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Contact Information

General Contact Information

Send staff an email at communitygarden@unt.edu or leave a message at 940-565-4587.

The garden staff consists of a team of three: the UNT WMGF Coordinator (Tristen Wheeler) who supervises the UNT Community Garden; the student garden facilitator who helps manage garden members and volunteers; and a graduate assistant who assists with marketing and operations. These staff members are available to assist you! Contact the garden staff team to request garden supplies, to ask for support or assistance, or to share ideas and concerns.

For general questions, feel free to communicate in the UNT Community Garden Teams chat.

Contact Information for Maintenance Emergencies

If there is an urgent matter related to garden maintenance, such as flooding from a pipe, please contact UNT Facilities at 940-565-2700. If you are calling them after operating hours, the call will be directed to the on-campus non-emergency police department (listed below).

Please communicate with the UNT Community Garden staff about any garden maintenance emergencies after contacting UNT facilities!

UNT Campus and Denton Police Departments

The local emergency number is 911; please call this number in case of any emergency!

If there is an urgent matter, but not a true emergency, call the UNT Campus police. The UNT Campus Police non-emergency phone number is 940-565-3000.

The non-emergency Denton Police department is also an option: 940-349-8181.

Wildlife Rescue/Rehabilitation

For any wildlife-related concerns, please text (940) 442-8289. This is the text number for Diana Leggett, the local wildlife rehabilitator for Wildlife Rescue Texas. If the situation is not urgent, you can also email wildrescuetexas@gmail.com.

Remember to keep the UNT Community Garden staff aware of any wildlife concerns in the garden. You may also consider posting a message to the UNT Community Garden Teams if it is something everyone should know about.
General Garden Safety Recommendations

Emergencies:

**In case of an emergency, call 911!**

For urgent concerns, see list of contact options below:

- UNT Police (non-emergency): 940-565-3000
- Denton Police (non-emergency): 940-349-8181
- UNT Facilities: 940-565-2700
- UNT Community Garden Staff: 940-565-4587
- Wild Rescue (Denton wildlife rehabilitator): (940) 442-8289 (text is preferred)

For detailed information about contacts, see the “Contact Information” section of this resource binder.

Tools:

- Use tools as they are intended to be used and use the right tool for the job. Not sure about this? Ask in our Community Garden Teams!
- Be aware of where you put down tools and how you put them down. Set tools down out of walkways and with any sharp edges or points facing towards the ground, not up.
- Point sharp tools like clippers towards the ground when carrying and away from yourself and other people while using.
- Wear gloves! When dealing with spiky plants, plants that you do not recognize, or insects, wear gardening gloves for your own protection.

Critters:

The animal life in the community garden is positive! No need to be worried about our non-human friends. That said, it’s still wise to be aware of safety concerns that could arise due to critters:

- Keep an eye out for snakes and leave them alone if you come across one.
- If you have an allergy to bee stings, be sure to carry an EpiPen and let some other garden members know so they can look out for you.
- Leave bunnies, birds, and other animals alone. This is best for you and them!
  - If you see an animal that is injured or in distress, contact the wildlife rehabilitator listed under Emergency Numbers above.

Extreme Temperatures:

Please see Extreme Heat resources in the following pages.
**Basic First-Aid:**

Please see First-Aid kit information in the following pages.

**Other Safety Considerations:**

Be up to date on Tetanus vaccinations.

Always wear closed-toed shoes and other protective clothing as needed.
Basic First Aid

A first aid kit is located in the community garden shed. It is next to the fertilizer sprays, on the shaving to the right when entering. It looks like this:

For a basic cut or small bleeding wound:

If you are assisting someone with a cut, be sure to wear a pair of the disposable gloves available in the first aid kit.

Wash with clean water (not the hose!) or wipe with a sterile alcohol pad.

If the cut is continuing to bleed, apply pressure using a gauze pad or small piece of gauze.

Once bleeding has slowed or stopped, cover with a band aid. If cut is too large for a band aid, please seek medical attention.
For additional first aid assistance, review the First Aid Emergency Guide provided inside the first aid kit.

Seek medical attention if any injuries cannot be treated with basic care.

As always, call 911 if an injury or illness shows any sign of being serious!
Extreme Heat Safety

What is extreme heat and why do we need to be aware of it?

Extreme heat is when temperatures are much higher than normal. This happens during the summer months in North Texas. When temperatures rise to this very high level, our bodies struggle to regulate a normal body temperature, which can lead to serious health complications. Overheating can be fatal, so it is important that we take extreme heat conditions seriously!

Ways to stay safe and cool during an extreme heat event:

- Find a place with air conditioning and remain indoors as much as possible. If air conditioning is not available in your home, spend time in an air conditioned public space
- Take cool showers or baths and wear light clothing
- Avoid the use of your stove or oven; this will help to keep the temperature cooler in your home
- If you are outside, find shade!
- Drink a lot of water and avoid drinking caffeinated or alcoholic beverages
- Watch for signs of heat-related illnesses in yourself and those around you

Heat related illnesses:

*Heat Cramps*

- Symptoms to watch for include muscle pain and/or spasms in the stomach, legs, and/or arms
- What to do about heat cramps:
  - Go to a cooler location
  - Drink a cool sports drinks with salt and sugar

*Heat Exhaustion*

- Symptoms to watch for include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, or vomiting
- What to do about heat exhaustion:
  - Take steps to cool off like going to an air-conditioned place or taking a cool shower
  - Lie down
  - Drink a cool sports drink with salt and sugar

*Heatstroke*

- Symptoms to watch for include extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees), red, hot, and dry skin with no sweat, rapid, strong pulse, dizziness, confusion, or unconsciousness
- What to do about heatstroke:
  - Call 911 and/or get the person to an emergency room right away.
  - Keep the person cool by any means possible until emergency medical personnel arrive
ADDITIONAL EMERGENCY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE UNT EMERGENCY GUIDEBOOK

emergency.unt.edu/emergency-guidelines-0

PLEASE SCAN FOR ACCESS
Harvesting Guide
This is a short guide on how to harvest the crops in the Community Garden. If you’re unsure which technique to use, you can use a search engine to find information and pictures of whatever you’re harvesting.

When you are harvesting leaves or stems, make sure you don’t harvest more than 25-30% of the plant at any one time. This allows it plenty of resources to grow back.

Growth Node

We harvest many of our herbs (mint, oregano, basil) and some greens (New Zealand spinach, bokoboko spinach) by pruning at a growth node. This effectively turns a single stem into two stems, as the plant will stop growing where you pruned it and send out two or four new stems from the growth node.

We want many of our plants to be bushier, so cut back along the edges of the plant. If a plant is overhanging the edge of a pot or plot, cut it back at a growth node slightly behind the line. It will branch out from there.
Fruits and vegetables (eggplant, tomato, strawberry, squash, cucumber, and so forth) have a fruiting body that’s connected to the plant via a noticeable stem. If it has a smaller stem (ground cherries, strawberries), you’ll know it’s ripe when the stem breaks with little to no pressure. For thicker stems (eggplant, squash), cut the stem close to where it meets the rest of the plant.
Cut and come again

Kale, cabbage, Swiss chard, spinach, komatsuna, and others are “cut and come again” which means they will continually regrow throughout the season. We harvest from the outside in – that is, the larger leaves furthest from the center of the plant. Cut to about ¼ inch above the surface of the soil. The plant will continue to put out new leaves in the center.

Leaves along stems

Red Malabar spinach is a great example of harvesting leaves that grow on long stems. Cut the leaf just above where it joins the stem.
**Leader**

Some herbs (thyme, rosemary) grow a longer main stem with shorter stems along one side. This longer stem is called a *leader*. We cut the auxiliary stems just above where they meet the leader.

**Buds**

With broccoli and cauliflower, we eat the inflorescence (flowering) part of the plant while it’s still a bud. Slice off the top a bit below where the smaller stalks all join to form the main stalk. However, you can also eat the leaves from cauliflower and broccoli! Harvest them as you would kale or other cut-and-come-again greens.

**Root vegetables**

Onions, beets, carrots, radishes, and others are root vegetables – we eat the large, fleshy part that grows underground. Dig up root vegetables when the size and color of the top of the root poking out above ground indicate ripeness; you can often find this information on seed packets, so check the seed packet info binder in the shed. You can eat the greens from most root vegetables; harvest a few leaves here and there while the root is still growing, or eat the greens when you pull up the vegetable.
Weed ID Guide

Bermuda grass (Native beds and plots)

Our most common weed! Bermuda grass tends to grow in from the edges of our plots. Pull it all out – roots, stolons (runners), and rhizomes (rootstalks). Follow long pieces back to their roots, put your fingers on either side of a clump of roots, and pull backwards (i.e. towards the deepest part of the roots you can find). You can also use a 3-prong weeder to dig under roots, stolons, and rhizomes and yank them out.
Crab grass (Native beds and plots)

A large, clump-forming grass common in the garden. Grasp firmly by the base, gathering all the blades into a bunch in your hand, and pull with a twisting motion. You can also use a 3-prong weeder to get into the root ball and yank it out.
Nut grass/ nutsedge (Native beds and plots)

Very common, but also easy to remove if caught early! Dig around the base a little until you can see the roots. Grasp by the whitish bulb-shaped based and pull – this grass can easily regrow from its base if you don’t pull it out completely, but if you catch it while it still only has a few blades, it’s simple to get rid of the whole clump.
Other invasive grasses

Quackgrass (Native beds and plots)

Deal with quackgrass as you would crab grass.
St. Augustine grass (Native beds and plots)

Use the same procedure to remove St. Augustine grass as for removing Bermuda grass.
Take out centipede grass as you would Bermuda grass.
Dallisgrass (Native beds and plots)

Deal with Dallisgrass as you would crab grass.
Broad-leaf and succulent weeds

**Henbit (Plots)**

This fast-growing weed will spread aggressively unless taken out. Trace the stems to the base. Dig around the base a little until you can see the roots. Grasp firmly by the base, gathering all the stems into a bunch in your hand, and pull with a twisting motion. Henbit is edible! Young leaves, shoots, stems, and flowers can all be eaten raw; tastes somewhat similar to celery.
Carpetweed (Native beds and plots)

Less common, this weed will quickly “carpet” the native beds if left unchecked. Trace the stems to the base. Dig around the base a little until you can see the roots. Grasp firmly by the base, gathering all the stems into a bunch in your hand, and pull with a twisting motion. Carpetweed is edible! Eat the young leaves and stems cooked with other greens.
We recommend wearing gloves to remove dandelions, as their leaves are spiky at the edges. Yank out dandelions using the two-pronged long-shanked weeders; get the prongs under the base of the plant, right where it joins the root. Every part of the dandelion is edible! Add raw young leaves or flowers to a salad, boil older leaves, or roast the roots!
Spotted spurge (Plots)

This low-growing succulent can cover large areas if not pulled out! Trace the stems to the base. Dig around the base a little until you can see the roots. Grasp firmly by the base, gathering all the stems into a bunch in your hand, and pull with a twisting motion.
Sunflowers will grow all over the garden every spring. They’re easy to pluck – just grab by the base of the stalk and pull. If you pull them while they still only have 2-4 tiny leaves, they’re edible as microgreens! Any larger than this, though, and they’ll become bitter and tough.
Clover (Native beds)

Clover will quickly spread and crowd out other plants; you’ll often find it hiding among the yarrow, where it can be very tricky to get rid of without ripping out yarrow as well.
You’ll want to trace the clover down to a root, *gently* disentangle it from any yarrow growing over/around it, and yank it out by the roots. If you find it catching on the yarrow or other plants when you try to remove it, follow it backwards to a more distant root and pull from there.
Mock strawberry (Native beds)

Like clover, this weed acts as a smothering ground cover and takes up space amongst the yarrow. It sends out “runners” much like clover and garden strawberry. Get rid of it using the procedure described for clover. You can eat the leaves and berries raw, cook the leaves with other greens, or dry the leaves and use as an herbal tea.
Mental Health Benefits of Gardening

Get Growing: How Physical Activity Affects Mental Health

One of the most important parts of taking care of our mental wellbeing is being physically active. Gardening offers opportunities to engage in physical activity, from the relatively low-impact (such as chopping up compost and collecting seeds) to the vigorous (turning compost piles, digging holes for transplants, heavy weeding).

Exercise increases blood flow to the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, or HPA axis - a term used to represent the interaction between the hypothalamus, pituitary gland, and adrenal glands; it plays an important role in the body's response to stress. The pathway of the axis results in the production of cortisol (stress hormone).

Cortisol is responsible for systemic inflammation. We are learning more every day about how inflammation is at the heart of so many of our bodily illnesses and issues. Exercise reduces cortisol, thus reducing inflammation and strengthening your immune system and your ability to respond to mood issues.

Physical exertion increases brain-derived neurotropic factor (BDNF) which promotes brain growth especially in the hippocampus which is negatively affected by mental illness (and cortisol); BDNF enhances learning; antidepressants also increase BDNF. Physical exertion releases endocannabinoids, which are also important in learning. Gardening might help raise your GPA!

Being physically active results in increased tolerance for frustration and discomfort; promotes feelings of mastery, competency, accomplishment; and keeps the mind occupied - even gentle physical activity.

“Why does gardening seem to be so beneficial to health? It combines physical activity with social interaction and exposure to nature and sunlight. Sunlight lowers blood pressure as well as increasing vitamin D levels in the summer, and the fruit and vegetables that are produced have a positive impact on the diet. Working in the garden restores dexterity and strength, and the aerobic exercise that is involved can easily use the same number of calories as might be expended in a gym. Digging, raking and mowing are particularly calorie intense; there is a gym outside many a window. The social interaction provided by communal and therapeutic garden projects for those with learning disabilities and poor mental health can counteract social isolation” (Thompson, 2018, p. 202).

A Fruitful Relationship Between Gardening and Mental Health

Simply looking at nature reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and lowers your blood pressure! Therapeutic gardens have been part of hospitals and places of healing for thousands of years.

You may have heard of the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku or “forest bathing.” “It refers to a healing technique that restores the physical and psychological health of the human body through a “five senses experience” (vision, smell, hearing, touch, and taste) when the body is exposed to...”
a forest environment” (Wen et al., 2019). Sunlight also has positive effects on mood (Kent et al., 2009).

“…the positive association with gardening was observed for a wide range of health outcomes, such as reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, stress, mood disturbance, and BMI, as well as increases in quality of life, sense of community, physical activity levels, and cognitive function” (Soga et al., 2017, pp.97-98).

“In two studies at the University of Essex, 108 people gardened, walked, ran, cycled, and got involved in conservation activities. Of these, 94% reported benefits to their mental health: ‘I feel better about myself and have more of a sense of achievement’; ‘It improves my depression, helps me be more motivated, and gives me satisfaction in doing things’; ‘I feel refreshed and alive.’ 90% of participants who went on a nature walk reported an elevation in self-esteem…” (Chalquist, 2009).

S.J. Gillihan writing for Psychology Today notes the following benefits of gardening (my comments included in parentheses):

1. Practicing acceptance
2. Moving beyond perfectionism
3. Developing a growth mindset
4. Connecting with others
5. Connecting to your world
6. Bathing in Green (shinrin-yoku) The results show that forest environments promote lower concentrations of cortisol, lower pulse rate, lower blood pressure, greater parasympathetic nerve activity, and lower sympathetic nerve activity than do city environments.
7. Being present (mindfulness)
8. Physical exercise
9. Reducing stress
10. Eating healthfully (our produce is actually more nutritious than what you get in a store)

Listen to this podcast about gardening and mental health!

References


participants: A REGARDS cross-sectional study. Environmental Health, 8(1), 34-34. https://doi.org/10.1186/1476-069X-8-34


iNaturalist Guide

Steps to join iNaturalist:

1. Download iNaturalist from the app store.
2. Create an account using Email, Facebook, or Google.
3. Open the menu, which is in the top left of the screen.
4. Select 'Projects' Search for 'University of North Texas Community Garden'.
5. Click the 'Join' icon towards the top left to participate in our project!

Steps to add an observation:

1. Go to the main app menu. Select the green '+' button that reads 'New Observation'
2. Import a picture or sound recording.
3. Identify what you see. You have the option to view suggestions to identify your observation to a level you feel confident about. You can also use the compare function to assist you in correctly identifying the species of your observation!
4. Before submitting your observation, add details so the data you submit is complete. You can add notes, verify the date, select a location, and list if it is captive or cultivated*. Make sure you add a location to your observation. If in the garden, search for and select 'UNT Community Garden.'

**Note: The iNat app is used to collect data about wildlife. This app is not used to document captive animals or cultivated plants intentionally grown by humans. If you document a species that is not naturally occurring, make sure to select 'captive/cultivated' on the observation details.
**Organic Pest Control**

**Ants**

**Drenching method:**

Brush away the top of the ant mound (use a tool not your hands!) to expose the inner nest. Soak the entire nest and mound area with the hose for about 30mins. Repeat as needed.

**Diatomaceous earth spraying:**

In the garden shed with the insecticides, there is a clear yellow puffer with pleated sides and a nozzle. It is filled with diatomaceous earth (a white powder). Shake the puffer, then squeeze it (top and bottom) and the powder will puff out of the nozzle; hold the puffer so that the nozzle is at the bottom. Shake/tap the puffer between puffs. Combine mound disturbance (scraping/digging into the ant piles) with puffing the diatomaceous earth. Use the diatomaceous earth inside and just outside your plot, and don’t water where you applied the powder for at least 24 hours. Reapply every 1-2 weeks as needed.

**Bucket mound removal:**

Add a few tablespoons worth of Dr. Bronner’s soap into one of the white buckets in the garden shed, then fill with water. Use a shovel to scoop the entire ant mound into the bucket. Let sit for a few minutes to make sure all ants have drowned. Empty the bucket into a grassy area away from garden plots.

**Remember that all pest control methods and products used in Community Garden plots must be approved by garden staff before use!**