Audio file

Darren Bender-Beauregard 1.m4a

Transcript

Cissell:

Boarding now and today is October 1st. It's a Sunday.

Bender-Beauregard:

They say do you want?

Bender-Beauregard

To like we could like stop.

Bender-Beauregard:

Would we be will you be?

Cissell:

Editing it or not necessarily not necessarily, but we'll just let it. I think you know, as long as we can get a transcript and I can piece together.

Bender-Beauregard

Cool. Awesome.

Cissell:

He said. Cool. But I'm with Darren and I meant to check your last name. I'm assuming is Ren from the OR no.

Bender-Beauregard

Oh, no, it's Darren Bender Beauregard, and it's it's not officially hyphen. My like legal name is Darren Bender, but my wife and I were wanting to hyphenate our last names and the.

Cissell:

Ohh, been hard OK? OK.

Bender-Beauregard

Southern Indiana just didn't quite know what to do, so we would have to pay like court fees and had, like, a court date to change. And it was like that. Whatever. We're just like, informally hyphenate and then.

Bender-Beauregard:

Ohh yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Legally, we're still there, and Bender and his ribald regard, but so my legal name is Darren Bender, but I go by Darren Bender. Beauregard.

Cissell:

OK. Is that BENDERN?

Bender-Beauregard

And then BEAU? REGARD.

Cissell:

Well, yeah, I guess getting into you know, your name and family history, if you want to talk about that where you're from.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah. So my dad is a Mennonite or was a Mennonite pastor. And I my mom is also Mennonite. So I grew up. Tonight I am what they would call an ethnic Mennonite, so both sides of my family. Go back. Many generations to Mennonites that emigrated from Europe. But I do. Have some Scotch Irish background on my dad's side from Appalachian, like Western Maryland, West Virginia. Kind of Wiley's so. But I grew up. My dad's a pastor, and so I grew up a number of different places. I was born in Kansas. Where he was going to college. I don't remember anything from that. And then we moved to northern Indiana where he went to seminary and after that I remember some about that. But then most of my growing up years was in Western Maryland in a very Appalachian culture outside of Cumberland, MD. So it's in the rural mountain, this Allegheny Mountain area. And I was right on the border of West Virginia. Like we were right on the Botanic River. And grew up in a neighborhood with lots. Of kids and we all ran around. There was a big, big mountain outside our front doors. We played on the mountain almost every day after school and. And I. We I was there until eighth grade and then after 8th grade my dad got a new job in Lancaster, PA. So Eastern Pennsylvania, southeastern Pennsylvania, where my mom was from. And so we moved there, and I went my high school years I spent in southeastern PA. My mom. My mom took over her family business from her dad, which was a farm equipment business. So my grandpa was a dairy farmer. My other grandpa was. Mennonite Pastor as well, so yeah.

Cissell:

What was that like growing up Mennonite? And then I guess. Some point you would have theoretically left.

Bender-Beauregard

Not necessarily. So I'm still Mennonite. Actually. We go to Mennonite church. But so we were what they would call conference Mennonites. There's a lot of different types of Mennonites. Most people think Amish like or, like, really conservative dress. We never did that. So the Mennonite Church sort of split into sort of different.

Bender-Beauregard:

OK.

Bender-Beauregard

Groups a while ago and some. Felt like they needed to stay very traditional dress and not be worldly. And then another group which is would have been my group decided there was nothing wrong with that but. But the main the main main things that almond mates would share in common would be a belief in nonviolence and. Believe that Jesus teaches. That violence never really leads to actual solutions that. Violence is just sort of a. Not a good way to solve problems I guess, so I've been. Aids would traditionally be like. Conscientious objectors and different wars. So I have stories from my family and just our Church of people who, you know, had to avoid the draft in Vietnam and avoid the draft in World War 2. And but there's also a lot of good stories about came out of that about. Doing alternative service things. So Mennonites were and Mennonites and other conscientious conscientious objectors were some of the ones responsible for reforming the mental health institutions in the US, which were like absolutely appalling conditions. But then during the war. They went to volunteer and work at those places instead of serving in military, and they really, really brought a lot of changes because they saw how terrible. People with mental illness are being treated. And other things like that too, even. Even in Europe there were different alternative services. So. So yeah, so we're. I'm still Mennonite. I would say my. Beliefs would be like my spiritual beliefs would probably be a little beyond just men and my I kind of have a little wider. General belief in spirituality in the world, but I still sort of hold that as my. Like home spiritual. Home and what I grew up with and and we have a really great church here in Paoli that was. Started by a bunch of men and eight doctors. In the 70s. That came to serve like an underserved, medically underserved community. So they moved here, started a clinic, including one clinic that was just for uninsured people. And my wife, that's actually what attracted my wife's family here too. So her parents, her mom is a nurse or was a she's. She works for a WIC Indiana WIC program now. But she was an RN and looking to do some medical work and this community was sort of like they. Were looking for sort of. Intentional communities in the 70s and visited this one, and it kind of clicked and so. That and that still kind of continues. So there's still a clinic in town comprehensive healthcare clinic and that is still run by. Two of them in a night doctors that moved to this area, so.

Cissell:

Yeah. So your wife is esperi. Her background is also men in there.

Bender-Beauregard

So she's not ethnically Mennonite, but she grew up Mennonite at this church here, because the the community was started by all Mennonite doctors. And they eventually started a church. And so she grew up in that church as a first generation, then at night and and then we both went to Goshen College in northern Indiana, which is a Mennonite.

Cissell:

OK.

Bender-Beauregard

College and that's where we met and. Yeah. So she so her mom grew up in Ecuador as a missionary kid. So her grandparents were missionaries, I think, through. United Church of Christ in Ecuador and they worked in. The jungles a lot with indigenous groups. And then. Her other grandparents were from Louisiana. Well, her grandpas from Louisiana said the Beauregard name is like a Cajun name and and then her dad did Peace Corps in Ecuador, and that's How I Met her mom and. They moved back and. Yeah, across this history.

Cissell:

Would you say your children are being raised Mennonite? Would you all identify with?

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, I think so, my. Older daughter Viola would probably describe herself as a witch at this point, and we're not very like dogmatic. So our church is pretty progressive, I guess politically and even religiously. And so we don't really feel like. I would say none of none of us, like fathers, fear I. Would believe that like. Christianity is some superior religion or that it's the only way to God, anything like that. So. So our kids are. Because we're in a church that's that's sort of that sort of. Viewpoints. Our kids. I think just figuring out what they believe and we help them the best we can and but you know, I don't like we have any hard answers because there are any good, hard factual answers for spirituality. But but yeah, I would say they're being they're being raised as Mennonites, at least in the Mennonite Church and. But you know, I think my older daughter's interested in. In sort of our Pagan, which stuff is kind of cool. And I was sort of interested in that in high school and through college and have a lot of respect for it and. So I I think it's a neat thing that she's exploring with that and. Probably not everybody at church would be super pleased that she was. She's like as a real public thing. But. And then. Yeah. Yeah, so.

Cissell:

And Goshen College, what years were you there and?

Bender-Beauregard

So I was at Goshen College from 1998 to 2002. And my wife is 3 was there I think. From 96. To 2001. So she did a double major and I was a biology major. I was planning I. Like knew what I wanted to do since I was in middle school when I was going to. Be a. Hepatologist and I. You know Goshen College had a really good biology program and I set to get into field biology, and somewhere along the way I got. Into plants more than I was in the reptiles and amphibians. And then after that I sort. Of found my way into organic farming or sustainable farming and I kind of just like. Left academia at that point and decided that I wanted to be a farmer and not keep going to grad school for field biology. But. Yeah. And so Goshen car and Goshen card, I would say would be. A lot responsible for that, because I think it's a it's a really good school that. Like puts a lot of focus on. Like what do you want to do with your life, like in the world? And like, how do you want to serve the world and not just like, well, how can we get you into the fast track to this academic route? It was a much more like, thinking more existentially about your life. And so I think. I think that that a. Lot of that helped me sort of figure out. Maybe I didn't want. Just follow the academic path all the. Way through in the end so.

Cissell:

Did you say? You did. You start like a graduate program or just decided not to go down that route.

Bender-Beauregard

No, it was at. Yep. Yep. And then I was. I was pushed to by my advisor. She really felt like. I really should. Do that. She was very disappointed that I. UM. Moving more into farming, she thought it'd be a fantastic skill. And my parents did. And so it was kind of a life. That's one of my great life struggles. I'd say is like. Giving up something that I had spent so much energy and time doing for something that was kind of an unknown and definitely not. Something that would bring in a good, but I think that's partly what you know, I think you know, the teaching at Goshen College and Justice also from a lot of mentors and people that I respected and read. And, you know, I did a lot of reading and I think. You know, I realized probably in college that, you know, I want to do. I want to have a meaningful life and find something that's meaningful to do with my life. And something that I love to do and. The few apprenticeships I did with the old biology just didn't really do it for me. I felt like I was just looking through the. Natural world with the lens all the time and quantifying it and not really participating in it and. And then I worked at an organic farm one summer, and I just felt like that was so nice because it was so. The work was so obvious, like what you actually did and what you instead of like publishing a paper, hoping to get like the right professors name on it and like. You know it. It just seemed like that was going. To be like this. Sort of. Game and then just a. Lot of like data crunching which. Just wasn't that exciting. Me. So I was like, interested in field biology because I'd be outside most of the time. And then I was like this. May not actually put. Me outside most of the time so. That I had taken some courses in forestry and Land Management as well at Goshen and I think that also got. Me interested in Mike. How humans. How humans kind of shape our ecosystems and how we can be like a benevolent force in restoring sound ecologies and. And I think from there it was just like a very short leap to realizing that, like farming could also be done in a way that like. Looks more like an ecosystem or like lets ecosystem still function. But we're also growing food for people, so.

Cissell:

Yeah, yeah, that's really cool to hear. And. Yeah, I'll, I'll jump a little bit and then maybe we'll come back. But just you know, before this walking around and seeing like I guess the grafting process up close and personal like that is very scientific. And I feel like you know, you have to keep track of those things and you seem to be a research oriented person. Just in like the discovery process from that. So it makes sense that you like had that academic. Background you know, but do you feel like that's the biggest translation in this work or do you see that like coming out and do you think like to be successful, you have to have that kind? Of like discovery or like records keeping process almost.

Bender-Beauregard

It's an interesting. So you definitely have to be fairly good at like keeping track of things at the nursery, because if you sell a bunch of trees that were like, well, I grabbed it and I forgot to label them. And I think they're this one. But and then people plant them. They're like, well, I wasn't even an apple or. They might be upset with you, but I don't know if it's necessary. I. Think I think you're definitely right there that that is that is my like. Intellectual curiosity and sort of academic like biology background that comes out. And when I moved into farming, like when even when I worked on the farm for one season in the summer between colleges, it was like I felt like I was able to use my knowledge of biology. In what I was seeing and doing every day, even if it was just picking green beans on the ground like I sort of understood how the flowers started and. They cascaded into beans. And the leaves and the roots and it. Just kind of was like. This is something where I can like still use my. Teachings like my all my all my work

that I've done learning stuff. But I also have my hands dirty at the end of the day and I remember distinct was one of the first days probably I was there at the farm that I was just like. Like it was end of the work day and I was going to like, get ready to take a shower or eat supper. And I just, like, washed my hands and the water just ran brown from all the dirt that was on my hands. And I was like, that was so satisfying. I was like, after being in college for four years it. Was like man like dirty, Dirty hands and like I've been working in the dirt. All day and it's just so nice. And and I think still every day that that's part partly what motivates me is just like. Getting little like briar scratches all the time and scabs and cuts from the grafting knife. And it's just like. It's like I'm participating in the world, you know, and I don't know, it's a. It's a good thing. But yeah, I think. And the grafting, you know, you need to learn to kind of know basic stuff. But you know, there's a lot of people I've talked grafting to that aren't scientific at all. And it's like a lot of skills, you know, it just takes a lot of practice. And. But you do have to know the basics, you know, but the same thing with forging steel, blacksmith thing, you know, you. And you could probably figure it out by trial and error, but like knowing some basics like it's a huge. Huge thing so.

Cissell:

Yeah. So out of college. What's the first thing do you go back to that organic farm?

Bender-Beauregard

So first out of college, so at the end, I was like my last year. I was like, realizing that I didn't want to necessarily go on to grad school. I still sort of thought I was going to take the N cats and like. Get something so I'd have the test done and like the. Pass to kind of go on to grad school if I decided I wanted to, but I felt more and more like that wasn't where I wanted to go, though I was exploring. Like graduate programs and ecological agriculture, so like UC Davis was one I was looking at. I was looking at a place called the Land Institute, which is in the. Graduate program but it's. An interesting like pretty like scientific project that's trying in Kansas that's trying to develop perennial grains, mostly trying to develop them from native Prairie grasses. But like. The whole focus is like, what if they were? Grains that we could grow that would never be planted every year, that could be like a pasture, but they'd be harvested and so they have one out now called kernza, which is like a perennial wheat that a bunch of farmers are trialing is interesting but. So I was looking at some of those. But then I don't know what. And I was also really looking in. So I also part of Goshen College, it's a pretty huge thing is that everybody is required to. Do a three. Month cross cultural term. And so I went to West Africa. So I went to Mali, I took a year of French and. Are a group of 21 students. We went to Mali in the summer of 2000. And that was like probably one of the most formative. Experiences of my life. I just. Absolutely loved. It was my first time really being overseas in a different culture. And I just loved every. I mean, not every minute of it. Some. Of the stuff I could get sick and you're whatever, but. It I just like soaked everything up and just loved that and I and I did some work with farming. Farmers there like one of my things is. Sort of documenting some. Stuff with farmers. In one of the villages and. I was just really wanting to go back to Mali or at the very least like I was sort of on a path to like I wanted to do international agriculture, work, like how farmers around the world like in, especially in poorer developing countries like. Farm in ways that are more like ecologically sound and won't destroy the land base around them and like. And I probably would be still doing that, but I. But then Espree and I got together my senior year and. So I was actually like fairly far along the process of going with the Mennonite organization. That's really cool, called Mennonite Central Committee that does kind of development work all around the world. And they have a lot of, like, sustainable agriculture stuff that they do. And I was like looking into going to

Bangladesh for like a four year term. And and then. I spread, I got together and it was like. She did have an interest in doing that and we weren't married yet either and like. There was a time where, like, I was like it. It kind of came. To a came to a. Head and I had to decide. And it was really stressful and I was really torn, but I decided to not go. And so we went to Tucson for a year, and that was sort of like a compromise in a way. Whereas like. Because I really. Like the idea now, it's also growing up Mennonite. Like, there was a lot of people that my dad being a pastor, you know, we had a lot of people over for church after. For lunch after church and things that were like visiting or missionaries or people been around the world and I just like, I saw so many people that like their whole life, like they didn't just get a regular job, they decided to be like. I mean, they, they say missionaries, but Mennonites traditionally like, haven't been very. Pushy, like a lot of like other missionaries, like not pushing. Christianity, or pushing American culture on other cultures, it's they've been just a little more generally culturally sensitive than other other religions and and denominations and so. I always really admire those people, but I I also just like saw so many people that like had made. Their lives. Their life work about service and not about just making money or. Working a job to make money to have their family or whatever. And so I think those seeds were planted pretty. Early on in me. And and so that's what I was. I would have done with them in a night. Central Committee would have been like. Gone over and had to do some fundraising and. Like but then I would have been, you know, my room. And boy would have. Been covered, but I would have been working full time. For free? Basically but. But instead we did that same basic thing for one year with the organization called Mennonite Voluntary Service, which is like a one year, and that's been around for a long time. And at the time, they were like, I think 12. Cities in the US where? There was one or two kind of group houses where you would go and. They figure out a placement for you. Or whatever, and you go and then you. Doing like a job in the area that you go work at and they get someone to work for free. So mostly nonprofits, and then you're usually doing something that is. From your area of study or something you're interested in, so so spring and I went, went to Tucson and I worked at a food bank there that did food security work. So the food bank did its typical food bank stuff. But then there was a whole office of us that were focused on food. Security. So my job was the Backyard garden coordinator. That was one part of my job, but. Basically, the food bank provided free assistance to anybody in Tucson that wanted. Free help like finding a place to grow. A garden in their. Yard. And so I got to like, go all around the city to a lot of different places and like people's backyards and find the right spot with the sun angles or water or things like that and help them. Plant out a garden and then we had access to free compost from the city and free seeds and plants that the food bank grew in their garden. And so we would we and we would even have like. Extra staff. Sometimes that we go, we can all help them dig a garden by hand with shovels. And it was really, really interesting where I met a lot of interesting people and kind of. Got to. Yeah. How a lot of people, like, learn to grow their own food and then they also did work with like 3 different school gardens that were in schools and they so some staff, their whole job was to be at the schools and teach. Kids, gardening skills and help them like make use the food in the cafeteria and things like that. And then I also have to get I help to design one of the newer school. Garden that we. Kind of made it into kind of permaculture. Rainwater harvesting. Kind of. Planting that you. Know like a lot of things are like I. Went back five years later. And it's all gone. So, but we worked with AmeriCorps team and then they all helped like dig the beds and shape the landscape and stuff. So that was cool. Then spree did a year as she did a home repair for low income and elderly family. So she learned a lot of building. Skills that we've been using all around the farm. Ever. Since and. Yeah. And I do some consulting work now too to help people grow like figure out what kind of. Farm or homestead? They want to do for so they bought

land and they want to help, like figuring out where to put trees and where to put various things. And so I do a fair amount of consulting work. And if like that all stems back to that year going out and. Doing free consulting for people for gardens, so yeah.

Cissell:

So from Tucson you come here.

Bender-Beauregard

Came here and that's where we've been to Tucson. We were there, we knew we. Were going to be moving back here. And her mom was looking around and found an old single wide trailer from the 70s for like 2500. Dollars and they paid someone to pull it onto the property and then we came back in. Very beginning of September 2003 and. We and we our my wedding was planned for like. For September 27, so we just celebrated our twenty year anniversary and thanks and then.

Cissell:

Ohh congratulations.

Bender-Beauregard

Though we had like less than a month to kind of get everything ready for the wedding and like our trailer, all the plumbing was busted, the roof leaked and like so we were. Also like revent, like renovating our trailer, but it was all good. It was fine and then like we live in that trailer for seven years, 7-8 years as we were just sitting where we wanted to build a house and how we wanted to build it. Growing vegetables and various and eggs, we sold eggs too and. Just kind of like. Then slowly kind. Of like we build a house here, we kind of moved over to this side of the lane and then everything we've done mostly here has been on this side kind of standing that way, yeah.

Cissell:

Do you want to maybe like? Describe the property and what you have going on here.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah. So originally when we moved back, her parents owned. I believe it was like 19.5 acres that they owned in common with the other family, Russell Sally Leinbach, who were on on the property and they built their house down. I think I pointed out earlier here down. Sort of the I'd be the. One of the central part of the property. And they own that in common. They both bought separate parcels and they just combined them and sort of held it in common. And and they shared I think 2. Meals a week. Together sort of help each other out with. A lot of things. So when we moved back, they were still here and we sort of just hopped into that meal. They were just doing one meal, one meal week then and we. Participated in that and. And we. Yeah. And they were just Bush hogging once a year, like they had a tractor and a Bush hog, and they just Bush hog. All the pastures, once a year to keep more trees from growing up and keep it open. But then other than that, they weren't really doing anything with the land and. We moved back and then just started like our trailer. Was kind of on. The eastern side of the properties or southeastern side. Oh, and before that too. Like the wood, the property was probably about half. Forest and half open the way it was. Because the forest. That's the we're on our Ridge top and. It drops off pretty quickly to the north as we go north, it sort of starts like when we went down to

the cab and it starts dropping off and so they left that as woods and kept the open more flat areas, Bush hogged and so. So yeah, so there's probably a total of. Like 7 maybe open Acres 7 to 8 open acres and then the rest was sort of woods. And then there's some trails to the woods. And then we. We just, we're sort of like growing on their property, so to speak, like they gave us permission and like wanted like when he was really excited about us moving back about their daughter moving back and having something done with the land and we were excited about getting to do things, land that we didn't have to go. Take out a big mortgage for and start from scratch on and. So, but we never like planned to. Buy it or. Anything we just both were like, we'll just do this while it's here and we don't need to know that. It's like, whatever. But we'll have use of it forever and. But then and I think. When we started to build our house, her mom felt like we really needed to officially own. Some property and so they decided to just deed. All but three acres of their section into our name, which we were fine with, but you know, didn't like. They need to just give it to us. But they they wanted to. And so then we owned like 13 acres. And then they haven't. So we everything got surveyed off. And so the other family had, I think 5 acres and when they they decided to move to Virginia. To be close to their kids. They're grandkids. I mean, they're one child and grandkids and. And so then we had to have a surveyor come, like survey off new. Survey lines where we wanted them and that's when we bought the cabin that. Was down there. We bought two and three quarter acres. I think with the cabin from them and the cabin because we knew we'd probably want to do some with that cabin at some point and. And then. About three or four years ago, maybe now we bought a property behind us, came out for sale and it's down in the box. So we're on a Ridge top. And it slopes to the north down and there's sort of a bowl like a bottom land where like everything drains to and. There's sort of a. Temporary stream that forms after really big rains, it kind of washes through that area, but then it's gone and the woods down there are really scrappy and kind of scraggly. If someone had, like, bought that land and then like heavily logged it and then turned around to flip it and sell it, and we bought 19. Then we bought 19. Yeah, 919 acres total. There, and so that added to the 13 acres we have before like now we have 30 and 32 acres and then where we're planning to do with that is slowly convert it into. More pasture for cattle or other animals, but also. I ideally, if we get it cleared. It's just a long, slow process, but. We'd like to plant like chestnuts and hazelnuts and pecans. Down there that are. More nut trees, a lot of fruit going up here. And I mean, I used to have some nut trees to sort of balance that. Out and maybe be like something that could be like set up in a way that could be harvested with a tractor or something in the future so. That's a long process, and sometimes I wonder if we should even do it at all, or if we should, if we should just manage it back into woods again, then it's kind of a hard decision so. But yeah, I. Mean the rest of it, we have like a 3 1/2 acre silver pasture where we used to graze cattle. In between rows of fruit trees. And then we have our nursery is in about probably 1/2 an acre chunk. And then our house and sort. Of landscaping areas or another, maybe. Another half acre. So it's a very like. Home study kind of like. More tight? Not not like a big farm with lots. Of big. Lanes for tractors and stuff to go in so.

Cissell:

Yeah. Was it important for you to have that kind of? Feel like us to it.

Bender-Beauregard

Probably I it's funny like I. I feel like. It's too tangly and tight, I feel like. I'm I'm feeling I'm constantly kind of cursing permaculture, which was sort of like the realm that I. We started all this then that I was really attracted to, which was sort of my at the time. That was my only framework for. Like ecological

agriculture or or agriculture that mimics an ecosystem. And now that we're like 20 years into it, I feel like that probably like permaculture in general tends to like be these really tight. Convoluted designs that are like. Like trying to in my mind, packing too much into one space, permaculture would say like. No, we're making so. Much efficiency by layering everything together, and I say well, try that for 20 years and tell me how it goes, because for us it's just been kind of a pain. To have everything packed together and I sort of. Like, yearn for more, like more streamlined simplicity and. So I feel like. Like our solar pastor looked tangly right now, but when we grazing cows in it or keeping it mowed, it's actually pretty simple. A very simple layout with straight rows, a single rows of trees running North and South, and then big chunk of pasture between them. And it's a very versatile space. It's easy to work with and. Around our house and stuff is is a little a little tighter like we can't get a pickup truck up to our back door anymore, you know and. If I had to like. Do it again. I'd probably like keep things a little more open for like a pickup truck or a tractor to come all the way around through almost anywhere on the property that I could get it. To but but people that come out to visit seem to like this field that we have. One person named it really well and it's always stuck with me ever since. A friend of ours named Jim, she's from Korea and she came and lived here for like, a fall one fall. And she just she's an artist and. She said it's like you have, like, the perfect balance between order and chaos. And and it was like I never heard it name before that. And when she said that I just was like, man, you nailed it like. Because before that, I felt kind of like I'd feel sort of guilty for how messy our place was when people would come out, I felt like, oh, yeah, we don't keep anything up around here and they probably think we're just like a big mess. UM. And then on the other side, sometimes I felt like I was getting I. Was a little too. Orderly or I was like, you know, mowing too much and it was messing up the ecology. Or like what nature wanted to do. And I felt like those things, these conflicting voices. And I was always trying to go away from one or go away from the other. And you can't. Do that on both of them, but then when she said, like no, you're just balanced. And I realize now it's like every farm I go to. Whether it's a. Huge corn and soybean farm that they harvest the plant completely mechanically and it's wide open or like a crazy like nature preserve or farm. That's like all about just restoring nature like everything is. On this spectrum of ordering chaos, and everybody finds themselves somewhere on that spectrum, and it's really helped me to understand and appreciate. Like where we're at on that, I guess and. You know if, like we are tangly enough here that. We have a lot of birds and wildlife that just you know, around everywhere. Sometimes it's a pain, you know, they either. Feeds or they deer come up and browse our. Seedlings that were growing, you know, and we find ways to kind of like order them out of the system, you know. But but I like that it sort of seems to still be functioning as an ecosystem, as if we weren't, if we weren't growing food here. You probably still have most of the like wildlife that would be here, I mean, including butterflies and pollinators and things like that too. So. So that feels good. But then it feels good to be like. Orderly enough that we can, like, run the lawn. Mower through where? We need to or set a ladder up to trellis things. And her name, Brambleberry Farm, is actually meant to reflect that. Like we were thinking for so long about what we would name our farm, and we decided brambleberry because. It was like we have brambles and we have berries and. It's like we're kind of brambling we we kind of have some production too. It's kind of like. So it's, I don't know if that's like you never know, maybe that's shaped our whole thing from the get.

Cissell:

Yeah. Yeah, when I guess did the naming and I guess the. Shift to like where this is our business and we're going to grow something here. When did that come about?

Bender-Beauregard

Well, I mean. We grew the very first year we were here. We grew, we did 2.

Bender-Beauregard:

OK. OK.

Bender-Beauregard

Csas as kind of a trial thing, we're both working off the farm part time. And then doing what we could when we were here, the days we were here. And so we made a little bit of money the first year even, like looking back, it was just crazy how cheap. We you know what we charge for things and but you know, it was something and. But yeah, and then the next year, I think we scale it up ahead like maybe a dozen CSA members. And so did the farmers market that year. And then I think we scaled up to like 30 CSA members the following year and that was probably when we were like more full on. I think we were still working off farm jobs like one or. Two days a week at that point. But then I'd say I think 20. Well, yeah, 2000. The fall of 2007 is when we. Started building our house. And I think that's when we stopped working any all fund jobs. And we worked about half of our time building our house and half of our time doing the farm. And then since then, we've. Not worked any offline jobs. So. So that's I guess when it became our. Time gig, I guess, but.

Cissell:

Yeah, I'm going to shift now to Papas in person, so your introduction to them and what those look like.

Bender-Beauregard

So like I have a longer history with. And so in high school I. Got pretty into wild edible plants and. Where I was living in southeastern Pennsylvania is a pretty suburba city area, and most of the land was developed in the farmland, so there wasn't a lot of woods you could forage in, but. There was some. In and outside my subdivision, I lived in and every Sunday I would go wander around the woods and find what I can find that. Was edible and also just be in the woods. UM. And I don't remember seeing pawpaw trees. I remember reading about them, but I don't think there were any in those woods. But later, as I was in college, I remember, like, just really wanting to try a paw paw. But like, I would look and I'd find them and I'd find. Fruit on some. Of the trees, but they would always be gone by the time they should have been, right? And you know, I didn't know quite what I was doing and, like, shaking the trees to see if they were right, they would fall, that kind of thing. And everybody just said that raccoons and possums ate them all before they, you know, ripen. And you can never. Any did my very first Paul Paul, I remember very clearly. Goshen College has this amazing property called Mary Lee, which is like an 1100 acre nature preserve and sort of a living laboratory where a lot of my biology classes were held. And I remember I was down there and I was. I want a tour where I was leading a tour group on a mode path. And we were walking. It happened to walk by this pawpaw tree. I saw a ripe fruit and it looked like the colored change a little bit. And I was like, I think that's right. Anyway, there's this whole group there. I didn't care, and I just was like, oh, my gosh, paw paw. And I just shimmied up this tree. Just probably like 4 inches in diameter and like 20 feet tall. And I like scoop it out in the branch and kind of, like, kick my legs out and rode the whole tree down and grabbed the pop. Unfortunately, I broke the tree in half, but I got it. Perfectly right, Paul, Paul and I brought my pocket knife out and I cut it up and people all got to

try some. And it was like one of the most amazing. It completely blew even my expectations out of the water about what it would taste like. This is so good. It was like it was the texture of an avocado. And it was sweet like a banana, but it had a little bit of almost a mango flavored to it. And I was like, this is incredible. So. I had that first when I started seeing them everywhere and I started figuring out where. To go to find them. Then when we started our farm, I plant, you know, gathers and seeds locally and planted them. We still have some of those trees that produce fruit for us. But then I started learning about the graph of varieties and things and I started trying to collect cyan wood and learn to graph them. And kind of been collecting them ever since. And persimmons were a lot different. Persimmons. I had never heard of until when Osprey and I were dating. We came down here one fall. Well, was it now? I remember day, I think we came on the spring, so I never was down here today. But like I think we moved back from Tucson. We came down here. When we move back here and then all of a sudden there's these persimmons. And I was really intrigued by them and they were green on the trees. We were taking a walk with her parents down the road. And they're like, oh, there's a percent tree look, it's got a lot of fruit on this here. And they were like, yes. Green, you know, knowing that. But I was like, really curious. And they're like, don't eat them when they're green and you really regret it. And I. Was like I. Don't care. I just kind of want to get a sense of what they taste like. Maybe they're like, whatever. So like, I like bit into the green for Simon and it was like awful. And and I think they kind of tainted. I like feeling towards person. For a while. You know, we I you know, I they present in pudding and like that and you know. Could sort of. I felt like they I also had other weird experience with that affected why I didn't like persimmons and it was these when I was a kid there was these and they're still around. I've seen them. There are these candies that are like wax. Soda bottles. They're like little like. Like so? Like soda bottle shaped. Things made out of wax that have like a candy like liquid inside of them and you bite the top off and squeeze.

Bender-Beauregard:

Oh yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

The like. It's like Kool-aid, like concentrated kool-aid or something in there. And I remember, like, as a kid, I. Think I ate too many of those one time. And they're like this orange flavor. And like the wax, there was kind of like almost like a wax flavor and you chew the wax afterwards too. And it sort of like. And I think I just had like a really bad association with his orange wax soda bottles. And when I ate my first person. And that's exactly like the flavor that came to mind for me and. It was just like. So I appreciate it for Simmons for like. How they were like such a strong local cultural thing here and everybody's family has a person inputting recipe. Anybody argues about whether you should put spices in them or not and. Or serve it with whipped cream or not and but I never really, truly liked eating them fresh. I was like, these are kind of gross and they're too sweet. And sometimes they're real cotton mouthy, and that's super nasty and. But then actually my friend Don Compton, who's a Persimmon breeder down in valley in 20 minutes South of us here. He brought me. Well, I didn't bring them to me. We went to a like an Indian or fruit and nut growers meeting together, and I was hanging out with him. And he had a little. Little solo cup that he had. Three or four of these exact persimmons these autumn 2. And I had never seen a cultivated person before, and these were just like. Huge. He's like, hey, try one and I ate it and it was really good. And I was like, oh, my gosh, persimmons can be, like, really good to eat fresh and they can be big and very few seeds. And I'm like, oh, man. And I knew how to graft already. So I every year

after that, I went over to Don's and he would let me. He'd walk around with me and let me cut cyan wood from his trees. Any Tammy which cultivars and things were good ones to have, and UM and I got some, you know, I eventually learned other places to get them too, and traded with other friends, but I just started grabbing for Simmons and then ever since, like, they've kind of. Surpassed Paul Paul. 'S and. Interest to me, I just think they have a. Lot more potential for. Human food and livestock food and. Longer lived, less picky about their growing conditions and.

Cissell:

So your first Persimmon was the ones on. This property that had.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, yeah, probably ones. We ate from right down there that I'm sure. Yeah. That was my very first right. Persimmon was that. And you can see it was like kind of astringent still and yeah, so.

Cissell:

I'd be curious to hear you kind of listed some of the reasons why you're interested more in persimmons now than Papas, but we were talking earlier. Maybe this is a good segue into like the toxicity of papaws and that like argument. So is that. Of a factor the livestock, I guess.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, it really has like. I think so. And and that's another weird thing that another argument why people say that we shouldn't be eating them is. There's almost no. Common livestock that will eat a paw paw and I've tried. I've tried feeding them to pigs, I've tried feeding them to chickens and they might take one bite, but they usually spit it out and they'll avoid it. And it's just really strange to me like a chicken, especially which we eat like almost anything that's sweet or gloppy. They won't touch them, but persimmons. Chickens were like. I mean, I used to clean my Persimmon seeds for planting in a nursery by putting. Like smashing a bunch of persimmons up into like a rubber tub and putting them like chickens, and they would lick them clean where like it was like the seeds were dry and are like sign, and they love that person and pop. And most livestock does too. So. I just kind of think. Yeah, pop out as they. I mean, it was a tax. Taxes, anything. And I never really bought that it was. They're so toxic that we shouldn't ever eat them, and I still don't believe that at all. Not for a moment, but. I also just noticed if I was being honest with myself that I was kind of getting tired of eating paw paws like I just didn't get excited about eating them every year like I used to. And then I talked to other people and they all have the same experience and it just made me think that, you know what? I think this is one of these foods. That, like our bodies, tell us. Maybe go easy on it. You know, because it's not like I hate pop pop and I still like, enjoy them and. And I love trying the different types and. But I'm not gonna like, just gorge on them anymore like that. Just makes me want to kind of. Puke thinking. About it, yeah. So now they are, I will I. Mean I could y'all. Every day could probably eat puffball ice cream. That's just absolutely amazing. It's like the best thing. Yeah, it's like and Papa. Papa and coffee ice cream, Papa and coffee. The flavors especially very white Papas have kind of a caramely burnt caramel like notes to them. And so like when I make my own home ice cream, I have some like, instant decaf. Coffee that I'll put it in. And it's just like it's so. It's so good. And I've also. I also made one time a really good. Kind of tropical sorbet. Almost. It was like coconut milk pal, pal, Pinot fresh pineapple, fresh mango. And then. I put a little bit of Thai basil in with it and that was just like. Amazing. And you make that again sometime? Yeah, that's a very fruity,

tropical kind of thing. So. So I do think Popos have a lot of great potential, but I just think it's something it's going to be a very limited.

Cissell:

That sounds great.

Bender-Beauregard

Used for desserts like it's never gonna. Be like a staple crop. Whereas for Simmons, I feel like. I mean, I think dried persimmons taste almost exactly like dates. I mean, they're chewy sweet. Sticky and like and there are seedless varieties of persimmons and like. People could grow those in an orchard setting and have, like, seedless persimmons that someone would dehydrate and the commercial dehydrator and they'd be like little dates. So you could just like have a go, buy a bag of dried persimmons at the store and. We would need to be importing dates from Middle East, you know, or California and. And then also just I mean yeah like. For something pulp can use in all kinds of baked baked goods. I make Persimmon pancakes right, kids. Sometimes Persimmon Paul. I'm sure someone would find a way to like. Extract stuff from percentage or dry it and make it do almost like a flower that you would add you know, would be a more easily used product and then I know someone who is very beginnings but they did enough research that they're looking to buy 4000 pounds of green persimmons just starting to turn right to use to. They found a way. To extract. A natural pesticide that is like for spraying on crops. That can be extracted from green percents and so there's a friend of mine. That's trying to round up £4000 for. This guy because he has like an industrial process all ready for it. To go through and. It's like, wow. So there's even another use for him and. And livestock feed. They're incredibly high in carbohydrates and very readily available carbohydrates. So you know, my mind first goes white. That's the car again. My mind goes right to Persimmon finished pork, so I'm thinking like there's like Acorn finished pork is a big thing, but. I'm like, I mean, persimmons like, they get super fat on persimmons, so I bet there'd be some flavor that might go through. I don't know. So.

Cissell:

And you were saying, like, the Papas kind of had their fat or you think they're on the way out, but the Simmons have this, like, potential. That hasn't been, I guess, mainstream recognized yet.

Bender-Beauregard

I think so. I think for Simmons or like the cool kid, the cool new kid on the block, and I think pop, I don't think popas are like going away, but I think I've just watched and like the toxicity issue is really starting to like become. More worrisome to mainstream people, and then I also know, like what happened with Sassafras, which is really a shame. Like Sassafras is now like you can't use it in any food products unless you've like, had it gone through this process to move remove staff roll, which is this compound that they found. To be carcinogenic. But you have to drink like 32 cups of sassafras tea a day to get that enough saffron for it to be carcinogenic. But the FDA, just like banned it, and so I'm worried that Paul Paul's could. Especially if the people that are like, vehemently against them. Like lobby and like, have their way, they would like be like, well, you're not even allowed to use it in any edible goods. And that. Would be a shame. That would be a total shame, and I so I really I think PayPal will be around. It's fantastic and ice cream and desserts I've had like Paul Paul Parfaits with like whipped into like how the pulp folded into like whipped cream. There's a million ways you can make amazing paw paw recipes. Desserts,

mostly. So it has its place, but it's just. I don't know. I just think it's also like you can't. There's not a good way to make them like shelf stable though. I. Guess for Simmons or? Like hard to ship to, they're a soft fruit when they're ripe, so. So fresh fruit, why is persimmons a lot of the same problems that Paul? Paul's do but. Yeah, I think. I think for seven they're going to be an. They have incredible potential in all different realms of. For human uses. Oh, and another thing that we see about nursery. More and more, they're really big deer food plot trees. They're like chestnuts and persimmons are kind of the main species that hunters are wanting to buy trees out to plant and that will attract deer to certain spots every day. And there's even varieties of persimmons called like. Your candy and deer magnet and buck candy. And these are all ones that are supposedly more attractive to deer, or they're ripening at the right. Season to get deer to start coming to those trees before hunting season starts, so it's another whole. Amazing thing for him so.

Cissell:

Before I ask you about all the varieties you have, we spoke briefly about like the indigenous plant knowledge and I kind of forget what you say, but something kind of along the lines of like. Maybe this Cherokee woman I you'll be able to tell it better than me, but you know, there's kind of. This knowledge like to not eat a lot. Of it, you know, yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Paul Paul's. Yeah, that was it was on a Facebook group. It was. It was one of the many, like, heated debates about, I think was on a pop Paul group Facebook group and. It was probably 2. Or three years ago and everybody was getting all up in arms on either side about whether they're. Total poison or there's no problem at all with them. And then there was a woman who's a young Cherokee woman that. Said that, she's heard from her. Elders that paw paw is just strong medicine and need. You need to be careful with it. Not that you shouldn't eat it, but just don't go too wild with it and that makes the most sense to me of anything I've heard. So just like, don't not enjoy it, but don't go. Hog wild on it like.

Cissell:

So and you were saying too like? The persimmons? Yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

So for Simmons, me and many. Other people that are involved in like. For some and breeding and like collecting for some varieties. We're all just totally convinced that it just has to have been. There's such a diversity in Persimmon, fruit shapes, colors, ripening times and flavors that. For a wild species, it seems way too varied that we feel like indigenous people. All around the persons natural range, and they probably expanded it to from a more narrow range. Have been selecting and breeding persimmons for thousands of years and. Most likely you know they were probably each region or settlement or just area had specific types of persimmons that were selected for and kind of bred for specific traits. And then when? All those cultures were completely disrupted by colonialism European. Colonizers coming over and displacing them. There was no longer anybody tending the Persimmon Groves and keeping certain varieties separate from other ones, and distinct and continuing to select for certain traits, and so they've just kind of gotten all mixed. Together now from wildlife and humans and just watching along the rivers and. And so now we just in any given spot, you can see all these different types of shapes of persimmons in one little area. And I think it's we're just seeing like the old breeding work all mixed up and somewhat

lost. But it's not loss because I think than the European most, like mostly European. Persimmon breeders which? Is what I mean. I mean European American. Are what most of the readers have. Been so far and. You know, they're they're. Selecting some of the better ones from the wild, which would have been probably. Seed more seed stable. Varieties that indigenous people would have selected, so they're maybe getting one fruit that's amazing and they'll cross that with something else. And then they're planting out and finding amazing ones. So. So I think I think that what we're seeing now is just. Breeding work that is thousands of years in the making, being like picked back up again. And move forward, though it would be very interesting and I would love to hear and see any work that indigenous peoples. Are doing currently with Persimmon breeding and planting and growing and harvesting and using because I think. Sorry go. I I think that. You know, most of the Breeders that I know. That are breeding for Simmons. You know, have a very specific focus of like for some in pulp and large fruit and fruit that doesn't, it can be commercially harvested maybe. And I just wonder if indigenous. Perspectives and like. Life ways would bring a different type of breeding where that might not be so like linear or like. UM. I don't know. I just think it would be. It would be really I would love to see more indigenous perspective in the breeding work of of all these crops. And so hip I know there's, I know there's people out there doing it they just. Got to get their voices heard and like. Because it's. And even just reuniting a lot of these people with the person where they've been moved to places that they don't have persimmons anymore and. That's been gone from there like. Physical landscape where they're at for like. 100 years or more and. Just getting people reunited for some in some way. So I don't know.

Cissell:

Yeah. No, that's really cool, too. And that's yeah, that would be a joy through this work to be connected to folks who are doing that or to see that work. Yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

I hope I I. Know they're there and it's just a.

Cissell:

Yeah, yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Matter of finding them and it's. There's a really cool woman that I heard she was up the North American fruit explorers. Online conference two years ago, I think his name is Regan. I forget her last name. Reagan said that she's down in New Mexico. She's a doctor. I think she has her doctorate degree.

Bender-Beauregard:

She's teaching grad.

Bender-Beauregard

School now, but she did, I think her. Graduate thesis on. And she is like. Pueblo, Laguna, maybe I forget, but. She did this awesome presentation on wild. Peaches in the southwest. There were all these very specific Peach varieties that were tended by different groups in the Southwest. And that grow really well in like no like very low water conditions. And traditionally, most of them are traditionally dried on rooftops for like dried fruit, and but they're almost all gone. And she went around and started, like,

asking the different elders. And she got into some really interesting old elders that had like. A secret bowl of these Peach seeds that were down underneath the floor. They dig for them and she like they they gave some to her that she's drilling and and trying to like breathe back up now and. I mean, that's just like, makes my spine tingle. It's so cool because, like. Especially because Peaches aren't even like a necessarily traditional traditional Native American crop. Because they were brought over by the Spaniards, they're not a new world crop at all. But they're brought to this. Traded all the way up through like South and Central America into North America. And then when, like Lewis and Clark came through all these Groves of wild Peaches all around that were just seedling populations at. The so it's like. Oh, it's not. Really a true like native crop, but it is because it was like claimed by people that were here. I don't know. I think it's cool so.

Cissell:

Yeah, and.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, have that same thing can happen with persimmons and someone, yeah.

Cissell:

Yeah, maybe now is a good time. Like you can talk about the Asian varieties and. Ohh yeah, I totally skipped over everything you have here. Like, yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Oh yeah. Oh, that's alright. Too many to list varieties, but yeah, so Asian persimmons are what's. Most people are familiar with in the United States would be just what they find, the supermarkets or specialty like international grocery stores or the Asian persimmons, which are really big. Amazingly, big fruits like apples and some of them bigger and there's two sort of main types that you'll see. The one is what's called. Like a hachiya type. And they're like a. Really large acorn shaped usually more towards like orangish red color. And those are in a stringent type which you have to let them get soft. Before you eat them, or else you'll get like this cotton mouthy astringency in your mouth. And then there's a. The other type are called non astringent types, and they're generally like. That's called a flu type. There's the two more popular types of those in all throughout Asia, or flu and Jiro. The one we have them to have here growing is a ichika gyro, so it's a gyro type. Those are both flat and squat like a pumpkin. Like a Cinderella pumpkin. And they're usually a light orange or a yellow color. And those are meant to be eaten crunchy, like an apple. And so those you slice just like you would an apple, you can eat the. Skin and they're very nice. They're very delicate. Very delicate, sweet Persimmon flavor. But not heavy at all, and crunchy and somewhat juicy. And they're kind of like great and fruit salads and stuff like that. But Asia persimmons cannot take as much cold as cold climates as American persimmons. American persimmons can grow. All the way down to zone 4 like so all the way up into like almost Vermont up into Wisconsin. It's very rare to see them there that they. Can actually ripen their. Fruit in thyme and they often will get burnt back by like. Really, really cold winters sometimes there, but they are found there. But like Asian persimmons are supposed to only be hard to like Zone 7, which is like South of the Ohio River like Louisville, I think is Zone 7, maybe, and we're zone 6B, but I think we're probably moving more towards 7. And so we've been able to grow Asian percent and and they getting hurt by really nasty winters like nest. Last winter did, but they don't. They they're not killed completely and they. Like ours

are growing back out. They'll be fine next year. Probably have a crop, so, but they're shorter trees. They only get, you know, 20 feet, 1520 feet. Generally, American persimmons can get up to like 90 feet in some areas. Certain types most around here. You'll see them, they'll get to be like, you know, 4050.

Bender-Beauregard:

And the male.

Bender-Beauregard

American persimmons always get bigger than the females because they're not spending all their energy making fruits, so they. They're really, really. Big Persimmon trees you see, are like big diameter, almost always nails. And the female trees seem to reproduce themselves by. By seed, but also they'll grow, make lots of fruit, and eventually almost wear themselves out. But they have root suckers that pop up all around the main trees, and so if one big may not come up or something cracks off, it's not dead. It usually sends up a bunch of new suckers from its roots and kind of builds a new structure that makes fruit. That way so they're sort of like like female Persimmon trees. American Persimmon trees are sort of like. Somewhat short lived like they're sort. Of designed to be kind of like. UM. Like, OK, so a wind storm will probably crack them off within 20 or 30 years when they start growing, but they'll be root systems that just. Continually renew them after that, so. Asian persimmons have thicker, glossier leaves, like more like, almost like they have like a leaf Polish on them. And they have exceptionally vibrant fall colors, just flaming oranges and Reds, whereas American persimmons have a little bit duller of a leaf. It's much thinner, doesn't have that sort of waxy, thick feel like Asian for something to do, and they do change nice colors in the fall, but not quite as vibrant. Usually yellows are the main color with those, so. Oh, in Asian persimmons. The fruit never falls from the tree when it's ripe, it stays on the tree. So you have to pick that fruit from the tree when it's ripe and know when it's ripe. American persimmons lets you know because they drop their fruit right when it's ripe. It also means the fruit splats on the ground. And it means that. In the US, like the health department won't let you sell that fruit unless it's processed properly, because it's touched the ground so. They're not leaving them there. 5 second rule.

Cissell:

I think I don't know if this is like significant or anything, but to me like I think my interest in this project comes from the fact that, you know, papos and persimmons are both indigenous to this region and I don't know you. Know the size. I guess it's new information to me that they could, you know, theoretically grow as north of Vermont. But like this Ohio Valley like watershed region being like this concentration and I guess being in this place it feels special. I don't know if any of that resonates with you or if you?

Bender-Beauregard

Would respond at all. Yeah, it's something I noticed and I talked. To everybody about, it's so interesting. That persimmons will grow. So they go all through the South too, but they're usually like, they're sort of a different. I could get all into that these big 60 chromosome and 90 chromosome person and generally north of the river Ohio River, they're generally 90 chromosome and tend to be. Better fruit quality. A lot of us believe that it has something to do with. Indigenous breeding efforts. South of the river, they tend to all be 60 tremor stones and and they still make fruit and it's edible and some of them are really good, but there's hardly any cultivars out there that are like really amazing fruit types that are 60. However,

the seedless persimmons that, like we have are generally 63% persons that are grown up here in 90 chromosome country where they will never get tree pollination because they're chromosome number differences. But they'll still try and. Make a fruit and that fruit won't have. Any seeds in it? Right. So that's why that's why now that's. All that's to sort of lead up to why. We moved here and I first was around persimmons. I was like, oh, man. Yeah, persimmons like everybody here had, like, when you go to potlucks, people bring Persimmon puddings. You know, it's like Persimmon pudding is just this normal dessert around here. But you go down into, like, across the river in the Kentucky. And it's like no one knows what to do. With them I mean that's. Fleet stereotype, but like, they'll be growing and falling. And you ask people and they're like, oh, yeah, they're, I mean, you can eat them if you want, but usually you eat them and. You know, there's just this fruit that falls in the fall and like, there's just not this culture of. Using persimmons and like around here, everybody has a fully food mill or some kind of strainer in their cupboards that they use for making Persimmon pulp from with in the fall. And it's just like, yeah, and I think and then we are in, like you said, we're definitely in like the heart of. For Simon and Paul Paul country. Paw paws, I would say like people definitely use paws around here a lot, but I would. Say, like West Virginia? Has and a lot of Appalachian culture has, like a lot of paw paw. Intact Paw paw lore and paw paw use. Maybe more than here. Even though they grow really well here. And are used a lot. I think that. Yeah, like the Appalachian culture has. A little more like. Still like a more functional vocabulary with.

Cissell:

Originally I was looking at some interviews through the University of Kentucky Oral History Center, and I've just searched pawpaw and the only ones that popped up is like talking with farmers and food waste. So I was like, ohh yes. And then it was just these people who lived in Paw Paw.

Bender-Beauregard

Ohh cool.

Cissell:

Creek, Eastern Kentucky so.

Bender-Beauregard

Oh yeah.

Cissell:

They they didn't. They weren't really talking about the fruit. But yeah, just like there was a place. Called Pawpaw Creek.

Bender-Beauregard

No, there's there's a there's. A Popal tunnel in Western Maryland like West Virginia, there's Paul, Michigan. Yes, around there's a Paul Paul. You saw, like papal St. somewhere rather recently. But yeah, it's it's like it's like. Lurking in the shadows.

Cissell:

Yeah. And I was doing the spelling PA. W PA W. Is that how you I've? That's been my.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, I've seen people spell it, I think especially maybe other parts like people say, like PAP hall, like PA with PA, PA, W But I don't think that I mean I.

Cissell:

Questions, too. There's no formal. Ohh yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Think that's more just a local? You know different spelling of it the. I do know that like the the a lot of the indigenous I. Think especially Cherokee where it is is. The genius of Paul is like a seminar. I think it's like a semina is the Cherokee word for Paul Paul. They're the guy that did. I think he did it and maybe even someone else that I've seen, like a visual. There's like a map. Somewhere flowing on Facebook that has a map and all the indigenous words for Paul Paul like on its. General Region, which is kind of cool, yeah.

Cissell:

Oh yeah, 30.

Bender-Beauregard

So I don't know the word, Papa. I don't know if they. Know where the word Papa came from because. Pupils are also wet, like in Australia I think, and also East Africa. They call papaya paw paw. So people get that confused too. They think like that. Maybe how it got its name but.

Cissell:

Moving on to now, the people you've met or influences and kind of your community and network, who would that be?

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah. So I'll try and. List them. Yeah. Yeah, so. The first one comes to my mind is definitely Donald Compton. His place is called. Hobo Woods, Persimmon Farm and he is down. Here in valine VALENE. Indiana it's a tiny little I. Think there's a post office? Between kind of between Paoli and Marengo, if you go down to 30. Seven. It's a little back Rd. there. And he is carrying on and kind of bringing his own. Style tip breeding work of the late James Claypool. Of St. Elmo, IL. Who did probably the most breeding work of Persimmon. For a white guy. He was more doing most of his work. In like the. 70s and 80s I think maybe 80s and 90s. But he was working closely with some kind of going backwards here and then I'll kind of jump forward but and then James Claypool was working closely with. Professor at Jim Painter Banna named. I don't know why I can't think of his name. It's like a JJ McDaniels, but I can't. I was gonna say Jeremy McDaniels that someone I know and it's not Jeremy McDaniels, it's. Yeah, but anyway the.

Cissell:

I can pause.

Bender-Beauregard

And I just. Yeah, pretty good. McDaniels with professor at Champaign, Urbana, who is really trying to develop for some another commercial crop. And he worked with.

Bender-Beauregard:

Then I have one water load.

Cissell:

But we might, I might pause it if we could.

Bender-Beauregard

Ohh yeah yeah. So yeah, McDaniels was really working to. Kind of make persimmons A viable commercial crop tree crop and then James Claypool. Worked a lot with him and they worked a lot together to and James Craig ended up doing a lot of the kind of footwork on ground growing and breeding work and then kind of work with Daniels to kind of help interpret and understand things a little bit. But then, so that's just sort of some of the older. Ones before that, there were a lot of Persimmon cultivars like early golden and things that were selected out of the wild. By people that just like, felt like, hey, there's this amazing Persimmon. So they grafted it or started seeds of it or just gathered from that tree. And so there were a number of person and cultivars around, but they were all not nearly as improved as some of the ones we have now today. So that's that's kind of going backwards and then. And we talked about the indigenous, that's probably the biggest chunk of percent of. Breeding history, but and then. So Don Compton then continued claypool's work, and he has an Orchard 5 acre Persimmon orchard that has. And I forget how many 1500 trees or something. Where he did. Hand crosses of different. Improved cultivars and planted them out and kept records and is watching now. His orchards probably probably getting close to 30 years old. I think by now and it's. Well, I might. Yeah. Maybe get more like 25 AM and they're all producing and he has a lot of amazing varieties out there that he's selecting now and me and a bunch of other people, we're all grafting them and getting them out to the world and. So Don Compton and he's been a real strong mentor to help me learn about grafting and getting me cyan wood and justice. Helping me out. So. So that's done, Compton and then. Jerry Lehman. I didn't know as well. And he is a Persimmon. And Paul Paul breeder or was a Persimmon paw paw breeder late. Jerry Lehman just outside of Terre Haute IN. And he. He did a fair amount of breeding work with Simmons, but mostly with Paul Paul's and he's known mostly for the Paul Pauls. So he. He was very active in the Indiana fruit and Nut Growers Association and. Did a lot of tours. With that group to bring people out to his orchards to see and trial a lot of different pop hall and Persimmon varieties, he also did a lot. He had a lot of international connections and brought a lot of. Varieties over from different parts of the world that we now have in the US. So he made a lot of good contributions and then. Another good friend is Cliff England of McKee, Kentucky, which is near Sand Gap, Kentucky right outside of Berea, and.

Cissell:

I'm realizing now I know exactly where Mickey. Yeah.

Bender-Beauregard

Perfect. Ohh man. Yeah, you got it? Yeah. So Cliff is an awesome guy, super friendly guy and helpful and he I am pretty sure he has the biggest collection, most extensive collection of persimmons, and Paul

Paul's. And now also jujubees and. Che or Chi or Chinese melon Berry, which is sort of another unusual crop from Asia of anybody I know in the US He just has and he has a lot of international connections. He was in the military. His wife's from Korea and he just has these connections all around the world and he has brought in a lot of amazing. Persimmon and pawpaw varieties from around the world, and then there's other fruits as well.

Cissell:

His last name is.

Bender-Beauregard

England, England. Ohh so his business is England's orchard and nursery. He also sells trees, so he he has a nursery where he sells. He uses sell all kinds of different things, but then he's now focusing on. Persimmons, pawpaws and jujubees maybe che as well. I forget just the ones that are sort of his main. He also worked with very interesting. So this is part of the network map. He worked very closely with the late David Laverne of Louisiana State University. David Laverne was a Persimmon breeder who I never met David wish I had, but he bred, I think, most of the Asian persimmons because he was down in Louisiana. That's what you would grow would be the Asian persimmons. But he. UM. He started breathing American persimmons with Asian persimmons to get hybrid persimmons, and so he would make these crosses and he would send the seeds to Cliff England in Kentucky to trial them for cold hardiness. Because Cliff, I think is zone 6B, maybe even 6:00 AM where he's at, he's up on the hills. And so it's a little colder. He actually has lost things we haven't up. Here in Indiana. And so a lot Cliff is now releasing a lot of varieties of hybrid persimmons that have gone through some really harsh winters. And he's seen which ones have survived and which ones haven't and which ones make really good fruit, which ones don't. And so that's a really important part of the story. David Laverne did a lot of crosses. And then Cliff England grew them out, so. That was kind of a. Partnership. And that's a neat thing, especially here. Cliff talked about it. So that's clipping line. And then let's move east a little bit. Sort of goes SA little bit. Well, I mean, we're down in Louisiana, so we might as well. There's a couple of people down there I know. That are doing southern. Persimmons. One of them's got a nursery. His name is Taylor Yawl, and I think it's called the Garden Pharmacy. With an. As the name of their nursery and their farm, and he has been finding persimmons that do well in Mississippi. I think he's in southern Mississippi and he also is working with a guy named Larry Stephenson, who has southern cultured fruits. I think is the name of his nursery and they both have been sort of collecting and trialing different Persimmon varieties down in the Deep South.

Bender-Beauregard:

And then.

Bender-Beauregard

Going to the East Coast. A really interesting historical. Couple different ones so.

Bender-Beauregard:

I'm not as.

Bender-Beauregard

Like straight on the history as some of my friends on this, but they were. Before World War 2, there was this extensive amount of research and development going on in, especially in universities, but also in private individuals with. Trying to make like tree crops like an alternative agriculture, it was almost exactly like where we're at now, but then the war just kind of like ruined the whole thing because for a number of reasons, there just wasn't resources to put into it anymore. And then chemical fertilizers kind of made their big debut and it just kind of like fizzled and all these programs that were just. On the cusp of, really. Making a lot of things very viable, kind of just like dropped off and we now just have remnants and stuff, so there's. There's a place in. Downingtown, PA that still has a remnant. Pretty like in not intact I guess, but like a pretty strong remnant. Of a huge. Nursery implanting by a man named John Hershey. And he had what was called the Nut tree nursery. UM. That he grew and crafted and sold a lot of nut trees, but also had a lot of persimmons and some paw paws and honey locust. For the purpose of planting for agriculture. Another friend of mine, who I'll get to in a Vermont buzz fervor and a bunch of other people. Have found that old planting, which now some of it is in the middle of a subdivision and there's still some of the original trees that are like yard trees in this subdivision. And some of them are just like growing up like a big forest they get but. There's still some there's map old maps of his nursery and they've been able to identify certain key trees. So they've been discovering collecting seed collecting, sign wood and getting that out. To a lot of people. That's kind of trying to like, rediscover and find out what was going on with John Hershey. And then John Hershey was working closely with another guy who wrote a book called Jay. Russell Smith wrote a book called Tree Crops. Towards a perennial agriculture and he wrote that in the 30s, I believe and. And it was sort. Of like the textbook for like. Perennial tree based agriculture. But he was mostly an author and kind of like researcher kind of guy. And so, like, he would work with like John Hershey. And then these other people that were more on the ground people. But he, I think got this thing with his Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA, which is this huge crazy organization that's still around in Tennessee. That they. Paid him to put in work with John Hershey and they put in these massive plantings of. Crop type trees from the nurseries and there's still remnants all around that. Tennessee Valley Authority area that. Friends of mine keep telling me about my one friend, Eliza Greenman. Just tell me about when they found this island that's full of honey locust that were all just the improved cultivars, and it's been isolated and it's like you can't even walk through it because it's so thorny and. They could even they like canoed around it and identify specific trees and mark them on the GPS. So there's these remnants around that we just have to rediscover so that Hershey planning is a good and interesting one. And then my friend Eliza Greenman is in Virginia. She just just now got a farm she's been doing. Amazing, crazy intense fruit exploring with apples and a bunch of things for a long time, persimmons included. And there's a guy. I mean, I don't know how much how much network do you want because I could probably keep talking. Like I'm realizing how much I thought I had, like, 6 people in mind. And I'm just like, oh, wow, there's other people, but I'll try and mention the last few pretty quick. But but Eliza and there's another great guy Taylor. Taylor Malone in Tennessee, and he's worked closely with allies and some other people. And he's done a lot of work finding stuff, remnants of the Tennessee Valley Authority planned things. And then Eliza and then a friend of mine, Zach Elfers in Pennsylvania, has a small nursery and he is also with a lot of these people going around and like tracking and finding old maps and finding a lot of remnant plantings. Persimmons. Paul Pauls. And that trees and then. Going further north, my friend, buzz fervor. Has a farm and nursery called Perfect Circle Farm. He's a mail order. Tree nursery. Excellent trees. And he is also heavily involved in all this, like sort of mapping and rediscovery of all these like lost plantings and buzz. And I trade a ton of plant material back and forth and graft each others stuff. And he's trialing a bunch of persimmons in

Zone 4 Vermont as well, which is. Kind of neat. So there's a number of other. People, I'm sure I'm missing some. Like, really important people, this friend of mine out in Washington state, Chris Humanex, I think his business, his head's hand and heart or head hand in heart. He's been doing. He does. He's doing. He's growing a lot of like for some varieties from our area, but also I think planting some things out to do some breeding work and he's doing a lot of plant exploring out in the West Coast and sort of tracking down things up there and yeah, and then there's like, there's the remnants that Cornell had, these Geneva plantings of persimmons and Paul. Calls that were. I think. Somewhat in partnership or planted by a guy named John Gordon, the late John Gordon worked a lot with people up there, but there's a number of. There's Geneva, pumpkin and Geneva long and. Geneva red are. 3% and varieties that are out there that. Are from the. Geneva Cornell. Cornell plantings so. Yeah, I'm sure from there you could probably keep jumping around and even more people. There's more people up in northeast and yeah, sorry for.

Cissell:

Yeah, we can always add there.

Bender-Beauregard

Anybody I left out? We go. We'll add. Yeah, just tell me so.

Cissell:

I think now I'll move on to the objects you brought if you want. And kind of give me a name or title and like physical description of each of them.

Bender-Beauregard

Cool, cool start. Let's start with.

Bender-Beauregard:

The grafting knife here.

Bender-Beauregard

So this is. Nothing fancy, it's. A winger like the Swiss Army brand kind of wanger, grafting and budding knife stainless steel. Like I bought it for $20 from Cliff England. It's one of his favorite ones to use and he always had a bunch. He'd sell you. He kept on hand. He would sell to his customers. So about my Cliff. And it's been my main grafting knife for the past. 10 years probably and. It folds so I can keep in my pocket if I want, but I almost never keep in my pocket because you need a bunch of other things when you're grafting. And so I have, like, an old fishing tackle box, so I keep my grafting. Well, I guess it's a toolbox. Keep my grafting stuff in, so I usually keep it open in there because I feel like closing it. I might sort of dull the blade a little bit when I. Close it. It hits the other. Stuff a little. Bit of something in there right now but. But yeah, I mean, as I look at it, it's it's pretty worn like it used to be bright red. Now it's kind of a weird pinky color, dirt and grime and the little cracks. One thing I really like about it that shows its age is that it's. I've sharpened this untold number of times and it's getting this like. Slight kind of bow to the edge. It used to be, you know, perfectly flat, but you know, gets sharpened more. Up in the. Upper part and this little part back here often never gets touched much, and so that part is still kind of like tall, but it just shows how much. It's like steel I've worn off of this. Grafting and then re sharpening it

and I've, you know, I've seen. Old pocket knives that. Older guides have carried that are just like whittled, like sharpened down in this little, almost like a filet. Knife and it's like that's so cool because like that tool got used. Through wear. That far, you know over its lifetime. So it's kind of cool. This one's getting that. Yeah, this is the main one I use. It's just really nice to. Stainless steel is nice. It doesn't rust because the SAP on the trees. You know, corrode steel pretty bad and the non stainless steel knives you have to kind of clean them off and oil them a lot. Like when you're done and this has just been a nice one, holds edge pretty well and it's. I like that it's a smaller knife because I do a lot of work on smaller. Diameter, twigs and things. Most people that graft use, like pretty beefy big stuff, and this knife is a little weak for that sometimes and I have some bigger knives when I'm using those, like doing those sort of things I can use. Them. But this is sort of like the main. My main partner in grafting, right? And it relates to my life and work because most of what I do in the nursery is grafting, I mean. In the from March through. August even I am. Most of the time I have. Free. I will be drafting one type of tree or the other, sometimes up at the nursery just in pots scrapping lots of little things in pots all together and sometimes out in the field. Putting new varieties on trees that are already growing out there that will have a way to trial and get more signed with from so. I was very close second to use to this one was my. Pocket knife that I carry with me because it's much more like multifunctional and I use it all around the farm to cut bailing twine or. You know, use this saw to cut little limbs. If I'm out and don't have pruners and. Pliers to pull wires out of things or whatever. So that's like maybe more overall useful, but this one seems more emblematic or symbolic to what we're talking about today. And my role with that. So go to the next one. So next one, I have three of, but I found this one really perfectly huge example of. The Persimmon variety that kind of woke me up to. How good American persimmons could be?

Bender-Beauregard:

To eat fresh.

Bender-Beauregard

So this is a variety called autumn 2. That's just a name that was given, nickname given to it by people for it's just a breeding number A-2. By James claypoole. So it was actually the second tree he would have planted in his planting in Saint Elmo, Illinois. I forget what his parents are, but there's a record I have of all those trees about what cross he did to get this fruit. I was given this by Don Compton, my mentor, and he. He has had some with him at a meeting, I think I said that earlier. Maybe that story, but. It's just. It's just it's a beautiful Persimmon. It has this, it's. Got more of a. Like white bloom on its surface that I've seen on any other persimmons, and it just makes it kind of. Look kind of like almost Milky or pale or ghostly. I'd really like to rename this one pumpkin latte because I think that would be, like really enticing for people to, like order, you know? But I I don't know. I feel kind of weird naming something that someone else bread, but who knows other people have already done it with Claypool stuff. I shouldn't feel too bad. They've even patented names for. Them, which I think is kind of dumb but. Mark names but anyway. But this Persimmon kind of got me woken up to like wanting to graft and like, really explore persimmons deeper and. And I think it's the very first Persimmon that I ever grafted, too. I think this is maybe the first one that I grafted. I'm trying to think. I also on this another thing about this one that I I brought it here is that I. Me and Don are the only ones I know that I mean now I've given it. I sent it out to a lot of people, but it's not a Persimmon that a lot of people have talked about or like is real pop. There's a lot of other clay Pope persimmons when that planting that people readily graphed and know and they have nicknames. And they're like this really well known. But this one never seemed no one

ever seemed to know. When I say autumn. Two or A2. Don didn't really like this one. Besides, he says it's a really nice persema. It tastes good. It's big, humongous. But he says his tree is just. Not productive at all. It also is unique in that it drops fruit a few at a time from the very early part of the percent Persimmon season all the way through the late part of the Persimmon. Season Don didn't like that because he picks up her Simmons and sells them, and so to have to go out to this tree for a whole 3 months or something. Is a pain and you get two or three a day is a pain in the ****. So and I agree with them for commercial planting, it may not be great. But for someone that wants like 1 Persimmon tree in their yard that they can like, enjoy eating fresh persimmons from for like a long season, I think it's a great trait to have. And and our trees have been very productive. So it could be that the tree he grafted it on was like a lower. Productivity, like seedling, or it's in a spot that it's not as happy with or something but this. This fruit just really. Speaks to me, and I also think it has some really unique genetic. Things going on. That we don't know yet. But now that the percentage genome is getting mapped, we might find out, but you can see most persimmons have a little 4 parted. It's called a calyx. It's like the leaf that's attached to the fruit, and most of them have four parts to them, but some persimmons tend to make. Significant number of their fruits that have more than four parts and so you can see these other two fruits have 5 sort of petals to their Catholics. And I think I've seen and seen 6 petals on this one too and I think that it's been determined that that has something to do with the like chromosome number of the genetics of these and so. This one also has very few seeds. I mean, you'll eat a big fruit like this and they'll maybe be one or two seeds in an often. And that makes me think that maybe. It's in a weird. No man's land between then 60 and 90 chromosome persimmons. Or there's just something going on with it. That is, that is unique. So yeah, so I think this Persimmon particularly represents a lot of those things to me. And part of that genetic uniqueness also makes me just it makes me think back to. The indigenous people that. Probably did a lot of work. Owen, like what was the the ancestors of this Persimmon? And I'm holding it in my hand now and I've eaten them and it's like this is just like one spot in. The line of history that is going forward when people plant seeds of this one and I'm just holding this little. Blip in time in my hand right now. So that's there's also a power pole here I bought just. That it's probably. Ripe enough for us to eat. So we. Can try that one. And the other the third object since I was asked the things that kind of represent my identity and role as a farmer is my smartphone and. Oh, I should describe I guess I described that Persimmon enough.

Cissell:

You gave a beautiful description, but you can go.

Bender-Beauregard

Good. OK. So no, that's fine now this so describing how this smartphone is, it's got a rubber case around it because I'm a farmer and.

Cissell:

Back if you want.

Bender-Beauregard

I you know, I'm going to bump into things and I have to kind. Of protect that it's black. It's kind of sleek Motorola. And I don't know. It's kind of your typical cell phone, I guess and. This I've chose because. Tool in our digital age because it represents our digital age. And I know that I would not be nearly as

connected to such a big network of. Mentors, growers, breeders, nursery people, just just people related to Pauper Simmons that I've learned so much from and I trade so much with without this sort of device I'm sure I would have found some people in the area. But you know, I just don't think. I think that's one thing that technology has really opened up to us is very quick access to networks. And that can be a really wonderful thing and and help us in our of our work and help speed up our work and make it. More efficient? And this also has to. Do with my livelihood, I mean. I I take calls every day from people asking about coming. To buy plants and I you know. And type up an invoice on this, or use square to like sell people things or, you know, shifts signed it out to people and it just kind of lets me stay connected. Where I'm at in the firm, even if I'm that extra computer. So. I think that's all I need to say about that little thing. As you all know. What they what else they? Do and I'm not really that special, but it's it's definitely part of my identity and.

Cissell:

I love what you chose and the things you said, and I think like my last thing, I also envisioned this project kind of being a source of like a learning Commons that we have in, like at least in like the library science way of thinking about it. You know, people coming together for, like, an open source of knowledge. So you said that you. Like, read a lot. Yeah. If someone was wanting to learn more, you know, from reading books or checking out resources on the web or something like that, what would you want to plug?

Bender-Beauregard

There's not any good like central Persimmon thing. There's no books written about persimmons yet there's a bunch of books written about Paul Pauls. That's kind. Of like it was like the fad thing to do. I think there's like now five or six books about Paul Paul's. And it's like, I mean, I guess if you going to write about another book about Paul Paul's, you know? And go for it, but it's like. Persimmons need to get that, but there is. Your best bet would probably be to. You know, just find a local like we have Indiana fruit Nut Growers Association and there's a lot of people into persimmons there or go to any of the people that I mentioned and and find a way to visit them or talk to them over the phone. And they can tell you about. UM, things. There's also a lot of great, like wild edible. Books and information and blogs and podcasts. Sam Thayer has a really good. Wow. Edibles book. I've never actually read the Persimmon section, but I'm sure there's a Persimmon section in there. And otherwise, you know, I, me and some of my friends that are in this like Persimmon network have developed like a Google Drive folder that I could share with you. That we all just throw stuff in as we find it and it has like a lot of these like it has a. The whole list of James Claypool's, like breeding orchard and like what every tree and number is, and I think we have maybe have Don Comptons partial list in there, but it also has like article old articles from. Like John Hershey and the Tennessee Valley Authority, all these things that sort of talk about. That's how a lot of people found like specific trees because they they mentioned it in this article and so people were sort of stuff and stuff in there and that's a great place to kind of sort through. It's. Something you just sit down and just read linearly. It's like a mishmash of all these things. There's much pictures of different persimmons in there and, but yeah, but I'd be happy to share that. And then I. Can get on to the like. Commons thing, yeah, which would be awesome because it's people are wanting to know about them and there is a Persimmon, Persimmon enthusiast, I think.

Cissell:

Yeah, whatever this inset be.

Bender-Beauregard

Persimmon, Persimmon World Facebook group. That's pretty good and a lot of people post on there and get a lot of good information. It seems like a pretty helpful group of people that aren't. Aren't quite as. Snippy and dogmatic and fighty is some of the other. Facebook groups tend to be maybe that's because it's. Fairly new but. Yeah. No, I mean I I. I wish there were more. I wish there. More like good things to go to, to try and find more about persimmons, but it's just sort of a it's still sort of almost underground network and. I hope that changes soon because it's. Uh, you know, Savannah Institute, they have. A really good free ebook that is fantastic. I think it's called perennial pathways. But it's basically sort of like a manual on how to develop and plan and like layout. And plant a. Like Agricola, eggy farm. And they have profiles in all these different tree species that are sort of showcased for the. Midwest and I know there's a section on persimmons in there, so that would be a good one. Go download that. Yeah, but there's no universities that are. Kentucky State University is like doing the paw paw thing really well. It would be nice to Champagne Urbana could take up persimmons again because they had historically done some work with persimmons, but I don't know why no university has taken this up yet, especially cause they could link up with like Don Compton and Cliff England and the old James Claypool Orchard, Jerry Layman's Orchard. And just like there's all these orchards that are already there. As they could just like jump right into and start doing reading work but. I don't know.

Cissell:

Well, is there anything that I didn't ask you about that you wanted to speak about or something that came up that you wanted to retouch or visit?

Bender-Beauregard

I don't know. I think we I think we covered most of it. Trying to think. I guess processing would be the only other thing. I mean Knights and hold another discussion, but there's a guy up and I should mention for sure there's a guy in Orleans just 10 minutes north of us. His name is Jason Robbins. His business is called twin takes, Persimmon Pop and he's the largest percent commercial Persimmon pulp producer in the US, and he makes frozen pulp. It's he's all health department inspected. He has an amazing setup that's working really well. And I feel like there could be like, a dozen people like him as. Demand for persimmons grow. I mean, there's no reason that whole food shouldn't have frozen Persimmon pulp in every store. You know, for people to buy, even if it's just seasonal. Yeah. The other thing interesting about processing, I mean, persimmons don't have much fat in them. Puppets have a lot of fat. So Paul Paul, Paul can kind of go rancid even in the freezer, kind of like meat, you know, can go. Rancid. But Persimmon pop? You know I've used pulp. It's like four or five years old, and it doesn't seem to be anything wrong with it. You know a. Lot of other people who have done that too, so it's like. I think it stays good for a lot longer as long as shelf life in the freezer. But yeah, I think persimmons. And Paul, Paul is, you know, there's just, we're just at the beginning of like seeing how people could, like process them commercially and do things on a larger scale. I don't think there's anything else. I think you got a lot of hit, a lot of the ground cover a lot. Of the ground.

Bender-Beauregard:

Which is good, so I'm.

Cissell:

Glad to hear it. Well, I'll be back or I guess we didn't really talk about Steve. Maybe he would be in your network.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, he though he's he's in my network as because he's a blacksmith, but he he has.

Bender-Beauregard:

It's just.

Bender-Beauregard

Steve has he will he? Is he. Is more of a true local for his family. Has been here for generations and generations. And he has a lot of connections with a lot of old timers and old timey ways in our area. Just generally he's done a lot of trapping. He's a blacksmith, he shoots muzzle loaders but he. Like he would probably know more like sayings and like local lore about.

Bender-Beauregard:

Paw paws.

Bender-Beauregard

The one thing you should definitely ask him about it, because he might forget is like the one thing he told me when I first talked about Paul Paul. Was that his dad said something about his, his current wife. I mean, not current wife. He said he had one wife, his wife Sean. When they were dating. When he brought her to to. His house, his dad said something about. I can't remember. It's something about like. Boy, you're skinnier than a wisp of a paw paw or something. He's because he's pretty, petite. Or maybe he said something about like we need to get some paw paws in you or something like that. I don't know. Something, but he'll have some kind of, like, nice little like old tiny. More about that he might know just hearing from people. Just stories and things I don't, unfortunately don't have a lot of that because I just, you know, my family didn't know anything about them and. Mostly what I hear people saying in the nursery when they talk about, I do hear a fair amount of stories about them. From people that come and buy trees and they said they remember or say they remember them as a kid at their grandparents farm and they remember like Oh yeah, grandpa, one time he found one and he popped it down and cut it open and we ate it it. Was so good, but we never saw any others. Or I also hear a lot of stories about people having fights with them as kids and getting completely covered in. Overwrite Paul Paul Paul and getting in trouble with their mom.

Cissell:

Yeah, it'll be great to collect those too. I guess I was saying, you know, if we leave out anything, I'll be back to talk to them. So we need to do a Part 2.

Bender-Beauregard

Oh yeah, yeah. Cool. Sounds good, but yeah, here's here's a cup of pawpaw trees that his Nate former neighbor planted that they're on his. Property there that. Are improved. Rides are actually one and done. Compton grafted and sold to that neighbor and we don't know what varieties they are, but there's they're really big, nice paw paws.

Cissell:

Well, thank you so much. Gonna stop.

Bender-Beauregard

Yeah, you're.

Bender-Beauregard:

Welcome, cool.