**17.05.21**

**So could you please explain to me what I’d see if I were standing at your front door please?**

And if you looking it's paved and to your left there's just loads and loads of pot plants, something exciting. I've got peony's. I've got avocados grown from seeds. I've got Apple very, very small apples, Apple trees in pots this small because it's a root bound an officially got out of here, but they died off in the Frost and I have just got lots of in the pots and lots of bulbs that come up seasons. I love spring, yeah, daffodils. I might even have some crocus and some bluebells and freisias which is not finished. I can't remember the names of all the things that I've got, but they just come up when I drive. I describe my gardening is that these plants have to thrive on neglect. I'm one of those people I can't get the really gardening. Yeah, I will. Wait for it and see what happens.

**Yeah, is that where your apples came from?**

Yeh but mine are pot bound, so they went like really thin, they've got like a the trunk is like about diameter yes 1 centimeter diameter even though they're quite old. I found some dates in there. If it comes in some grapes, at the least, some grapes coming up. I've managed to kill a lot of stuff. I actually went to kill some time last year. I grew some corn and they had some cobs. They were really tiny, about four inches long. But yeah, but they were 6 feet tall and 'cause the back of my house, I've only I've only got like 2 floors. I've got the first one in the back of my house. Yeah, 'cause the back of my house. There's another property and so I've got a really large balcony and I grow that's over the corn on the balcony, yeah? Yeah, this is my house and I like it.

**Yeah, it sounds pretty idyllic . So of all of the plants you grow, I guess you're not kind of growing them so that you're you've got a crop of avocados or whatever. It's more for the fun of it?**

Yeah, I mean I, I think if I were took it more seriously and actually potted and put them in a large enough containers, they probably would thrive. But yeah, I mean I've got some on the balcony. I've got some tomato plants from last year, which I thought were dead. Yeah, Flowers on really. Yeah, and then I got to thinking site right now. The cloves you know then you got like garlic and you leave it for too long. It starts sprouting, yeah. Stick those in the dirt. I don't do mint, 'cause it runs rampant, yeah? Yeah, and when I had a garden before it was like a little border and I said, well, marigolds and roses. And yeah, just stuff to look after.

**Yeah, that's amazing. It sounds great, yeah?**

The talent they don't need a huge amount of time and you can just do it and you get results and it's good fun. Yeah, just buy the packets you see for like 30 P, yeah. You buy the compost from the pound shop and get like maybe six pots and he started out really simple. Really good fun and things that you can do. My things I don't. I don't stay focused, but you know, like vegetables that will sprout in the fridge, yeah? You know your lettuces, celery. And yeah, it's just really good stuff like that. Carrots, carrots yeah. Yeah, another one I do. It's really not people don't know. Is it pineapples? If there under ripe then? Cut off the bottom, stick it in the in the bowl of water. Keep doing it and that will grow yeah. The seeds are in the skin. Right? Fine. Yeah, yeah.

**Yes, yeah, that sounds. That sounds really good fun. I've never done the pineapple. I've done the avocado and I've done carrots..**

People they say Oh no. Yes to stick pins in them and sticking over water, yeah. Just leave it. That's very very good and and they often will germinate very easily. Now what you have to do with the citrus, I'm not as good with this, but then again I think the trick is just to leave it alone. Leave it yeah yeah, yeah. And then yeah, nothings happening that you know, maybe I should put it now and then. And now I've got some little seedlings about four inches high,

**wow. That sounds amazing. My flats too dark to keep them alive unfortunately.**

So OK. The thing with seedlings. Is it you need to keep them in the dark? It doesn't even have to be light. Yeah, 5 degrees C or so, yeah? Alright then, whichever rooms got about a thing. So if it's your bathroom, if you know there's all windows, you get a light in the bathroom or kitchen, just sitting on the shelf, yeah? Yeah, definitely give it a go. That'll actually help it to germinate. Yeah, yeah, well, give more of a go then.

**I mean, you know my this research is about what what is nature and what people. How do people interact with nature? I mean all of those, those things that you don't see is your germinating and all of your bulbs and your plants that you've got on your balcony? Are they nature for you?**

Oh yeah, 'cause The thing is is that you get interesting things like even though my balcony, the 1st floor and I've had snails pull up the wall. I've had some bugs crawl up the wall. Yes, the thing you find. How did that happen and he faces? The city Academy yeah? About 15 feet from me and they've planted a gardening project so the trees are gaining ground quite quickly so you get birds and you get bird song in the ventilator shaft for the bathroom ventilator, there's a bird, yes. Really.

Yeah they get in the moss. So this then one day I was talking across the car park. See and they must be like woodlice that live in the Moss. So the birds were trying to get the insects, and that's why there's always most in the garden in the morning, right? Yeah, yeah. Obviously it's nicer to be the more urban environment that. I've lived in London, my life. Yeah, and what I've seen over the years has changed. When I was really small, you only saw sparrows and pigeons. And blackbirds and starlings, and that was that, well, we've got squirrels. You've got wood pigeons, we've got Magpies. Now you get such a collection of birds you find him in a London has grown and they’ve come from overseas. Now we get Foxes because they are protected so but the amount of wildlife that we've got has increased. I mean when I first used to go to. London still. And hadn't recovered not even 60s. Yeah, sites hadn't been developed, so you go over there and mostly what you catches those black and yellow caterpillars? Oh yeah, had they survived. Yeah. Well, I don't really see as much variety in butterflies. But yeah, every now and then you'll see something colorful. Yeah, yeah, definitely. So we surprised. Some things I've ever seen grasshoppers really. Mistaken for a cricket. I'm not sure which of the thing very bright green and it's definitely that shape where about starting on your balcony or just yeah wow. Yeah, on Friday night. But it's not in the parks. It's actually people. By in the gardens. I'm not sure. It's not just in England. I think, you know. Iit's just a huge variety of plants and it's partly fashion from the 19th century they know trees would be really fashionable in the 30s and then conifers were very fashionable. I've only found out the other day that monkey puzzle trees are from South America.

**Yeah, yeah yeah yeah, from Chile or something.**

Yeah. Yeah. So I just love it. I love the knowledge and then saying that I live in an urban environment. It's a thing. Yeah. Just a minute 20 minute walk from me is Hackney Marshes and the life that goes there, yeah. The River Lee and, they said it was not just marshland, it was always underwater. This is years ago and it was actually very difficult to navigate. It's dangerous to navigate, yeah? And that's why you gotta straighten it. Yeah. Needed a boat. To get across years ago, if you wanted to travel to Walthamstow. You had to get in the boat. Yeah, it's really strange to think is that how the landscape is?

**I suppose you know you're talking about that as a really like natural landscape, but really? You know, then it's also man-made landscape. At the same time.**

You still have to remember we want things. I keep saying to people that know London is basically a huge giant floodplain and it does have some high rises. No, like Hackney has some gentle rises and something not so gentle. Yes, but you know, you got isn't, and you've got like Hackney Downs right? Which is very very steep, yeah? The. Yeah, London I mean, significance of London. Is it in the River that is tidal for such a long way in? Yeah, so that's why London is so important because you could get you more ships. I'm back out again wherever. And even to that sad tragedy is because people aren't aware, and also because it is. It's about 150 years ago they deepened the channel. 150 years and or more ago. Yeah, they deepened the River and that's one of the reasons why it was so dangerous. Yeah, disgustingly dirty. Yeah, I don't fancy having a dip in there. Well, you see people in the Lea in the summer on the marshes sometimes. Yeah, well, it's different 'cause that. That's a River that runs into the Thames. It's disgustingly bad. I'm sure that the Thames has switched, I’ve not looked into it, but I think yeah, it's all kinds of nasty stuff. People get away with it. It's going up and down. So yeah, yeah.

**Not exactly ideal. Interesting, amazing thank you. That gives me a really good idea of you know what I wanted to talk about in this first interview really is just, what sort of what you see is nature and how you experience it and what's on your doorstep, more or less. The one the one thing that we haven't talked about that I wanted to just really briefly bring up was. You know I can't. I can't really do any research at the moment without talking about the pandemic and how it's changed. You know, so many things in all kinds of ways for all kinds of people…**

The skies are blue, yeah? March 2020 was absolutely amazing. Yeah, March and April. It's really noticeable, and so there was none of that pollution while the pandemic was on, there were fewer cars on the road, and so there's less pollution, so the skies were blue and everybody noticed that. It's just really lovely, yeah?

**Has that changed the way that you've thought about things or appreciated nature?**

No, I mean, I think it was noticeable, but I'm the kind of person that if I've got to go somewhere and if I'm gonna walk, I don't. I try not to walk in the main road. I'll walk through. The back street so is that from where I am I can walk through St. John's Church yard. Yeah to get to the center so it's it's the most direct route, yeah? And remember, theres this flower. I think it's Jasmine or what, but it was whenever it was about may it would come into flower and this beautiful beautiful fragrance they ripped it up. Now that's a shame. Yeah, but it's but I can always remember that.

And yeah, I mean noticing things like the air being cleaner, dirtier, the 80s, was much, much dirtier. There were a lot more diesel vehicles. You could take a tissue, when I worked in in in central London. Yeah, and all the particulates would be on your skin. Gosh, disgusting stuff. Yeah would be black and sooty. Yeah yeah. So in that regards, the air is actually cleaner but I I put that down to the change in technology and fewer of diesel vehicles being on the road. Yeah. And that just makes it makes it more more noticeable.

And it's meant that there's more species that have been able to come back into that. Cleaner. Yeah, that's that's one thing. And also the fact that it's a lot warmer now than it was sort of 30-40 years ago, yeah? Well, time to get those up on their back by half a degree or something like that, but over the course of 40 years now, it means that the flora and fauna in the UK is very different to what it was when I was a child. And for me. When people wanted to grow lemons is the plants they grow them is out in indoor plants as house plants you couldn't, yeah. Now I can put a lemon seed in the dirt and it won't it won't die off in winter.

**Is that a good thing?**

Yeah. You know you see Yucca plants are in people's front gardens, and these things at all they like about 8-10 feet tall. So they gotta be like decades old. Yeah, growing outdoors. When I was a child you could not grow outdoors. And then much longer. You know, it's you had a longer period of cold weather and then further North. I believe that the weather, the winters are milder. Yeah, I think definitely getting up even into Scotland and yeah. As a child and skiing, there's an option. You go to Scotland to go skiing. Yeah, and interesting enough they they've spent a lot of money installing all these ski lifts. Yeah, by the time they were installed the weather had changed. No snow. As much snow, it's a much shorter season. Yeah, yeah, I don't know what you do about that as well, so maybe it's a nice view from up the topic. Remember that. About 30 years ago, yeah. Yes, so they could have a kind of skiing thing up in the Cairngorns like you do, like if you go to Italy. Yeah, you just don't get as much snow. I think you can still scared up there, but this season is much shorter. Shorter, right, right? Yeah. It's an expensive pastime.

**I mean I hate the cold so I don't got enough money. So that's me, out. Uh, I think that's pretty much all of the sort of questions I wanted to wanted to ask, so thank you very, very, very much. And then we've I just wanted to explain the sort of the next bit of research and then and then sort that out so, so as you know, I think I've seen it over a couple of times. It would just be taking a minimum of say, 10 photos. Of what is of what nature you see and experience or think about over the next couple of weeks. So you got my email.**

Oh really, yeah so and so. Like if I'm living on a housing state because there's lots of different types of bushes, that they’ve planted on to green up the housing estate. So I've been taking pictures to know that now it's raining and it's milder. They're in bloom.

**So yeah, I'd love to see some of those.**