

Remove warm weather crops as they finish producing. Cut them from the garden to let the root ball break down and return to the soil.

Continue planting broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage transplants throughout the month.

Continue to direct-seed spinach, lettuce, peas, arugula, radishes, carrots, turnip and beets throughout the month.

Broadcast wildflower seeds throughout perennial beds late in the month.



Zucchini Walnut Pesto

Recipe: Hannah Lamar Gibson

Zucchini isn't normally associated with what goes into a typical pesto, but we gave it a shot and it totally works! So if you've got a big harvest of zucchini you're looking to use, or if you're wanting to try a new, fun way to utilize a vegetable or something from your CSA box, give zucchini walnut pesto a try and you won't be disappointed.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large zucchini squash, finely diced
- 1/4 cup walnuts, toasted
- 1/2 cup fresh basil
- 1/4 cup Parmesan, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, roasted
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Olive oil

PREPARATION

- Over medium heat, cook diced zucchini in 1 T olive oil to sweat out the excess water. Drain cooked zucchini and cool.
- Meanwhile, roast garlic and walnuts in oven at 375F, until fragrant. Remove to cool.
- Combine zucchini, walnuts, garlic, basil, Parmesan, lemon juice, and 1-2 T olive oil in food processor. Blend until smooth. Taste and season with salt or pepper to taste.
- Stir into pasta or risotto or spread onto bread for a big veggie sandwich!

IN THE NEWS

- Local news video coverage of two area community gardens and their developments <https://www.nbedfw.com/news/local/denton-community-garden-struggles-to-thrive/3319074/>
<https://www.fox4news.com/news/volunteers-work-to-expand-community-garden-that-feeds-veterans>
- Op-Ed on proposed measures for inclusivity and equity in Urban Ag <https://civileats.com/2023/09/21/op-ed-4-solutions-to-make-urban-ag-policies-more-equitable/>
- A detailed look at the many ways one urban farm serves the underserved in Chicago <https://civileats.com/2023/09/05/the-organic-urban-farm-growing-healthy-food-for-one-of-chicagos-most-underserved-neighborhoods/>

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

Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage

Carrots, Beets, Radishes

Mustard Greens, Collards, Kale, Lettuce



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

I've sitting here this evening (in the air conditioning!) thinking about where Opal's Farm has been and where we are going. The last couple of months have been hectic, but August is a time when things tend to slow down in the garden or at the farm. The Texas heat sees to that! Tomatoes begin to go dormant for the next few weeks, triple digit heat causes more casualties amongst the produce, and it seems like more farms are absent from the market each week as August goes on. Charlie Blaylock used to remind me that August is the time of year every farmer asks themselves why we do this. Texas summer tends to cause a crisis of conviction for even the best of us.

A friend emailed a quote the other day that put things back in perspective – "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant" (Robert Louis Stevenson). Opal's Farm moved to a smaller, more intensive means of farming this year. Many of our neighbors are still growing their crops, but a small amount of his



opalfarm@nityaunlimited.org. Keep on sowing those seeds you all!

Greg Joel
Farm Manager - Opal's Farm
<https://www.facebook.com/opalsfarm>