



FAIRFAX
Food Council
healthy • accessible • affordable

Community Food News Fall 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to our new Fairfax Food Council seasonal newsletter! We'll be sharing news of urban gardening, food access, and food literacy activities and resources from around Fairfax County. If you have something you would like to share in the next newsletter, please submit to Melissa Aune at fcnewsletter@gmail.com by November 15th.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, please email fcnewseltter@gmail.com.

We encourage you to share this newsletter widely with all who may be interested! If you have any issues accessing the information in this newsletter, please let us know by emailing HDFairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Fairfax Food Council Urban Agriculture Upcoming Work Group Meetings:

September 14, 2020 - 10:00 a.m. –11:30 a.m. - online meeting

October 19, 2020 - 10:00 a.m. –11:30 a.m. - online meeting

November 16, 2020 - 10:00 a.m. –11:30 a.m. - online meeting

Fairfax Food Council Food Access & Literacy Upcoming Work Group Meetings:

September 30, 2020 - 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. - online meeting

October 28, 2020 - 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. - online meeting

November 18, 2020 - 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. - online meeting

Want to attend? Both the Urban Agriculture and Food Access & Literacy Work Group meetings of the Fairfax Food Council are open to the public and anyone interested in getting more engaged in these issues or Work Groups is welcome to attend. Locations for meetings are likely going to be done via video connection, so please email

HDFairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov for information about the location and/or how to 'attend' a meeting.

Like us on FACEBOOK!!

The Fairfax Food Council publishes content on FB that connects, educates & informs our community. PLEASE (pretty please) "[Like](#)" us and be a part of our growing community!

Fairfax Food Council Leadership Update

As she steps down as Chair, the Fairfax Food Council is grateful for the solid leadership Chris Garris, Programs Director for Britepaths, has provided over the last three years. She has been a staunch advocate for equitable and healthy food access for all. In her role as Chair of the Fairfax Food Council for the last 3 years, she has provided steady leadership and dedication to supporting increased and improved food access throughout the county by partnering with numerous organizations and county agencies. She also was a key player in the impactful 2019 Food Equity Summit, as well as the smooth transition of project managers, providing valuable mentoring to ensure continuity of the Food Council's work. Her commitment to healthy food access has been inspiring and contagious. Many thanks for her valued service. The Food Council is grateful she will continue her service on the Steering Committee and Food Access & Literacy Work Group.

The Food Council is very pleased that the baton has been passed on to extremely capable and committed Co-Chairs: **Annie Turner**, Executive Director of Food For Others and **Kate Garsson**, Manager of Program Outreach & Education for Inova. Both Annie and Kate have been very engaged in the work of the Food Council over the last several years, serving on the Food Council's Executive Committee, as well as serving the Fairfax community in their leadership roles through their respective organizations. There is a great deal of energy and excitement around the leadership and passion they bring to the work of the Food Council.



Save the Date to Stuff the Bus in September!

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a dramatic rise in the demand for food from area nonprofits. To help meet this demand, the frequency and variation of Stuff the Bus food drives is increasing. In May, drives were held on two days at 21 locations throughout the county and the response was immense, with 33.6 tons of food collected for area nonprofits.

On **Saturday, September 12** and **Saturday, September 26**, Fastran buses will again be parked at **21 locations from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** to collect food donations. Buses will be located in less-frequented lots throughout the county, including many Board of Supervisors' offices and the Fairfax County Government Center, to allow donors to comply with social distancing recommendations.

For more information, including donation sites, a list of most-wanted items and information about donating virtually, visit bit.ly/FfxStufftheBus

Community Stories

We are excited to share the extraordinary efforts of community partners as they have worked to increase access to food, promote urban agriculture, and utilize innovative partnerships to address the needs of citizens throughout the county. Thank you for all you are doing!

Local organization feeds thousands & needs your help building a garden

[The Good News Community Kitchen](#) is launching the Good News Garden in Burke on 1.3 acres of land donated by Rob Lin and Occoquan Airbnb. TGNCK is a local organization that aims to rebuild and strengthen communities by fighting hunger one meal at a time. In 2019, it fed 16,000 people and partnered with 12 Title I schools in Prince William and Fairfax counties. During the pandemic, TGNCK has served more than 635 *additional* families. While staff sustains the organization's existing programs, founder and CEO Mercedes Kirkland-Doyle is focused on getting the garden up and running. She's seeking volunteers who can

- Build raised beds out of recycled pallet wood
- Plant, water, weed and harvest fresh vegetables and herbs
- Sponsor the project or make a donation in any amount

"As a direct initiative to fight against hunger, it is imperative we provide our most fragile residents with fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs in order to attain and sustain a strong immune system," Kirkland-Doyle says. "We are on a mission to establish our own community garden so that we can provide fresh and healthy food to our low- to moderate-income-based residents in need."

If you can help, contact TGNCK at office@tgnck.org or fill out the [volunteer application](#) online.



Future site of Good News Community Kitchen garden in Burke

Grow a Row featured on NBC 4 news!

Fairfax Food Council Urban Agriculture Co-Chair Stacey Evers and Project Manager Diane Charles [were featured on local news NBC 4](#). Grow a Row FC is a program created by Evers through which local community members can donate homegrown produce to local food pantries including Food for Others. GrowaRowFC.com provides many resources to interested gardeners and participants including gardening information, seeds, and multiple drop-off locations for gardeners. To date, Grow a Row participants have donated over 500 pounds to local food pantries. For more information, visit GrowaRowFC.com or the [Grow a Row Facebook page](#).

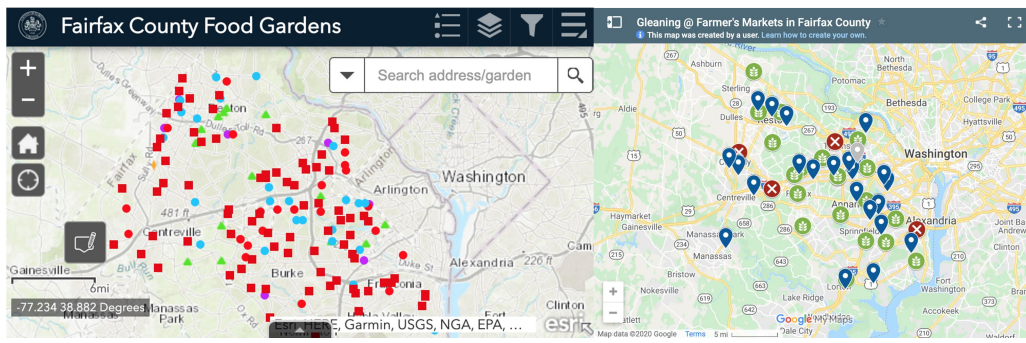


FCPS Students receive Grow at Home Kits

Over the summer, thousands of children received Grow at Home kits with the help of FCPS Get2Green and FCPS Food and Nutrition Services. These kits included green bean seeds, a bag of soil, planting instructions, and an activity kit for children to enjoy at home with their families. These kits were distributed to children at FCPS meal sites throughout the county. The activity packets, as well as instructional videos are available for viewing and download [here](#). Thank you FCPS!



Check it out: Featured News and Resources



Fairfax County Food Council Maps

The Fairfax Food Council has two interactive maps available through the Fairfax Food Council website. The [Fairfax County Food Gardens map](#) features food-producing gardens and documents the many schools, faith communities, workplaces and neighborhoods that are vegetable gardening and farming in Fairfax County. If there isn't a garden near you and you'd like to explore starting one, contact the Fairfax Food Council. Map edits can be sent to: HDFairfaxFoodCouncil@fairfaxcounty.gov

The [Gleaning Network map](#) provides links to the Fairfax County Farmers Markets and the organizations who glean (i.e., collect) fresh produce from vendors at the markets and deliver it

to community organizations. Please consider helping to glean this fresh produce! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the organization directly using the information listed in the map. Tax credits may be available for produce donations. Learn more about [Virginia Food Crop Donation Tax Credit Guidelines](#). Thank you to [Food for Others](#) for coordinating and tracking these efforts.

A [map of Food Resources](#) is also available on the Fairfax Food Council website. This map was designed to help Fairfax County individuals and families find the nearest food resources to their location. The food resources map was developed by Neighborhood and Community Services. For more information about food resources in Fairfax County, please see Fairfax County's [Neighborhood and Community Services site](#).

Seed Saving Workshop

In July, the Fairfax Food Council hosted an informative workshop, "Seed-Saving for Everyone: Easy to do, great for your garden" with guest speaker Kathy Jentz, Editor of the Washington Gardener magazine. We wanted to share this link to the recorded presentation.

The Fairfax Food Council is grateful for our partner, Virginia Cooperative Extension, who provided the platform for the workshop, edited it and developed it into this recorded treasure.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6v-xn2Gjok&feature=youtu.be>

Fairfax County Proposed Agritourism Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Fairfax County Zoning Administration staff, Sara Morgan, Bill Mayland and Austin Gastrell (who specializes in gardening-related issues) joined the August meeting of the Food Council's Urban Agriculture Work Group. During the meeting they presented their work on modernizing the zoning code as it applies to agriculture and ag tourism in our county. In addition, the zoning staff answered questions, and received feedback on proposed zoning ordinance amendments. The proposed changes can be found [here](#).

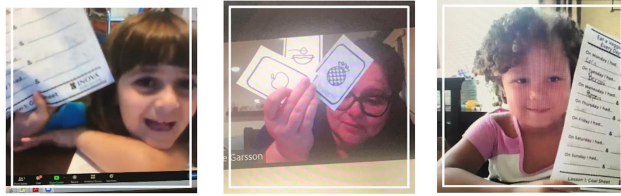
Fairfax Household Water Testing Program

Register by September 10, noon - space is limited

Public water is tested every day. What about your well water? Clean, safe water is essential to health. Beyond bacteria and other obvious contaminants, well water can contain high levels of sodium, heavy metals, etc. Know what's in your water to take control of your health. This year's program is slightly modified to accommodate social distancing guidelines, with the major change being virtual orientation and result interpretation sessions via Zoom. Register [online](#).

Fairfax VCE - SNAP-ED Fall Programming

The Virginia Family Nutrition Program, SNAP-Ed, is conducting outreach to school partners for fall virtual programming options. Programs are available featuring a variety of topics for children in preschool through 12th grade. These virtual classes are mainly targeted towards eligible schools and out of school partners. Should you have questions, or wish to hear more regarding these programming options, please contact Kirsten Kelley, MS, CLC, SNAP-Ed Agent at kirstenk19@vt.edu, or call 703-746-5542. Additional information is available online at <https://eatSMARTmoveMoreVA.org>.



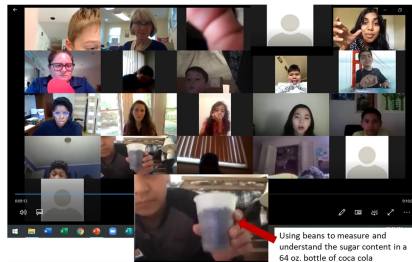
Students and Teachers During Virtual Classes

Inova Healthy Plate Club goes virtual

In August, the Inova Healthy Plate Club piloted three virtual programs with about 70 students in 1st – 6th grade. Two of the pilots were with Food Council members Belong! and Britepaths. Students participated in four classes to learn about food groups, reading nutrition facts labels, and choosing healthy snacks and drinks. Most of the classes were taught through Zoom, and there was a pre-recorded option. Parent feedback included “his takeaway was to respect his body and take a little more responsibility to feed himself well” and “they voluntarily asked for more water instead!” If your school or organization would like to reserve a spot on the fall schedule, please contact Kate.Garsson@inova.org.

Nutrition Services from Giant Food

Visit the Giant website to register for FREE online classes on a variety of health topics including Meal Planning for Health and Budget, Mindful Eating, Virtual Grocery Store Tours, Eating for Heart Health, Eating for Prediabetes and Diabetes, 6 Steps To A Healthier You, and more! Connect with a nutritionist for a FREE one-on-one virtual nutrition consultation or to check out our blogs and podcasts. Email nutrition@giantfood.com for more information.



Nutrition Camp Success!

Belong! is happy to report a very successful Nutrition Day Camp held during the first week of August in partnership with the Inova Healthy Plate Club. Twenty-six elementary age children had a great time learning about the food groups, healthy snacks, reading labels, alternatives to sugary beverages, and nutritious breakfasts. Each participant received a bag of supplies, including activity pages to use during camp and recipes with food items for the kids to make with their families each day after camp. Upon completion, day campers received a second bag with prizes and a t-shirt, and one participant won a blender! Belong! works in Vienna to spread love through service in the community.



Food Cards Provide Critical Support

Back in March, in response to the economic shut down from the pandemic, the Vienna Student Food Initiative (VSFI) was formed, a partnership with Belong!, Christ Church Vienna and other local churches, concerned citizens, and staff from four schools in the Madison Pyramid. The idea was to work closely with the schools to provide \$25 food cards weekly to low income families already struggling with food security, and the goal was to provide support for families for 12 weeks. Because of the generosity of many, Belong! and the VSFI are now working with six schools and have provided weekly food cards to hundreds of families for 22 weeks. The number of families in need has swelled from 180 to over 330. To date, 4,704 food cards (\$117,600) have been distributed, helping to provide a critical safety net during these unprecedented times. Additionally, local businesses, organizations and families have supplemented the food cards with donations of countless meals, food bags, academic fun packets, personal hygiene items, books and more.

Local Events

Food for Others Tysons Virtual 5k & Fun Run

Friday, September 25th - Sunday, September 27th

Food for Others is the one of the largest providers of free emergency groceries to people in need in Northern Virginia. They are busier than ever due to Covid-19. Food for Others is a place to turn for those in need of food, serving over 4,000 households on average per week.

Participants can make an impact on community members in need by supporting the 2020 FFO Tysons 5K and Fun Run. The \$30 registration fee provides rice and beans to 25 families. The event takes place anywhere one would like it to be! It could be a trail, neighborhood, or treadmill. 5k and Fun Run: \$30 through September 27th at midnight, when online registration closes. Be sure to register early, by September 10th, to be guaranteed a shirt and have it shipped prior to the Virtual Race Weekend!

Register online: <https://potomac.enmotive.com/events/register/2020-food-for-others-5k-and-fun-run>



Locally Grown: Urban Gardening Resources

VCE Virtual Farm to Table: Aquaponics

Friday September 4, 2:00 - 2:40 pm - online

The demand for high-quality, healthy protein in the urban community has increased tremendously in the last few years. With the movement for locally grown farm products, aquaponics is fulfilling this niche. Aquaponics is the combination of growing fish in tanks and using the nutrient-rich water to feed the plants. The water is recirculated back to the fish tanks and plants, making it a sustainable, eco-friendly urban aquaculture venture. Dr. David Crosby with VSU Extension will give an overview of aquaponics. Then Dr. Carlin Rafie, Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise, will provide information about the dietary guidelines in relation to fish intake, things to look for when purchasing fish, and tips on storing it. She will then highlight a tilapia recipe as tilapia is a type of fish commonly used in Aquaponics. Register here: https://virginiatech.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-6falH_URKu5IO9Jf9v6Hg

Climate-conscious Gardening

Monday, September 14th, 7:30-9:00 pm

September temps and spring-like rainfall totals in August are local examples of how our climate is shifting to become even more confounding for gardeners. But there are steps that gardeners can take to both cope with and not contribute to climate change, including building soil and managing water. These are two of the five climate-conscious practices that Master Gardener Elaine Mills will cover in a free online talk for the public and sponsored by the Falls Church Garden Club. Mills will also offer a brief climate change overview and offer a climate-conscious gardening checklist, as well as provide resources to learn more. Time at the end of the session will be reserved for your questions. Email Stacey Evers by Sept. 9 to request the Zoom link.

Fairfax County Master Gardeners (FCMGA) - Plant Clinics...now online!

While typically used to seeing Master Gardener volunteers offering in-person advice at local farmer's markets, plant clinics have temporarily moved online. Experienced gardeners from Fairfax County Master Gardeners and Green Spring Master Gardeners are hosting online, video plant clinics three times each week. Anyone with lawn or garden questions is welcome to join the virtual plant clinics. Each clinic begins with a short presentation on a gardening topic by one of the Master Gardeners. The rest of each session will address guests' specific questions.

Registration can be found [online](#) and allows guests to ask their questions in advance. While Master Gardeners will address pre-submitted questions first, they then will open the floor for additional questions. No specific question? No problem! Registered guests are welcome just to listen in. Photos are encouraged! Guests looking for a plant identification or with questions about a pest, disease, or damage are asked to submit good quality photos when they register. If you have any questions please contact Adria Bordas at abordas@vt.edu.

September Plant Clinic Schedule:

September 1st: Perennials: Blooms from Spring to Autumn

September 3rd: The Nocturnal Garden

September 8th: Edible Virginia Native Plants

September 10th: Lessons learned from gardening this Summer

September 15th: Introduction to Native Plant Landscaping- Making a Plan

September 22nd: Edible Virginia Native Plants

September 24th: Seasonal Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition: Fall



Green Spring Gardens Talks and Workshops

We have included a selection of Green Spring Gardens talks and workshops below. Many additional programs can be found [online](#).

Garden Talk: Basics of Fall Veggie Gardening

September 11, 2:30 pm

Planting a fall vegetable garden will extend the gardening season so you can continue to harvest fresh produce. Many cool-season vegetables, such as carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, produce their best flavor and quality when they mature during cool weather. Extension Master Gardeners show you how. The program at Green Spring Gardens runs from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, call 703-642-5173. [Register online \(code 3A3.487E\)](#)

Edible Garden Tour

Saturday, September 12, 10-11:30am

Explore the bounty of Green Spring's Edible Garden with an Extension Master Gardener docent who showcases many food plants – from vegetables to fruit trees – suitable for home landscapes. See how edibles can grow in containers and small spaces and discover their ornamental value in the garden. Program held outdoors. \$15 per person. [Register online \(code 748.8D51\)](#).

Fall Veggies: From Garden to Soup

Saturday, October 3, 10:30am-12:00

Cindy Brown of Smithsonian Gardens demonstrates how to extend your gardening into fall. Learn how to prepare a bed for planting seeds, transplants and garlic. Afterward, warm up with a comforting bowl of vegetable soup featuring fresh ingredients you could grow yourself in autumn. Program held outdoors. \$22 per person. [Register online \(code F01.AE50\)](#).

Composting Made Simple

Friday, October 16, 1:30-2:30pm

Instead of dragging your kitchen, garden and yard waste out to the curb week after week, learn how to use it to make your own valuable compost to use throughout your yard and garden. Extension Master Gardeners show what you need to do to have your own compost pile. Indoor classes will be conducted according to Health Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention safety guidelines. \$10 per person. [Register online \(code 844.7562\)](#).



School Garden Corner

School Garden Meetup

Tuesday, September 1, 4:30-5:30 pm

Join FCPS Get2Green and gardening experts from the Fairfax Food Council's Urban Agriculture Work Group to discuss keeping school gardens active during virtual learning. Learn about available resources and support for your school's garden, share your garden challenges and ideas, and find answers to your questions. All FCPS employees and community members working with school gardens are welcome to join. This meetup will take place virtually. [Register for the FCPS Virtual School Garden Meetup](#) and a link to join will be sent to you before the session.

Can't attend the Meetup, but want to chat about school gardens? Reach out to Get2green@fcps.edu.

Seeds Available for FCPS Gardens on School Grounds

Ready to plant? Get2Green and the Fairfax Food Council's Urban Agriculture Work Group are providing seeds for fall produce and cool weather cover crops for FCPS school gardens. The following seed options are available for schools:

Seeds to plant in August or early fall: Seeds available for fall veggie gardens are arugula, carrots, cauliflower, collards, lettuces, mustard greens, radishes, spinach and turnips. Beets and broccoli may also be available. One benefit to growing these crops is that the harvests can be given to your community or to a food bank/pantry. If you have produce to donate but don't know how to go about doing it, contact [Grow a Row FC](#) and they will give you guidance; they also may be able to help you arrange a pick-up of your produce. **Considerations:** These crops would require regular water, full sun and weeding.

Cover crops: Plants such as buckwheat, oats, clover and winter peas nourish and aerate the soil, crowd out weeds and attract pollinators. Once they're dying or you want to reclaim the garden space, they should be turned into the soil to further add nutrients. Some fall cover crops, like winter peas, may overwinter and produce edible greens and peas in the spring.

Considerations: These crops need watering to become established and during dry spells. Additional details about how and when to plant will be shared with the seeds. If you are interested in seeds for your school's garden, please [fill out this form to request seeds](#) with your FCPS email account. Seeds must be requested by a FCPS staff member but volunteers are

welcome to help with planting and maintenance. Every effort will be made to fill requests, however specific seed availability and quantity cannot be guaranteed.

School Garden Support Organizational Network - COVID-19 Related Virtual Gatherings and Webinars

The SGSO is hosting many informative webinars and virtual gatherings to support school gardeners during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information available at <https://www.sgsonetwork.org/webinars/>. Please note that all times are PST.

Upcoming offerings:

Covid-Friendly Outdoor Classroom Infrastructure & Design Webinar -
September 2, 11am-12:15pm PST

Bringing Social Emotional Learning & Mindfulness Education to Your Work Webinar -
September 9, 11am-12:15pm PST

School Gardens Support for Food Relief and Food Pantries Virtual Gathering -
September 23, 11am-12:15pm PST

Addressing Equity in School Garden Programs Webinar -
September 30, 11am-12:15pm PST

Make it Happen: Funding Opportunities

Annie's Homegrown Grants for Gardens

Applications due November 2, 2020

The application period for Annie's Homegrown Grants for Gardens program is open. Eligible school garden programs within the USA are welcome to apply. More information and application can be found [online](#).

This information is provided by the Fairfax Food Council.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/>

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