

## How Does Your Family Interact With Nature?

*400 Montauk Avenue Community Garden*

Speaker 1:

I would get up in the morning. And the first thing I would do is, I would climb up the tree of the june plum. I would eat the leaves. I would eat all the leaves that I could reach. That was my breakfast. My grandmother would get so upset because I didn't want to eat like everybody else. I wanted to eat the leaves of the tree. I wanted to eat the lemons. I could be in the outside all day. And they used to whip my butt, because I would not eat meat.

Speaker A: I also grew up liking certain vegetables and my mom will bring it to me. And this was her gift to me because her mom used to have a garden right at our house in Trinidad. And she used to grow tomatoes and she will give it to my mom as a gift and say, "Lulu", my mom's name is Luda. And she would say, "Lulu, I brought something for you". And my mom will be so excited just for this tomato. Right. So another thing too, I grow tomatoes with my mom in mind because I want to give it to her. Like her mom gave to her.

Speaker 2:

I have a family of nine kids, siblings. And like most people in the Caribbean, you learn how to plant by virtue of your parents showing you how they do plants and stuff for now.

Speaker 3:

Yeah. So my grandmother gave me a small little square in the backyard and I grew my beans and I was so proud the day that my grandmother took the beans and cooked them. And then she said, "This are from Nita's garden". It was just a square little piece. But I was so proud because I had contributed something towards the table.

Speaker 4:

My country, mostly people are farmers. We used to have corn in front of my house and the fish growing. My brothers, my father, they used to do fishing. I used to see the fish coming from the water. You know, those things.

Speaker 5:

I had a great, wonderful childhood and definitely was outside and things. But I didn't... I feel like wasn't instilled with a deep connection to growing and these types of things. So finding that on my own, in my adult life, that feels very liberating. And I think just so much fun too, just learning about plants and there's so much to learn about. I feel as we know, just the resiliency of plants and trees and there's so much to learn from nature. And I just find that really exciting.

Speaker 6:

It's most of the time my parents, they always teaching me how the weather going actually. And back to times, and I'm talking when... I'm 53 years old now right now. So I'm talking 45 years about back to

times older than Ecuador too. It was changes, every year is not the same. So my parents, they always teach me some things like see the trees, how the wind blowing side to side, and it's going to be the whole year. And when you can plant in this or that, like corns or like beans. What I do is much more is watching the weather, how the weather is.

Speaker 7:

I said I would never do anything like this again, because I grew up in North Carolina. Picking cotton, harvesting tobacco, stringing tobacco, grading tobacco, picking beans, all that slave stuff. And I said I would never-

Speaker 14:

On your own farm or on somebody else's farm?

Speaker 7:

No, somebody else's farm. My great-grandfather. He left us 240 acres, but he rent his land. Can't sell it because stay in the family. But I was a kid and I had no say in it. And I went to live with a relative that put me out there on that slave thing. So the first day he put me out there, I passed... I couldn't, I didn't know about the heat or anything about cotton or anything of that sort.

Speaker 14:

And you were young, right?

Speaker 7:

Yeah. I was about 10, 9 or 10.

Speaker 8:

Coming from Barbados. I used to see my grandfather working land and I was like, it would really be fun to just do some gardening. So I started looking my little flowers and my herb garden. And then before you know it I expanded into doing other things.

Speaker 9:

Well, I've been gardening all my life. That's how we have to live off the land. Sometimes you don't, from the Caribbean, you don't need everything.

Speaker 10:

And I remember my dad, every time he ate something, don't throw the seeds out, put the seeds in the container on a piece of four for me.

Speaker 11:

My mother raised me thinking, you know, silent spring.

Speaker 12:

I don't think I had a very good relationship to seasons or nature at all. I grew up in suburbia and I really believe that's one of the big things I've learned over the last few years is to really sit with nature and think about it.

Speaker 13:

I am an American and not just an American. I come from slaves. So I know what it is to grow food.

Speaker 14:

Yeah.

Speaker 15:

I'm from a Southern. I know what it is to grow food. So like I said, it's something natural to me. That's why, what I do... If you come and see what I do, you go, "Wow". I said, nah, this is something natural to me.

Speaker 14:

It's like in your bones.

Speaker 15:

It's just something natural to me. You know, it takes no effort.

Speaker 16:

I tease my mom it's like you made the mistake of showing me that those orange seeds in my lunch box, those will plant. I can plant those and they'll grow into something. So I was like, "Oh, can we plant this? Can we plant that? Can we plant the corn that's in the freezer?" "No, that's been frozen. It's dead. It's not going to work." "Can we plant this?" "Yes we can. We can try it." And it's like, "We don't know how it's going to work out, but we'll find out." And it was, it's been a lifelong adventure.

Speaker 18:

I know.

Speaker 14:

Yes. It's beautiful, baby.

Speaker 18:

It have nectar.

Speaker 14:

Yes, it does have nectar.

Speaker 18:

It's for the bees.

Speaker 14:

Yes. For the bees.

Speaker 18:

I sneak into the bees.

Speaker 14:

You sneaked... You didn't want to disturb them. Right. Okay.

Speaker 18:

One of the bee...

Speaker 14:

Yes.