



Urban Ag Work Group Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

September 16, 2024

10:00 – 11:00 am

Introductions:

Attendees individually introduced themselves and their urban agriculture backgrounds and interests.

Fall & Over-Winter Gardening: A Mini Workshop

UAWG Co-Chairs

Cassandra and Amanda presented great information about Fall & Over-Winter gardening. Here are some key tips:

- The average “First Frost” is around November 1st. This date is important because vegetable crops have varying degrees of frost tolerance.
- Rule of thumb for Fall planting: add 14 days to the normal “days to maturity” listed on the seed packets of any crop to account for slower growth in cooler temperatures and waning daylight hours.
- The key to winter gardening is protecting crops from frost, wind, and snow.
- To create a cold frame, use PVC piping, ladder mesh, or thick metal frames. For added protection, you can also use a frost covering inside of cold frames.
- Cover crops do not need to be covered and can be undersown with your crops. After crops have begun growing (or have been transplanted), simply plant cover crops (like Daikon Radish) below them. When the cover crops grow, they will stay low to the ground and protect and enrich the soil.

[Click here to view the presentation.](#) [Click here for a Virginia Cooperative Extension resource.](#)

Topics of interest to the group

Group Discussion

In January 2024, the group expressed a desire to:

- Focus on composting
- Stay abreast of the County’s long-term urban agriculture plans
- Expand work group network/membership

- Plan in-person meetings/field trips
- Visit commercial operators located within the county
- Visit community gardens located within the county
- Visit Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture’s new community garden
- Visit Hidden Gems Farm
- Visit Fairfax County Park Authority’s new community gardens in Hogge Park and Lorton.
- Visit Composting site at I-66 Transfer Station
- Visit Suters Glen Permaculture Farm

Today, the group expressed a desire to:

- Continue sharing gardening tips
 - Especially while in the garden and on camera
- Host more in-person site visits
 - Consider a hybrid option for those who cannot attend but want to ask questions live.
- Record and share video tours of Work Group members’ gardens
 - Videos can serve as a virtual site visit or gardening tip
- Host more workshops
 - Host a “container gardening” workshop for gardeners who live in apartments.
- Consolidate the educational resources discussed in meetings on the FFC website
 - The Fairfax County Park Authority has 721 gardeners and 1000 people on their waitlist to rent a garden plot. They could all benefit greatly from the information and resources in Urban Ag. Work Group meetings.
 - The Master Gardeners host Plant Clinics, but it would be nice to be able to send videos of work group presentations and workshops to gardeners.

Member Updates

- **Juan Pablo**—Arcadia is hosting a gardening workshop in Spanish on 9/18 from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. [Click here to learn more and register.](#) [To view the flyer, click here.](#)
- **Juan Pablo**—Arcadia is hosting a flower-picking event on 9/20 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. [Click here to learn more and register.](#)
- **Juan Pablo**—Arcadia will soon begin hosting a monthly virtual gardening presentation and Q&A Session. Stay tuned for more info!
- **Amanda**— In October, the Urban Agriculture Work Group will combine with the Food Access & Literacy Work Group for “A Cross-Pollination Meeting–Food Waste Diversion: Food Waste Reduction, Food Rescue, and Composting.” More info to come. **Be on the lookout for this October meeting date!**

Next Urban Ag Work Group Meeting: November 18, 2024