Transcript: Permaculture Garden In The High Desert

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**[00:00:00]** [Music]

**[00:00:13]** hey friends today we're checking out

**[00:00:15]** Lance's Homestead in western Colorado

**[00:00:17]** he's been gardening the high desert for

**[00:00:19]** over 40 years he produces 95% of his

**[00:00:22]** food on just 3/4 of an acre and today

**[00:00:24]** he's going to give us a tour and share

**[00:00:26]** his Secrets let's go Lance swager this

**[00:00:30]** is Hotchkis Colorado little over 6,000

**[00:00:32]** ft in the Rocky Mountains High Desert I

**[00:00:35]** originally came from uh Southern

**[00:00:36]** California s Clen and I was a beach bum

**[00:00:39]** at that time I had some relatives that

**[00:00:41]** moved here and I came out to visit and I

**[00:00:43]** liked it so my mother and I bought this

**[00:00:46]** property in the fall of uh 79 and the

**[00:00:50]** garden got started in 1987 that's when

**[00:00:53]** we drilled a well we did have some

**[00:00:55]** irrigation water here but it wasn't

**[00:00:57]** enough so um drilled a well and that

**[00:01:00]** works really

**[00:01:01]** [Music]

**[00:01:13]** good so this Garden got started in

**[00:01:17]** 1987 and it was just cheat grass and it

**[00:01:21]** was a desert there was no nothing here

**[00:01:24]** and this is this year this is uh winter

**[00:01:27]** squash and in the stams this this is

**[00:01:30]** volunteer datur a gsen weed some people

**[00:01:33]** call it

**[00:01:34]** moonflower this and you can see the seed

**[00:01:37]** pods on

**[00:01:38]** it grenades but it's a very sweet

**[00:01:42]** smelling flower in the evening and the

**[00:01:45]** stoms I know people would love to have

**[00:01:46]** those nsts to eat yeah you eat the

**[00:01:49]** flowers ra

**[00:01:52]** yep the possibly be a little spicy yeah

**[00:01:56]** it's not bad it should be good in a

**[00:01:57]** salad mhm this is uh couple rows of

**[00:02:00]** what's called Pearl

**[00:02:02]** Millet and uh lots of people are

**[00:02:05]** actually using this for bird seed uh but

**[00:02:08]** I'm going to eat this and it also will

**[00:02:10]** go into my homemade bread this is

**[00:02:12]** Anasazi beans right here in front

**[00:02:15]** farther on is huite soup beans the other

**[00:02:18]** spot over there with the buckwhat was

**[00:02:20]** Kut Kut is a type of ancient wheat and

**[00:02:24]** it's a spring planted wheat it's not a

**[00:02:26]** winter wheat so what does that mean

**[00:02:27]** winter grains are planted in the fall

**[00:02:30]** they germinate and then they survive the

**[00:02:32]** winter and then they grow and produce a

**[00:02:34]** spring weed is planted in April and it

**[00:02:37]** will be ready in July early August and

**[00:02:40]** then you got your summer grains which

**[00:02:42]** Millet is a lot like corn and you can't

**[00:02:45]** plant that till after danger of frost we

**[00:02:47]** got

**[00:02:47]** melons here c a type of cantaloupe a

**[00:02:52]** hogen it's a middle eastern melon with

**[00:02:55]** uh green flesh I'm not a huge fan of

**[00:02:58]** tomatoes so I got a few plants I dry

**[00:03:00]** them and cook with them no canning I

**[00:03:04]** always wanted to just grow food so here

**[00:03:05]** I am little by little and when I started

**[00:03:08]** I was doing your typical stuff I was

**[00:03:10]** actually buying plants and buying seeds

**[00:03:13]** and then as things went along one of the

**[00:03:16]** cover crops that I had a r cover crop it

**[00:03:19]** got way far ahead of me it was starting

**[00:03:21]** to make seed heads so well let's just

**[00:03:23]** let this go and see how hard it is to

**[00:03:25]** grow grain that's how I learned how to

**[00:03:27]** start growing grain well let's see about

**[00:03:29]** growing things for seed then you learn

**[00:03:31]** how to grow seed and uh stuff and we did

**[00:03:34]** at one time have a very knowledgeable

**[00:03:36]** seed grower and collector here in the

**[00:03:38]** area I learned a lot about seed saving

**[00:03:41]** and got a lot of different varieties of

**[00:03:43]** stuff from him he'd give me a little

**[00:03:45]** tablespoon of say the turkey red wheat I

**[00:03:48]** got a tablespoon now I have 10 10 or 15

**[00:03:51]** Gallons

**[00:03:53]** cucumbers and delicata squash and some

**[00:03:57]** zucchini up there and again all of this

**[00:03:59]** is my own seed I've grown it all from

**[00:04:02]** seed this is all blue corn here 8 9 ft

**[00:04:05]** tall the tops of those but it's still

**[00:04:07]** drying out it hasn't been watered for 2

**[00:04:10]** 3 weeks there's your blue corn look at

**[00:04:12]** all the earwigs still but they're not

**[00:04:14]** hurting nothing and what do you do with

**[00:04:16]** the corn you turn into flour I will make

**[00:04:18]** palenta is the main thing flour and

**[00:04:22]** these kind of corns the flour corns you

**[00:04:25]** toast them before you grind them so you

**[00:04:27]** have a toasted corn flavor and I'll

**[00:04:29]** store them on the cops cuz they'll store

**[00:04:32]** way better and I only take it off when I

**[00:04:34]** need to make some and you can make corn

**[00:04:37]** flour out of that too um they're soft

**[00:04:40]** what's what's your secret to Corn cuz I

**[00:04:42]** know so many people have a hard time

**[00:04:43]** with it make your rows water it get the

**[00:04:47]** ground moist plant the corn down in that

**[00:04:50]** moisture and don't water it till they

**[00:04:52]** come up cuz we have a tendency to water

**[00:04:54]** too much and they will rot in the ground

**[00:04:57]** and also if you wait till the soil

**[00:04:58]** temperature 6 65 or higher 7075 is great

**[00:05:02]** don't plant it early this is a uh P bean

**[00:05:05]** and it's actually a friend of mine it's

**[00:05:08]** actually a family heirloom of hers is

**[00:05:10]** called the Littlefield

**[00:05:12]** Bean this is a Potato Patch right here

**[00:05:15]** where you see the white buckwheat

**[00:05:16]** blooming down there that was the early

**[00:05:18]** potatoes just turned around plant it and

**[00:05:20]** you know we let the buckwheat this time

**[00:05:21]** of year the insects have very few

**[00:05:24]** pollinated plants are pollen they're

**[00:05:25]** really working that a lot uh there's

**[00:05:28]** German butter balls I heard about these

**[00:05:30]** and there's a rose fin Apple you save

**[00:05:33]** your seed uh potatoes are a little bit

**[00:05:35]** more difficult these here were my own

**[00:05:38]** potatoes and I marked them with steak so

**[00:05:40]** that I know which ones I actually bought

**[00:05:43]** now this variety down here you can see

**[00:05:45]** my steaks those are seed potatoes that I

**[00:05:48]** bought this is seed potatoes that I

**[00:05:50]** saved we have a wind break I always like

**[00:05:53]** the idea of a hedg Grove so I bought a

**[00:05:55]** bunch of seeds I think it was 150 plants

**[00:05:58]** the choke Cher and the Russian caragana

**[00:06:01]** then I added in here lilacs there's

**[00:06:04]** hedge roses the ausan Copper Rose the

**[00:06:06]** Persian yellow ning Cherry Eastern red

**[00:06:09]** cedar that over there is a gamble Oak

**[00:06:12]** it's a perfect Wildlife yeah they stay

**[00:06:14]** away from your food crafts yeah and it's

**[00:06:17]** a wind break privacy break you know it

**[00:06:19]** creates its own space here oh there's

**[00:06:22]** even a sour cherry that I don't know

**[00:06:23]** where it came from there's four

**[00:06:25]** varieties in each bed and this bed is n

**[00:06:29]** red cor chantes damers and a French

**[00:06:34]** deine and I harvest a little bit of each

**[00:06:36]** variety so I got to mix these are the

**[00:06:40]** chanton classic just broad fat things

**[00:06:44]** they do pretty good in this soil as it

**[00:06:46]** is so we just had some some rain and

**[00:06:49]** when the soil is moist it pretty much

**[00:06:52]** just comes right out of the ground and

**[00:06:54]** then what I'll do when I get this full

**[00:06:57]** is I um fill the bucket with water

**[00:07:00]** another bucket with water which I'll

**[00:07:02]** rinse with and then another bucket is uh

**[00:07:05]** drain I drain them in and then I beg

**[00:07:10]** [Music]

**[00:07:20]** them what would you tell someone that's

**[00:07:23]** young in their 20s about this lifestyle

**[00:07:26]** like how did it all develop how did you

**[00:07:28]** get started uh my mother and I actually

**[00:07:30]** bought this property if you're really

**[00:07:32]** going to go for it decide what you'd

**[00:07:34]** like to eat and uh learn how to grow it

**[00:07:38]** nothing in this Garden is strictly for

**[00:07:41]** sale it's because I like to eat it so

**[00:07:44]** decide what you want to eat and learn

**[00:07:46]** how to grow it and then you can go from

**[00:07:48]** there your health is way better at this

**[00:07:50]** end than what most people think in fact

**[00:07:53]** I still have stayed in contact with all

**[00:07:55]** my old friends in Southern California

**[00:07:57]** and I'm the only one still going at it

**[00:08:00]** they're retired they're doing stuff

**[00:08:02]** but totally yeah totally different

**[00:08:04]** totally different and these are all the

**[00:08:06]** different

**[00:08:07]** grapes suff red here so this these to

**[00:08:10]** get a little bit riper and I still have

**[00:08:13]** a few things like this this is the hem

**[00:08:15]** rod those are going to be really good

**[00:08:18]** those hem rods cuz they're ripe two

**[00:08:20]** weeks out and that's a seedless there's

**[00:08:22]** still a few hanging on there wow yeah

**[00:08:24]** they're really good and then the next

**[00:08:27]** batch to ripen a ready as the Candice

**[00:08:31]** and these things are they're really

**[00:08:32]** quite a pretty great cluster you can see

**[00:08:35]** those and this needs to be a little bit

**[00:08:36]** more purple but see right next to it

**[00:08:38]** there's a little bit darker and then you

**[00:08:39]** have niaga grapes it's not warm enough

**[00:08:43]** but when you when these start to ripen

**[00:08:45]** uh they start to perfumes the air it

**[00:08:47]** smells just like a flower bloomy I have

**[00:08:50]** a friend that's going to come pick these

**[00:08:52]** this weekend you'll make wine out of

**[00:08:53]** those I don't know what those are but I

**[00:08:55]** know they're not right they came out of

**[00:08:56]** a Vineyard that it was like a pollinator

**[00:08:59]** but I know that they still got two weeks

**[00:09:01]** to go and they're really good too this

**[00:09:03]** is a s senson and you have a Delaware

**[00:09:06]** that's a good grape the Delaware would

**[00:09:08]** be good for uh making Jam or Jelly Tight

**[00:09:11]** clusters and again they all have seeds

**[00:09:14]** so you'd have to press it press the

**[00:09:15]** juice out strain it and then do whatever

**[00:09:18]** you do after that and the trellis you

**[00:09:20]** made how did you make that that uh is a

**[00:09:22]** wood trellis a juniper post and that's

**[00:09:25]** actually Choke Cherry and what people

**[00:09:27]** don't realize is the plants do not like

**[00:09:30]** metal it's too hot and we use metal cuz

**[00:09:32]** it's durable and it works but the plants

**[00:09:34]** like the wood better you know so that's

**[00:09:37]** what that is and it's fun about every 5

**[00:09:39]** years I rebuild these trellises this is

**[00:09:41]** Choke Cherry but if it's Willow it

**[00:09:43]** really breaks down after about that much

**[00:09:45]** this is sunflowers this is Tara Mara

**[00:09:48]** whites and I'm growing it out for a seed

**[00:09:50]** crop and they got so heavy I actually

**[00:09:53]** put a TST in there to hold them up a lot

**[00:09:56]** of weight there and they'll get you know

**[00:09:58]** 10 or 12 ft tall and then once they

**[00:10:00]** start forming those seed heads they bend

**[00:10:02]** over like this I was surprised that it

**[00:10:04]** wasn't the bees that pollinated it was

**[00:10:06]** the bumble bees that came in here and

**[00:10:09]** all different types of bumblebees and

**[00:10:10]** they were collecting a lot a lot of

**[00:10:12]** pollen the birds haven't gone out there

**[00:10:14]** yet but I will have to net this and I

**[00:10:16]** have the bird netting for it just to

**[00:10:18]** slow them down that's the early Alberta

**[00:10:21]** so they're almost ready and normally you

**[00:10:24]** don't want a tree to be tall like that

**[00:10:26]** cuz that's all ladder work but for some

**[00:10:28]** reason these lower branches they died

**[00:10:31]** what to say that's what happened at

**[00:10:32]** least I got a tree still and did you

**[00:10:34]** purposely thin these guys out or I

**[00:10:36]** thinned these to a certain degree many

**[00:10:38]** people can't do that but if you don't

**[00:10:40]** thin you might have heard that fruit go

**[00:10:43]** to every other year one year is a heavy

**[00:10:45]** crop it's so heavy the tree can't make

**[00:10:48]** fru and Spurs for next year the next

**[00:10:50]** reason is if you want a little bit

**[00:10:52]** bigger fruit these didn't have to be too

**[00:10:54]** much so these are actually huge for a

**[00:10:56]** peach can't even fit in my fist I just

**[00:10:59]** picked these the other day this is

**[00:11:02]** Italian prune Plum and I said when the

**[00:11:04]** birds start to go after it and if you

**[00:11:06]** can look in there that's been bird

**[00:11:08]** pecked and stuff so I said okay time to

**[00:11:12]** harvest these doesn't feel like we're in

**[00:11:14]** the high desert of Colorado no no over

**[00:11:17]** 6,000 ft something like that and this

**[00:11:20]** was just a big flower bed there's still

**[00:11:22]** some zenas and Cosmos and the pink

**[00:11:25]** flower is lavatera this is just for

**[00:11:27]** flowers this is all just for flowers

**[00:11:30]** eventually there's an English Walnut

**[00:11:32]** over here and that will take over the

**[00:11:34]** entire area but that's 10 years 15 years

**[00:11:36]** down the

**[00:11:38]** road

**[00:11:40]** theams um this is what I grew up with in

**[00:11:43]** Southern California and they can grow

**[00:11:46]** you know 15 ft or so and they really

**[00:11:49]** like the cooler weather so now they're

**[00:11:52]** really going to town and this is the

**[00:11:54]** type of sweet pee that smells really

**[00:11:57]** good oh wow yeah they smell really good

**[00:12:00]** in the middle of the afternoon when it's

**[00:12:02]** hot that's when they smell the best and

**[00:12:04]** what's this ground cover here uh that's

**[00:12:06]** Yaro so we're just walking on a field of

**[00:12:08]** Yaro yeah and if you keep it mowed it is

**[00:12:12]** the greatest lawn it's soft it's you

**[00:12:15]** know it's way better than

**[00:12:17]** grass how big is this Garden space it's

**[00:12:21]** about 3/4 of an acre and it does 90% of

**[00:12:24]** your food there's so much food here it's

**[00:12:26]** it's phenomenal and I sell stuff out of

**[00:12:28]** here too if you stay on top of it you

**[00:12:30]** can do a lot I could actually grow more

**[00:12:33]** food in here if I really wanted to and

**[00:12:36]** maybe when I really retire from

**[00:12:38]** Landscaping maybe I will what made you

**[00:12:40]** believe that you could make a giant

**[00:12:42]** Garden in a desert I mean I did I just

**[00:12:45]** started doing it I was a athlete and you

**[00:12:48]** just take that same energy you have

**[00:12:50]** physical energy and determination and

**[00:12:52]** stuff and you just start doing it and

**[00:12:54]** you just observe things and observe how

**[00:12:56]** things are going on and I also have a

**[00:12:59]** lot of physical endurance and so I just

**[00:13:02]** keep going I can Peck away at something

**[00:13:04]** for

**[00:13:11]** months and how have you seen the soil

**[00:13:13]** change because like the soil is red

**[00:13:15]** outside of red and clay and it's brown

**[00:13:17]** in here yeah just uh and it's much

**[00:13:20]** easier to work you know and it if I stop

**[00:13:23]** using compost or any type of organic

**[00:13:26]** fertilizer it would go right back to

**[00:13:28]** clay with in a year or two it'd be maybe

**[00:13:30]** it wouldn't be red but it's uh it would

**[00:13:33]** go right back to Clay that's just the

**[00:13:35]** nature of it and I actually like clay

**[00:13:37]** soils you know the trick is that it um

**[00:13:41]** is to get the organic matter in there so

**[00:13:43]** you can work it because clay has all the

**[00:13:46]** nutrients that you can want if I'm right

**[00:13:50]** it's only zinc that's not quite here and

**[00:13:53]** the right amount but otherwise it's it's

**[00:13:56]** good soil this is all composting area

**[00:13:59]** everything that's organic goes in this

**[00:14:01]** it takes about 6 weeks on these piles

**[00:14:04]** the dark stuff on top just got shredded

**[00:14:06]** yesterday this is probably three or four

**[00:14:09]** piles of shredded compost but a regular

**[00:14:12]** pile out there takes 6 weeks and then I

**[00:14:14]** store all the waste products until I'm

**[00:14:16]** making a pile in there so you can see

**[00:14:18]** there's some squash in there and hay and

**[00:14:20]** there's even some two big cucumbers

**[00:14:23]** weeds it's all done by hand and all my

**[00:14:26]** gray water from the kitchen sink goes

**[00:14:28]** onto the compost it's really the only

**[00:14:30]** source of uh organic matter you know

**[00:14:33]** that I use and I've never had any soil

**[00:14:36]** test anything of the

**[00:14:39]** sort this is where all the seeds are

**[00:14:43]** this is cimut and you can leave it on

**[00:14:45]** those stocks and all the seeds you see

**[00:14:47]** here are from my garden these buckets

**[00:14:50]** are full of carrots Swiss chard beets

**[00:14:53]** cilantro all the

**[00:14:55]** lettuce here's your bucket of Lavia the

**[00:14:59]** pink mow out there there's that and I'll

**[00:15:01]** clean that all out there this is the

**[00:15:05]** carrots there's two and a half buckets

**[00:15:07]** of

**[00:15:08]** carrots carrot seed

**[00:15:11]** and then those all dry beans and Grains

**[00:15:15]** and all that kind of stuff winter squash

**[00:15:17]** melons so you save all your seed mhm I

**[00:15:20]** don't buy any seed unless there's

**[00:15:22]** something new coming along and I'm not

**[00:15:24]** really looking people bring me seed hey

**[00:15:26]** Lance try this and so the first thing do

**[00:15:29]** is try to grow it off for seed see if it

**[00:15:31]** it does anything here so you've been

**[00:15:33]** doing this for 40 years at least yeah so

**[00:15:36]** these varieties are 40 years adapted

**[00:15:38]** these grains are not so much but soon to

**[00:15:41]** be and they get adapted and they just

**[00:15:43]** grow so that's part of the success the

**[00:15:46]** seeds are adapted to growing in the

**[00:15:48]** conditions I got here this whole bed was

**[00:15:51]** the early crop and then turn around and

**[00:15:53]** come back and I plant a lake crop so I

**[00:15:55]** got snap peas that are blooming snow

**[00:15:58]** peas are a little slower they actually

**[00:16:00]** don't like the heat as much so they take

**[00:16:02]** their time and then you have some more

**[00:16:04]** col rabi and then have four types of

**[00:16:06]** beets in there finocchio and two

**[00:16:09]** different types of spinach in here one's

**[00:16:11]** called uh one's uh winter Bloomsdale and

**[00:16:15]** you can see the size most people are

**[00:16:17]** eating spinach really small well look at

**[00:16:20]** the this is not a big leaf of this this

**[00:16:22]** is getting close I like letting them get

**[00:16:24]** big these crops when you plant them in

**[00:16:26]** the spring they just die CU it gets hot

**[00:16:29]** in the fall they just keep growing and

**[00:16:31]** this will actually survive a frost this

**[00:16:34]** is a German Lutz beat I don't know how

**[00:16:36]** big they are down in there they're not

**[00:16:38]** too big yet you can't find the seed

**[00:16:40]** commercially anymore in the seed

**[00:16:42]** industry or the food industry something

**[00:16:44]** goes out of Vogue and it disappears and

**[00:16:47]** we've actually lost about I think it's

**[00:16:50]** 90% of our food crops because of the

**[00:16:52]** modern seed and Agriculture and stuff I

**[00:16:55]** took it to the seed swap in ponia in

**[00:16:58]** March and people just went nuts because

**[00:17:01]** you can't get it this is a beet and as

**[00:17:03]** you can see it's actually grown more for

**[00:17:05]** the greens beat grains than the actual

**[00:17:08]** root but the roots can get about this

**[00:17:10]** big which is a perfect size beet oh wow

**[00:17:12]** then there's golden beets has a little

**[00:17:14]** bit of gold in the leave this is the

**[00:17:17]** chiia beat that's a pink and white and

**[00:17:20]** then the regular or standard Detroit

**[00:17:22]** dark red and you see it has the red and

**[00:17:24]** all these greens are good to eat where

**[00:17:27]** can people find more information about

**[00:17:29]** you the only place that you can really

**[00:17:31]** reach me is at the our um public radio

**[00:17:34]** station we do a live call-in Garden talk

**[00:17:37]** show and uh it's called as the worm

**[00:17:39]** turns Tuesday evenings 6 to 7 kvnf org

**[00:17:45]** or you can actually listen live that way

**[00:17:47]** anyways tank this will be interesting

**[00:17:50]** I'm being

**[00:17:53]** interviewed okay go relax someplace

# Full Text (without timestamps)

[Music] hey friends today we're checking out Lance's Homestead in western Colorado he's been gardening the high desert for over 40 years he produces 95% of his food on just 3/4 of an acre and today he's going to give us a tour and share his Secrets let's go Lance swager this is Hotchkis Colorado little over 6,000 ft in the Rocky Mountains High Desert I originally came from uh Southern California s Clen and I was a beach bum at that time I had some relatives that moved here and I came out to visit and I liked it so my mother and I bought this property in the fall of uh 79 and the garden got started in 1987 that's when we drilled a well we did have some irrigation water here but it wasn't enough so um drilled a well and that works really [Music] good so this Garden got started in 1987 and it was just cheat grass and it was a desert there was no nothing here and this is this year this is uh winter squash and in the stams this this is volunteer datur a gsen weed some people call it moonflower this and you can see the seed pods on it grenades but it's a very sweet smelling flower in the evening and the stoms I know people would love to have those nsts to eat yeah you eat the flowers ra yep the possibly be a little spicy yeah it's not bad it should be good in a salad mhm this is uh couple rows of what's called Pearl Millet and uh lots of people are actually using this for bird seed uh but I'm going to eat this and it also will go into my homemade bread this is Anasazi beans right here in front farther on is huite soup beans the other spot over there with the buckwhat was Kut Kut is a type of ancient wheat and it's a spring planted wheat it's not a winter wheat so what does that mean winter grains are planted in the fall they germinate and then they survive the winter and then they grow and produce a spring weed is planted in April and it will be ready in July early August and then you got your summer grains which Millet is a lot like corn and you can't plant that till after danger of frost we got melons here c a type of cantaloupe a hogen it's a middle eastern melon with uh green flesh I'm not a huge fan of tomatoes so I got a few plants I dry them and cook with them no canning I always wanted to just grow food so here I am little by little and when I started I was doing your typical stuff I was actually buying plants and buying seeds and then as things went along one of the cover crops that I had a r cover crop it got way far ahead of me it was starting to make seed heads so well let's just let this go and see how hard it is to grow grain that's how I learned how to start growing grain well let's see about growing things for seed then you learn how to grow seed and uh stuff and we did at one time have a very knowledgeable seed grower and collector here in the area I learned a lot about seed saving and got a lot of different varieties of stuff from him he'd give me a little tablespoon of say the turkey red wheat I got a tablespoon now I have 10 10 or 15 Gallons cucumbers and delicata squash and some zucchini up there and again all of this is my own seed I've grown it all from seed this is all blue corn here 8 9 ft tall the tops of those but it's still drying out it hasn't been watered for 2 3 weeks there's your blue corn look at all the earwigs still but they're not hurting nothing and what do you do with the corn you turn into flour I will make palenta is the main thing flour and these kind of corns the flour corns you toast them before you grind them so you have a toasted corn flavor and I'll store them on the cops cuz they'll store way better and I only take it off when I need to make some and you can make corn flour out of that too um they're soft what's what's your secret to Corn cuz I know so many people have a hard time with it make your rows water it get the ground moist plant the corn down in that moisture and don't water it till they come up cuz we have a tendency to water too much and they will rot in the ground and also if you wait till the soil temperature 6 65 or higher 7075 is great don't plant it early this is a uh P bean and it's actually a friend of mine it's actually a family heirloom of hers is called the Littlefield Bean this is a Potato Patch right here where you see the white buckwheat blooming down there that was the early potatoes just turned around plant it and you know we let the buckwheat this time of year the insects have very few pollinated plants are pollen they're really working that a lot uh there's German butter balls I heard about these and there's a rose fin Apple you save your seed uh potatoes are a little bit more difficult these here were my own potatoes and I marked them with steak so that I know which ones I actually bought now this variety down here you can see my steaks those are seed potatoes that I bought this is seed potatoes that I saved we have a wind break I always like the idea of a hedg Grove so I bought a bunch of seeds I think it was 150 plants the choke Cher and the Russian caragana then I added in here lilacs there's hedge roses the ausan Copper Rose the Persian yellow ning Cherry Eastern red cedar that over there is a gamble Oak it's a perfect Wildlife yeah they stay away from your food crafts yeah and it's a wind break privacy break you know it creates its own space here oh there's even a sour cherry that I don't know where it came from there's four varieties in each bed and this bed is n red cor chantes damers and a French deine and I harvest a little bit of each variety so I got to mix these are the chanton classic just broad fat things they do pretty good in this soil as it is so we just had some some rain and when the soil is moist it pretty much just comes right out of the ground and then what I'll do when I get this full is I um fill the bucket with water another bucket with water which I'll rinse with and then another bucket is uh drain I drain them in and then I beg [Music] them what would you tell someone that's young in their 20s about this lifestyle like how did it all develop how did you get started uh my mother and I actually bought this property if you're really going to go for it decide what you'd like to eat and uh learn how to grow it nothing in this Garden is strictly for sale it's because I like to eat it so decide what you want to eat and learn how to grow it and then you can go from there your health is way better at this end than what most people think in fact I still have stayed in contact with all my old friends in Southern California and I'm the only one still going at it they're retired they're doing stuff but totally yeah totally different totally different and these are all the different grapes suff red here so this these to get a little bit riper and I still have a few things like this this is the hem rod those are going to be really good those hem rods cuz they're ripe two weeks out and that's a seedless there's still a few hanging on there wow yeah they're really good and then the next batch to ripen a ready as the Candice and these things are they're really quite a pretty great cluster you can see those and this needs to be a little bit more purple but see right next to it there's a little bit darker and then you have niaga grapes it's not warm enough but when you when these start to ripen uh they start to perfumes the air it smells just like a flower bloomy I have a friend that's going to come pick these this weekend you'll make wine out of those I don't know what those are but I know they're not right they came out of a Vineyard that it was like a pollinator but I know that they still got two weeks to go and they're really good too this is a s senson and you have a Delaware that's a good grape the Delaware would be good for uh making Jam or Jelly Tight clusters and again they all have seeds so you'd have to press it press the juice out strain it and then do whatever you do after that and the trellis you made how did you make that that uh is a wood trellis a juniper post and that's actually Choke Cherry and what people don't realize is the plants do not like metal it's too hot and we use metal cuz it's durable and it works but the plants like the wood better you know so that's what that is and it's fun about every 5 years I rebuild these trellises this is Choke Cherry but if it's Willow it really breaks down after about that much this is sunflowers this is Tara Mara whites and I'm growing it out for a seed crop and they got so heavy I actually put a TST in there to hold them up a lot of weight there and they'll get you know 10 or 12 ft tall and then once they start forming those seed heads they bend over like this I was surprised that it wasn't the bees that pollinated it was the bumble bees that came in here and all different types of bumblebees and they were collecting a lot a lot of pollen the birds haven't gone out there yet but I will have to net this and I have the bird netting for it just to slow them down that's the early Alberta so they're almost ready and normally you don't want a tree to be tall like that cuz that's all ladder work but for some reason these lower branches they died what to say that's what happened at least I got a tree still and did you purposely thin these guys out or I thinned these to a certain degree many people can't do that but if you don't thin you might have heard that fruit go to every other year one year is a heavy crop it's so heavy the tree can't make fru and Spurs for next year the next reason is if you want a little bit bigger fruit these didn't have to be too much so these are actually huge for a peach can't even fit in my fist I just picked these the other day this is Italian prune Plum and I said when the birds start to go after it and if you can look in there that's been bird pecked and stuff so I said okay time to harvest these doesn't feel like we're in the high desert of Colorado no no over 6,000 ft something like that and this was just a big flower bed there's still some zenas and Cosmos and the pink flower is lavatera this is just for flowers this is all just for flowers eventually there's an English Walnut over here and that will take over the entire area but that's 10 years 15 years down the road theams um this is what I grew up with in Southern California and they can grow you know 15 ft or so and they really like the cooler weather so now they're really going to town and this is the type of sweet pee that smells really good oh wow yeah they smell really good in the middle of the afternoon when it's hot that's when they smell the best and what's this ground cover here uh that's Yaro so we're just walking on a field of Yaro yeah and if you keep it mowed it is the greatest lawn it's soft it's you know it's way better than grass how big is this Garden space it's about 3/4 of an acre and it does 90% of your food there's so much food here it's it's phenomenal and I sell stuff out of here too if you stay on top of it you can do a lot I could actually grow more food in here if I really wanted to and maybe when I really retire from Landscaping maybe I will what made you believe that you could make a giant Garden in a desert I mean I did I just started doing it I was a athlete and you just take that same energy you have physical energy and determination and stuff and you just start doing it and you just observe things and observe how things are going on and I also have a lot of physical endurance and so I just keep going I can Peck away at something for months and how have you seen the soil change because like the soil is red outside of red and clay and it's brown in here yeah just uh and it's much easier to work you know and it if I stop using compost or any type of organic fertilizer it would go right back to clay with in a year or two it'd be maybe it wouldn't be red but it's uh it would go right back to Clay that's just the nature of it and I actually like clay soils you know the trick is that it um is to get the organic matter in there so you can work it because clay has all the nutrients that you can want if I'm right it's only zinc that's not quite here and the right amount but otherwise it's it's good soil this is all composting area everything that's organic goes in this it takes about 6 weeks on these piles the dark stuff on top just got shredded yesterday this is probably three or four piles of shredded compost but a regular pile out there takes 6 weeks and then I store all the waste products until I'm making a pile in there so you can see there's some squash in there and hay and there's even some two big cucumbers weeds it's all done by hand and all my gray water from the kitchen sink goes onto the compost it's really the only source of uh organic matter you know that I use and I've never had any soil test anything of the sort this is where all the seeds are this is cimut and you can leave it on those stocks and all the seeds you see here are from my garden these buckets are full of carrots Swiss chard beets cilantro all the lettuce here's your bucket of Lavia the pink mow out there there's that and I'll clean that all out there this is the carrots there's two and a half buckets of carrots carrot seed and then those all dry beans and Grains and all that kind of stuff winter squash melons so you save all your seed mhm I don't buy any seed unless there's something new coming along and I'm not really looking people bring me seed hey Lance try this and so the first thing do is try to grow it off for seed see if it it does anything here so you've been doing this for 40 years at least yeah so these varieties are 40 years adapted these grains are not so much but soon to be and they get adapted and they just grow so that's part of the success the seeds are adapted to growing in the conditions I got here this whole bed was the early crop and then turn around and come back and I plant a lake crop so I got snap peas that are blooming snow peas are a little slower they actually don't like the heat as much so they take their time and then you have some more col rabi and then have four types of beets in there finocchio and two different types of spinach in here one's called uh one's uh winter Bloomsdale and you can see the size most people are eating spinach really small well look at the this is not a big leaf of this this is getting close I like letting them get big these crops when you plant them in the spring they just die CU it gets hot in the fall they just keep growing and this will actually survive a frost this is a German Lutz beat I don't know how big they are down in there they're not too big yet you can't find the seed commercially anymore in the seed industry or the food industry something goes out of Vogue and it disappears and we've actually lost about I think it's 90% of our food crops because of the modern seed and Agriculture and stuff I took it to the seed swap in ponia in March and people just went nuts because you can't get it this is a beet and as you can see it's actually grown more for the greens beat grains than the actual root but the roots can get about this big which is a perfect size beet oh wow then there's golden beets has a little bit of gold in the leave this is the chiia beat that's a pink and white and then the regular or standard Detroit dark red and you see it has the red and all these greens are good to eat where can people find more information about you the only place that you can really reach me is at the our um public radio station we do a live call-in Garden talk show and uh it's called as the worm turns Tuesday evenings 6 to 7 kvnf org or you can actually listen live that way anyways tank this will be interesting I'm being interviewed okay go relax someplace