



## 2020 Annual Summary

**Mission:** To enhance university and community engagement, promote sustainable food production, and educate on health and nutrition, environmental stewardship, and organic gardening techniques.

### GENERAL SUMMARY:

The [HSC Community Garden](#), a program of [HSC Sustainability](#), completed its seventh year of operation. We would like to thank the Facilities Management team for valuing the garden and helping to maintain the garden grounds. We also appreciate the Sustainability Committee and Garden Steering Committee for offering a range of support throughout the year.

Due to COVID-19, we have had to adjust our gardening program this year in order to keep gardeners engaged, resume our harvest donations, and tend to the overall garden while still adhering to HSC guidelines as well as city and state mandates. Despite these unforeseen challenges, the garden had many successes and received recognition for our efforts to support food security and encourage gardening in Fort Worth during the pandemic. This year, the garden was featured in a variety of news outlets including NBC 5, [Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#), [360 West](#), [GreenSourceDFW](#), Telemundo and also received the Innovation Award in November from the City of Fort Worth for Land Redevelopment. We are proud of our accomplishments. The garden continues to be a space to connect with others and support people's health and well-being.

### FOOD BANK DONATIONS:

Since the garden's inception, we have prioritized providing fresh harvest donations to the community. COVID-19 increased food insecurity throughout Fort Worth and we were motivated to increase our donations during the pandemic. For 2020, we set a goal to donate 300 lb of our garden harvest to the community. This year we exceeded our goal and donated 386 lb of food! Harvests went primarily to the [North Inter-Community Agency \(NICA\)](#) food pantry. In the past, we were able to donate some harvests to the [HSC Student Pantry](#). After April, the student pantry stopped accepting fresh foods due to the pandemic. In turn, gardeners donated canned goods, prepacked foods, and toiletries throughout the year to the student pantry instead. Recognizing the need throughout the community,

donations were also given to other community organizations which included a local church and the [HSC Healthy Start](#) program. The chart shows a summary of the garden's harvest donations excluding the canned goods and other items donated throughout the year.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Community Organizations</b>	75.25	121	243.25	345.25	133.5	128.5	354.25
<b>HSC Student Pantry</b>	N/A	N/A	71.5	135.5	49.38	21	31.25
<b>Total</b>	75.25	121	314.75	480.75	182.88	149.5	385.5
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>							<b>1709.63</b>

To ensure consistent food donations for 2021, we dedicated one garden plot for demonstration purposes and started growing in large planters throughout the garden where the food will be donated or accessed by people in need who visit the garden. We will continue donating to NICA and plan to resume providing harvests to the HSC student pantry and give produce to HSC Healthy Start participants for the upcoming year.

#### VOLUNTEER HOURS:

The HSC Community Garden continues to thrive due to volunteer support. Our volunteers learn more about growing and sustainable practices, offer their expertise and guidance, and have a hands-on experience beautifying the garden for many to enjoy. This year we relied heavily on existing gardeners to volunteer their time to maintain the overall



garden, keep plants watered, and harvest. Even though we cancelled our typical work days throughout the year, we were approached by HSC groups and students to support our efforts to keep the garden growing. Celina led the Women's Health and Pediatrics program on a tour in January and they helped to harvest this summer. TCU and HSC MD students volunteered to tidy up the garden at the end of the summer. This fall, a few student volunteers helped out on small cleanup projects and planting throughout the season. Volunteer interest was high, but we could not accommodate everyone that reached out to us this year. Despite limited volunteer opportunities, we estimated 200 volunteer hours for the year!

Event	Length of Event (hrs)	People	# of Events	Total Hours
<b>Harvest Days</b>	2	2	6	24
<b>Gardener Volunteer Commitment</b>	0.5	34	6	102
<b>Work Days</b>	2	28	0	56
<b>Event Support</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Steering Committee Meetings</b>	1	5	3	15
<b>Planning Committee Work</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Compost Turning</b>	0.5	1	6	3
				<b>200</b>

### COMPOST BINS = WASTE DIVERSION:

We have a 3-bin composting system. The bins and maintenance are overseen by a dedicated volunteer and Celina. Through our collaboration with [Tarrant County Food Policy Council \(TCFPC\)](#) and the [City of Fort Worth](#), we continued collecting coffee grounds from local coffee shops, Ampersand and Starbucks. However, the program was on hiatus from May to September. This Fall, we started collecting food scraps from Snappy Salads as well. We have diverted an estimated 423 lb of coffee grounds and 170 lb of food scraps from the landfill this year alone! It is converted to rich, nourishing compost for our gardeners to use. A special thanks to community member, Sally Dieb, for her ongoing commitment to composting. We look forward to increasing our waste diversion in 2021.



### SUSTAINABLE FEATURES:

In an effort to promote environmental stewardship, we have designated areas to support native flora and fauna. These areas promote a healthy garden ecosystem that attract pollinators and beneficial insects. We also continue to incorporate regenerative practices and features that encourage sustainability, such as:

- Water catchment
- Repurposed materials
- Composting
- Seed Saving
- Natural and organic products



### EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

The HSC Community Garden is committed to providing educational opportunities for our gardeners, campus, and local community. This year, restrictions related to COVID-19, prevented us from hosting workdays, workshops, and large tours as we have in the past. Though engagement was a challenge, there were opportunities to deepen relationships with gardeners. In February, Celina assisted gardeners in preparing their garden beds for spring planting. Archie's Gardenland has been a longtime supporter and donated several bags of natural soil amendments for the event. Throughout the spring and summer, Celina extend her hours in the garden to connect with gardeners in a personable way, she provided support for growers sheltering in place, and tended to their beds. She also communicated regularly with gardeners through the weekly garden newsletter, phone conversations and emails providing growing techniques and advice.

To engage with the broader community, we provided educational content and presentations through virtual conferences. In a response to COVID-19, Celina created an online flyer promoting the benefits of growing food and describing ways to engage in the local food movement for HSC's annual [Earth Day](#) event in April. This summer, she submitted a video garden tour and a presentation about the intersections between growing food and activism for [Dig Deep: A Conference for Growers](#). We also utilized social media to share information about our harvests and composting program. For 2021, we plan to create more on-line and virtual content to further our educational outreach. This year, we postponed the Lena Pope Early Learning Center gardening programming, but still maintained their garden plot. Celina helped facilitate garden book donations to Lena Pope through the [Blue Zones Project](#). She also plans to transition their plot to a perennial sensory garden that the children can enjoy through sight, smell, taste, and touch.



To stay connected to the larger food movement in the area, Celina participates in the Community Garden and Urban Agriculture working group with the Tarrant County Food Policy Council. They look for ways to connect with other growers, share resources, sponsor events, and advocate for policies that increase food accessibility. CGUA is brainstorming strategies to ensure the longevity of growing projects and revitalizing underused garden spaces.

Overall, this year offered ways for us to expand the way we engage with our community, helped strengthen our relationships, and increase our food security efforts.

### THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

Thank you to the following partners for their generous donations to our garden over the last 7 years. Their support has positively impacted our community and helped us to fulfill our university's mission to create solutions for a healthier community! A special thank you to [Tarrant Area Food Bank Community Garden](#) and [Archie's Gardenland](#) for donating plants, compost, and fertilizers this year!

- Archie's Gardenland
- Calloway's Nursery
- Four Star Café
- Freehling's Tree Service
- Silver Creek Materials
- Saint-Emilion Restaurant
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Tarrant County
- Tarrant Area Food Bank Community Garden
- HSC Facilities Management
- HSC Sustainability Committee



**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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Visit our website: [unthsc.edu/communitygarden](http://unthsc.edu/communitygarden)

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