

## **PDX Garden Stories**

### **Interviews with participants in Growing Gardens Home Gardens Program Portland, Oregon**

#### **Interview with Maribel**

Conducted by Kent Hudson, Emily Garner & Francisco Puentes

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[Beginning of conversation in Spanish with Francisco]

My English is very good, so I can say things in English, that way if you guys...

**Yeah, thank you.**

*(1:31-3:09) Yeah, my involvement in the garden is because, you know, my grandpa truly was a gardener and he came from Spain and he was an agricultural engineer. And he came from Spain to Honduras and buy a lot of land in Honduras and have a garden, a community garden. You know, and then my grandma always have a garden, that was kind of my family that, you know, we grow up growing things that we ate. You know, the basil, we always have the basil, I love the basil because, and I have basil now and I has to have basil because my mother and grandma always had basil, you know. (Cultural legacy) I always want to get involved here, you know, but I used to live in an apartment, it's very hard to grow. And at one point you get so involved in things that you forget that you can garden! But I was working over there in Gresham and was talking to people about access to fresh food and we start a community garden about two year ago and a lot of people... at the beginning we hardly had people getting involved in the garden, you know, and we started conversations with people going door to door... the next year, you know, we had the garden full and now we has to do an extension because it's so many people that wants to get involved. (Community, food quality/access) About three years ago, you know, I was kind of working at my son's school, in [inaudible] school, and I met the...*

**[Francisco asking question in Spanish]-**

*(3:30-4:02) About four years ago, I start to work with Growing Garden and that was so amazing that, you know. I told them that I really want to grow corn, you know, that's my thing that in the future, that's my thing that I want to grow because I do not agree with what happened with corn, you know, because Monsanto, you know, it taking all the power and all the access and changing the corn and that's not fair. It's our culture, you know. I grow, with corn I grow, it's for tortillas. (Political statement, cultural legacy, self-sufficiency?) Last year, no two years ago, with Devin, we grow garlic, and corn in the backyard here, and every year I have been getting plants. (4:17-4:58) Last year I have a huge garden, everywhere here! You know, the backyard, right here up front, but I realized that was kind of too much, I was too ambitious!*

**[Laughing] Yeah.**

And people really, [laughing] yeah, you know, it's a lot of work. *This year, you know, I decided that I wanted to do, that I want to do a container garden, and I want to master myself in container garden because I see over there in Gresham where I working, you know it's a lot of people living in apartments and they not able to grow, but I think container gardening is a great idea. (Community)* [Maribel's son Devin] There's some strawberries over here...

**[Kent] Strawberries, huh? Alright.**

[Devin] Yeah, everything's right here.

[Maribel] And this is the cauliflower that I got last Saturday over there at the, at the... but this is, this is my [inaudible] right now and we are going to grow some corn and some peppers in the backyard. I share the backyard right now with the neighbor, and then... come on back...

**[Kent] Oh yeah, ours should be coming up in a few weeks.**

[Devin] Oh yeah these are ready they've been coming out.

**[Francisco] Oh, cilantro! [Spanish]**

[Spanish]

[Devin] We got a few more strawberries, and some of those are in containers, yeah but I... the recyclable containers that we use, I think it's really cool just to be able to use your own stuff, and just decorate your yard or wherever you want. You can put your... you feel me? Bring some color.

**Yeah, definitely.**

I kind of decided to, you know, the mint, to just let it grow because I realized that it was so invasive that, you know, you cannot stop it. It's so good to have mint.

**Let it be free.**

Let it be free. Yeah, and last year I did, kind of some sunflowers and some squash here. But this year I just let the mint to do whatever [laughing]. Be wild. Let me show you guys the... [Motioning to the backyard] Back here I grow tomatoes and peppers and here and corn, and garlic over there. But now my, my roommates are going to grow the half side, and we are going to grow this side. And this afternoon I put in some corn here.

**[Emily] You have a beautiful space, that's awesome.**

**[Kent] Do you have a compost bin, or... over there?**

That one, over there, yeah. We have to move it. We has to do some work. We just, destroying everything [laughing] yeah.

**[Emily] Have you used your compost much?**

Oh yeah, mm hmm.(7:35-7:55) *Yeah, for me this is kind of the beginning, you know, I just, I think everybody has to do, you know, garden. You know, when I think about Occupy, everybody must occupy their garden and we all need to start to garden because that is the way to all the issues. (Political statement, self-sufficiency?)*

**[That's very empowering]**

**[Francisco] So how do you feel when you are gardening? Do you feel different? Or, has it changed since you garden in the ground and now that you're transitioning to become an expert gardener with containers?**

(8:13-8:39) It just make me happy, you know, it make me happy. And I feeling that I can, I doing exercising, you know, myself that I don't do much but if I gardening it kind of relax me, you know. *And I know that I kind of teaching also my kids that I leaving a legacy, you know, for my family, that we all need to garden. (Education, future legacy)*

**Do your children enjoy gardening with you?**

You know he [Devin] enjoy gardening and he knows how to garden!

**Alright, well thanks for showing us the back...**

I know it's not a lot, but, I wish I had more to show you guys, but you guys know how it is [laughing].

**No, it's great!**

...

**So you mentioned that corn... you have a lot of edibles here in the ground, how has gardening had an impact in your daily diet?**

(9:26-10:34) Well, I'm a vegetarian now. Two years ago I became vegetarian and... I used to have ulcer, you know and I used to have a lot of stomach issues but now that I gardening and I becoming vegetarian I

am more involved with... *you know my dream is to have an herbal garden, you know, a beautiful herbal garden that you can heal. You know, there's a lot of stuff that we have... thyme, oregano, rosemary, and all these things that are so good for our health, you know and having right there at you house knowing that you growing that, that it's not Monsanto, not GMO, you're not eating GMO's. (Political statement) And it really, really, for me, changed my... and bring me back, you know, to mother Earth. You know, because we has to go back to mother Earth. Mother Earth gives us everything, you know, and we need to go back and take care. (Cultural legacy? Connection to Earth)*

**[Kent] Would you recommend Growing Gardens to anybody else? Or take any part in the program?**

Oh yes! I always recommend it, Growing Gardens to everyone and I think this will help everyone. Even my daughter got a job there, Abby, she's going to start working.

**[Kent] Oh, she works for them?**

She's going to start this week I think.

**[Francisco] Well I think you were quite generous.**

**[Emily] We're so appreciative for you showing us your garden today.**

Thank you.

**[E] Did you have any other question you wanted to ask her?**

**[F] I think we covered everything we were going to ask you, well, you covered most of it! [laughing] Thank you.**

**[E] Can we take a picture of you guys next to your containers over there?**

Okay... Thank you for coming and I'll keep doing it.

**[E] We're looking forward to sharing your story with others, too. We're getting to show what it really looks like to garden, and have this beautiful space in Portland. It's awesome.**

Even though you busy, you know, I used to think 'I'm so busy!' but, no even though you busy, you know, it's something that has to be, you know, part of you daily life, that you garden. Anyway... it's many ways that you can garden, now these days.

**[E] I think this is a great example of that, that even with a small amount of space you can really do a lot.**

**[F] Yes, you can grow food in containers on the driveway, I mean, that's great. That's great, and with very basic planters which you know, sometimes are just discarded, if not recycled. You're, I think, repurposing them.**

Yeah, these bottles, you know, I kind of hate to put these bottles in recycling. I'm going to cut it and...  
[inaudible]

**So nice meeting you guys... Good luck on your seasons this year...**

**[F] I have a little plant, and your willingness to cooperate, and I am almost certain that I will see you in the future, because I am also getting involved with Growing Gardens.**