

welcome to the garden gate a podcast where we talk to professionals across many fields who work directly and indirectly with plants and our natural world we are students at american university in washington dc and interns
0:08
at smithsonian gardens we have created this project with the hopes of inspiring a new generation to make sustainable and meaningful change
0:14
in our world i'm kira berba and i am caroline mcdonald and this week we're talking
0:21
with zannah porter about gardening and community zanna works at green city growers in
0:27
boston massachusetts as their director of operations good morning good morning santa it's
0:32
great to have you today so excited to talk to you today it's great to be here today i'm also really excited to talk
0:38
about to talk to you thanks um so can you tell us what you do
0:44
today and how you got there sure um i am the director of operations
0:50
at green city growers green city growers is an urban farming company based in
0:56
somerville massachusetts we've got projects across the northeast
1:02
as the director of operations i oversee both our installations as well as all of
1:07
our horticultural aspects of our company so by installations i mean the the design and
1:14
building of raised bed gardens be those on rooftops or
1:21
on the grounds or also in bed or in ground gardens
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as well as in ground farms and on the horticultural side of things
1:33
that means i oversee all of the planning and crop production
1:38
as well as the growing of all our vegetable crops through managing all of our farmers
1:44
so i have a wide breadth of uh of responsibilities
1:51
and it's something that i really really enjoy getting to see our gardens grow from just
1:57
you know uh something in somebody's imagination all the way through to harvesting
2:04
tomatoes and eggplants and educating folks on
2:10
how to grow their own as well as you know consuming those amazing healthy

2:21
delicious crops yeah that is that's wonderful do you have a favorite crop that you like to
2:27
grow oh there's so many i love them all um i really one that i find just always
2:35
breathtaking is the carrot which maybe sounds like a simple a simple
2:41
plant but they're actually technically they're kind of difficult to grow they're a little bit finicky and they're
2:48
also they're just a hidden treasure underneath the soil you can't really tell what's going on
2:53
until you harvest that carrot and i very much enjoy harvesting carrots
2:58
with folks just you know watching somebody harvest a carrot and have their breath taken
3:05
away when it like pops out of the ground and they see it for the first time wow that's incredible
3:12
um it's just very uh
3:17
it's just very profound and um and yet simple and so yeah i would say i love
3:22
growing carrots i like anything that's a little bit tricky um that may tell you some things about my
3:29
personality but um you know at the end of the day uh
3:34
i really enjoy all vegetables and um and i enjoy eating them and sharing that
3:40
with other folks no yeah totally i remember in high school we had just built a new like community garden on
3:47
campus and my environmental science class would always go to tend to it senior year this
3:52
is like 17 18 year olds and they were just completely amazed when they first
3:57
harvested a vegetable and it was like just such an exciting thing to experience for the first time like no
4:03
matter how old you are i feel like it's such a fun thing if you've never done it before that's so wonderful one of the
4:09
schools that i worked at in undergrad we had a community garden outside it was next to the playground
4:14
and the students about once a month each classroom once a month got to go and
4:19
harvest whatever was there or maybe planting was needed or weeding and we
4:24

just followed the seasons and it was and i was working with first graders and a lot of them had never you know pulled

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out a vegetable from the ground before and i understand where you're coming from

4:38

where like it's it is such a magical thing seeing these little first graders pull out uh we did radishes and they

4:43

were like whoa what is that and then we cooked with them and it was just so much fun and gardening can be so magical yeah

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for sure how long have you been at green city growers and how did you end up there sure i've been

4:57

with green city growers for about three and a half years and prior to joining the team here i was

5:02

actually an organic production farmer so i managed a few diversified vegetable

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farms in the greater boston area and i did that for several years and i

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actually i got into farming um in a way that i i very much appreciate i

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started from the ground up quite literally my background is in environmental or sorry outdoor leadership

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and i've done a fair amount of environmental education as well and i moved to the boston area

5:36

about 12 years ago and um i was interested in getting involved with uh

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farm-based education and so i i started working at a local

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non-profit farm actually on the on the field crew so working in the fields harvesting and um

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because that that was a way to get in the door and um i absolutely fell in love with the work

6:02

and i absolutely fell in love with um just the challenge the you know the long

6:08

days and the hard work and the constant problem solving and the putting the

6:14

puzzles together and uh i have a background also working

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with i'm pretty mechanical so like working with machinery and on

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you know mid-scale organic farms around here we need to utilize tractors and tractor

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implements and i really enjoyed that um and it tapped into i found in farming it

6:39

really tapped into a lot of my interests um i'm a very physical person

6:45

uh i need to keep moving and also like i've touched on already the

6:51

the problem solving every day is different the weather is different the conditions are different

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the soil behaves differently in different fields or different parts of fields

7:02

you know there's a myriad of plant families and

7:09

varieties within those families that we grow and they behave differently and

7:14

there's pests and disease and there's just so many factors to deal

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with and that can be you know i'm not gonna say that when i first

7:25

started farming i was like i love the challenge this is amazing no i was like

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why can't there be some like something stable why can't there be something that is why

7:37

aren't there you know these constants and it took time and practice and like learning from

7:45

my mentors that um there is consistency the timeline is

7:51

different and also like i'm not in charge of the timeline

7:56

in many ways um you know there's a lot that's out of our hands when we're when

8:01

we're dealing with nature and uh there is so much planning that goes into

8:09

crop production and plant production and you really do you think about all the factors you bring take in all of the

8:16

information you know you do your soil tests you make a crop plan um

8:22

you know you grow a buffer there's all of these all of these safety checks that

8:27

we put into place but in the end like you know it might be a drought year it

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might be a flood year there might be a new disease there might be a new pest that comes in

8:38

and there's that day-to-day like dealing with that and i think

8:43

you know there's a level of resiliency that folks who

8:49

grow plants long-term farm long-term either build or just inherently have in

8:55

order to succeed in in this field um

9:00
because it i've watched a lot i've been in it long enough to watch
a number of people enter the field and be really excited
9:07
and get like totally burnt out because um because of these
factors but
9:13
um it's certainly not for everyone but it's really uh
9:21
so my first question is
9:26
talking about like the resiliency that um a lot of people have like
as you know
9:31
the nature of this work um do you think that resiliency is
something that like
9:36
you've built over time or did you already have that like starting
out did you know going into this work that
9:43
you know there would be some level of like uncertainty
9:50
uh i would honestly i would say both i think i like have some
resiliency just
9:56
the nature of my me as a person i have some resiliency but it is a
it's a
10:01
muscle i've had to exercise in farming in terms of like
10:07
uh building up like i've over time like i've built up my strength and
i've become more resilient and i've learned
10:14
tools and skills and built a network uh of of other professionals
and friends
10:21
who help with um with dealing with things and being more
resilient
10:26
and um you know there's here in in new england here in eastern
massachusetts at least we have a really strong farming
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community local farming community which i tapped into really
early on
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and um the amount of support that i've found from that
community over the years and
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from what i've heard it's it's different in different regions um but
there has been a lot of
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collaboration and um i touched on it a little bit earlier but like i've
had a number of
10:56
just amazing mentors over the years here and there have been
11:02
when i first started farming here there were a number of like
strong female
11:07
farm managers and queer farm managers who um really sort of
blazed the trails
11:14

for me and to um you know you know they opened the door and
they
11:20
held the door open for a number of folks like myself to to grow in
this industry and
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you know i think when you stay in a place long enough i've been
here for 12 years now like you start you really like
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put down roots and build community and i don't know boston is
a pretty transient area but i think in terms of culture of
11:38
like collaboration and of a commitment to being available and
helping folks out
11:45
yeah so i grew up in eastern massachusetts pretty close to
boston like 20 minutes south
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and my hometown is definitely not rural but uh it does have like a
really high
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percentage of just like small family farms a lot of them like might
not still be farms but it's a lot of like
12:04
converted farmland but there's still definitely a lot of uh like
generation old family farms that are still operating
12:10
like i know there's a flower farm uh down the street from me that
people go and get like bouquets of flowers from
12:17
and there's still a dairy farm that actually still provides a lot of
the milk for the community and they go out with
12:24
old glass bottles and their old vintage milk truck and still like
deliver it to
12:30
people's front door um which is something i feel like you don't
see that much anymore and it's just such a big part of the
12:36
community building in the area and farmers are just like so well
respected for the work that they do rightfully
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that's wonderful and that's really the power of community and it
sounds like it is just so strong
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in the field that you're in and that's really wonderful it certainly
doesn't feel good to you
12:53
know have isolating work and to have like people you know
uplifting you throughout that
12:59
is i think so important you know to prevent burnout like you were
talking about um
13:04
and that's just so wonderful when you had your background in
outdoor leadership did you see yourself going
13:11
the trajectory that you you went um or how did you get from
outdoor leadership
13:17
to like organic farms sure um that's a great question and it
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um when i look back it makes a ton of sense but when i was just starting out i had

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no idea this is where i was gonna end up um so

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you know i studied outdoor leadership because i um

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well i should go further back than that i grew up in a rural area in virginia in southwest virginia

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my father was a college professor at virginia tech and

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he taught botany and um he's a botanist and so

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i grew up both of my parents really enjoyed spending time outside and really valued

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um getting i'm the youngest of four and we're all very close together at age so

14:09

there was a lot of like go play outside and i was you know i was privileged

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enough to like we had a big yard with like there were trees in one area and there were like lots of

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great like corners to play in and i was really encouraged to like go out and get dirty and i always had a bike and

14:28

um you know i spent a lot of time outside and it i loved it um and so i also like walking through

14:35

the woods with my dad and you know identifying plants and you know like i said he's a botanist and so he's like he

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knows all the latin names of everything and doesn't know any of the common names like i don't know latin i you know at

14:49

this point in my life i'm like i would like to take a plant taxonomy class i would love to learn to learn latin and

14:55

how to identify plants in that way but um it did really instill in me this this

15:00

love of nature and um and so i

15:06

all of this time spent outdoors and being engaged with the outdoors i was

15:12

like this is exactly what i want to do you know i want to be able to give back back and share that

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experience and so i found a program at warren wilson college which is outside of asheville

15:25

north carolina where i could study outdoor leadership and i was like yes that's what i want to do i want to go

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you know lead wilderness adventure trips um and you know i did that for a while i

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worked for upward bound in north carolina for a while and um enjoyed that but also

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uh wanted i i was just looking for more i was looking for something different i was in my early 20s

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and wanting to do everything and i think that's a very like natural place to be in your early 20s is to

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explore you know i moved around the country a lot and tried different things and it

16:01

was incredible an incredible experience um and all that time i was spending time on

16:09

farms i was spending time warren wilson has a strong sustainable ag program and when

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i was there i would volunteer on the farm both working with the livestock as well

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as working in the garden there as well with friends who are on those work crews

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warren wilson is a work college so all the students have to work to help run the campus

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and i worked construction while i was there and i loved it which is another skill i use today

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and so you know i spent my 20s kind of just like collecting skills that's really the

16:45

way i left that out i was like i don't really know what i'm doing with my life but um you know i'm

16:51

learning amazing things i'm having really great experiences and you know there's a lot of privilege in that i

16:56

understand that not everyone has that of that um accessibility and ability to

17:04

to like move around or you know choose to take a job that um you know

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maybe doesn't pay as well or is seasonal um and i'm grateful that i was able to do that um

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so you know i was like i said i moved here and was really looking at expanding on

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my education experience and remaining outside i had worked in an

17:31

elementary school for a period of time when i was in north carolina and i loved working with the kids and

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that was amazing but at the same time being stuck between those four walls in

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a traditional classroom was just like terrible for me

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it was terrible which was great information um and so you know i knew that i wanted to

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continue teaching but i just i needed to do it in a different way um

18:01

and like i said previously the way i came into farming was sort of unexpected you know i thought i was going to go

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into farm-based education and i was like no my my real calling is in the actual

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production and in the growing um and in the you know operating and fixing

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tractors and um and there's a there's a large amount of

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engagement there so i have always worked on non-profit farms where almost always

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worked on nonprofit farms which always had an educational component a

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volunteer component they're all csa farms so there was a lot of

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interaction in teaching and so not only being a mentor to say apprentices or

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you know different different firm staff but also you know

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engagement with the public you know doing tours leading volunteer groups um

19:01

working with csa members [Music] so i really got to do everything you

19:07

know i've gotten to do almost everything that i really feel love and feel passionate about

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is wrapped up in in uh what i do now and i still get to do you know i've been

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talking a lot about farm management like all of those experiences and skills apply to what i do today

19:26

um and i'm very uh

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you know i'm not like running a csa but i'm running of like day to day running a pretty uh

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multi-faceted business you know and i've got um a number of staff members who are like

19:48

across the northeast who i engage with on an almost daily basis

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and i'm teaching and i'm now with covid you know we're having weekly zoom

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meetings and talking about you know pest identification and um

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that i'm going out to site and like teaching someone how to do an irrigation repair

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and you know going engaging with the public we have a project at the museum of fine arts right

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now in boston that we're wrapping out wrapping up uh installation of uh this week and

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just working right in front of the in front of the museum having uh folks who

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are standing in line at the museum coming and engaging and asking about like oh how do you grow corn

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or like tell me about this project um so all of those things

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all of those experiences really dovetail nicely into what i do today

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and it sounds like such a cool job because you get to have such a variety of interactions with

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people and experiences and to that like really appeals to me

21:01

because when you're talking about like in your 20s you just wanted to explore like that's where i'm at i'm like i want

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to try everything i want to see you know what kind of classroom do i like working in what do i like to teach um

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and i i never want to feel like stuck or i i want to be interacting with

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the community that's just so important to me so um it sounds like in your job you get to do exactly that

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definitely definitely i do and um i i'm a total introvert

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and i am probably the most extroverted introvert i mean i i do i spend a lot of time

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engaging with folks and i love it i absolutely love it and then i also take quiet time and go

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like recharge my batteries and like take my dog for a walk and um you know balance it all out but it is

21:51

such a gift to be able to do what i do i'm incredibly grateful for what i do

21:58

um and i have a lot of fun doing it yeah that's so awesome it's so

22:04

inspiring to like hear you talk and it just like makes me so excited for like you know my future career and like what

22:10

what i could be doing in 10 years um and hopefully i can be like as happy in my position as it seems like you are

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yeah it just like really sounds like you're in the perfect place for you which is uh just so awesome

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moving forward when looking at all of the different projects that green city growers has going on

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uh we are really interested in your guys's project at fenway park as i mentioned earlier i'm from boston and i

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actually heard about the project through my brother who used to do groundskeeping at the field there uh and he had

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mentioned the project to me it sounded like something just like so dressing that we really wanted to get to know

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more about so you're in boston working at fenway park so do you want to just kind of describe what fenway park is for

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those that don't know and then tell us a little bit more about the project you guys have going on there

23:04

sure well um so fenway park is the home of the boston red sox it's a historical

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site um i believe the park itself i'm gonna totally break myself into jail

23:16

here maybe built in 1918 something like that i have taken the tour um

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but it's a historic baseball park um it's a beautiful space just architecturally it's um it's a pretty

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classic uh baseball field um you know there's the green monster which

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is uh well-known it's a big uh outfield wall and um highly recommend going to a

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baseball game they're really fun um i'm not i'm not the biggest

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baseball fan in the world i do like baseball i love going to a game so at fenway park we have a rooftop farm

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which is about 2 500 square feet of production and it is on a rooftop um and it is a mobile

24:02

farm and i mean that we grow in mobile small mobile units they're actually milk

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crates they're one cubic foot of soil and so they can be arranged in different

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formations they can be moved around which is important here in new england we can get a lot of snow we don't always

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but we can get a good amount of snow here in boston and the units need to be able to move

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so that the when we get snow drifting on the rooftop in the wintertime the roof is

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insecure so we've got these planters that we plant in

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we've got an irrigation system that we control so the plants get enough water we've got

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soil media that we grow in up there that supports the plants which we also

25:01

utilize uh organic inputs to give the plants their nutrients

25:06

[Music] and we grow between four and six thousand

25:12

pounds of produce up there every year we actually have two areas that we grow

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on the main area all of that produce goes into the food service at the park

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so when you eat in the restaurants there you get to eat produce from the farm

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and then we have another deck that's adjacent to the main farm where all of the produce that's grown there is

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actually ground for donation so that goes to um we work with an

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organization called love and spoonfuls which they are like a food aggregator

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and they collect uh produce and um

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and food from other organizations and aggregate it to

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organizations that need it in need so actually the produce that we grow on that deck goes to a soup kitchen

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which is right down the street and loving spoonfuls comes and picks it up and delivers it once a week and last

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year hickory grew something like 2 000 pounds of produce on that donation deck

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so it is impactful and you know when when one visits fenway park uh you can

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take a tour and you get to tour past the farm and the number of people it's

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amazing standing on the deck there and hearing people say i had no idea you

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could grow vegetables like this or this isn't such an incredible project

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utilizing this space because it was it was just a blank rooftop with nothing going on and it can be so

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productive and it beautifies the space in non-coveted times we can have tours

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of the farm on the roof itself and then at the donation area that's uh

27:01

accessible during it's like a party deck so folks can can be more immersed in in

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the growing area so it's a full sensory experience and it is you know it is impactful

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it's a lot of fun it really changes people's ideas about how to utilize space and it beautifies the space so

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it's really it's multifaceted in its in its impact but it's a super fun place to

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work i just did a quick google search of um what it looks like and i'm just blown

27:32

away i can't believe that this is in milk cartons in milk and yeah milk crates like crates

27:40

yeah like the black or i feel like typically they're black like plastic or i put them on the back of my

27:46

bike exactly they're super useful yeah oh my

27:53

gosh wow and they do have a liner in there so the folks are like how do you do that milk

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crates are full of holes um there's a felt liner that fits into each one that holds the block of soil in place

28:06

wow this is beautiful awesome i want to come visit

28:12

yeah come visit we hopefully the park is opening back up for baseball games so at

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some point this summer will likely hopefully keep your fingers crossed people need to do tours of the farm

28:24

again

28:35

yeah so um a few years ago working with ron abel who's the head chef for aramark

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that runs through the food entities within the park

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he pickled a bunch of our fall root vegetables

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and there was an event at the park um that really highlighted

28:59

those vegetables so there's different types of like pickled radish and i think he made sauerkraut also

29:05

um and we do grow we grow a lot of leafy greens um like kale and chard carrots or grant

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those obviously aren't the leafy greens but we grow a lot of carrots as well as cherry tomatoes all of which the way if

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anybody knows anything about crop planting or has worked in the restaurant industry like uh working with farms what

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we do is i sit down in the winter time and i have a conversation with ron and

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his team about what they would like to see going around on the farm this year and you know this is new england so we

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can't grow oranges for example but you know we we go through the different crops that they're most interested in

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and i create a crop plan so that we have vegetables every single week that will be harvesting for them

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and the woman who manages the site day to day her name is lily as the season progresses she walks through the farm

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and makes predictions about what's going to be ready to harvest when and how much and those again we made a crop plan so

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those predictions are based on when we thought that we were going to have them anyway what we planned on which he

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kind of dials it in so ron and his team then know like oh in three weeks we're gonna be getting you know 50 pounds of

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spinach so that they can plan and they can tweak their menu to accommodate for what's going to be

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coming off the farm but again all of that is based on conversations we've already had anyway so they kind of know

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what to expect and then as the season goes on and those dates come closer they're like

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fine-tuning sort of amounts that they're going to be getting that's so cool that's amazing yeah that's a lot of

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communication yeah yeah and that's neat to hear about the process in the

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crop planning and it's just like i mean as we talk it's just so fascinating i think like the wide variety of people

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you interact with like you're talking to like the public you're talking to chefs like you're talking to other people who

31:01

do similar work to you to like plan this and it's just it's i don't know if there's any other field really that like

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just communicates with so many different people and um that's really cool to me yeah it's very fun um i've gotten to

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meet so many different types of people different backgrounds you know famous

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people fascinating people who are you know academics um

31:26

people who are fascinating just in who they are and like how they engage with their food and um

31:33

who are passionate and and people who are very curious and you

31:38

know tiny kids all the way up to you know elders and it's um

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it is it's really magnificent um and especially in this time of covid when like

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interactions have been so limited um and learning new ways of interacting like

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via zoom or um you know really i know i've become much more thoughtful

32:02

about how i engage with people but also like when i'm engaging with people that

32:07

consciousness of like human i'm interacting with you hello person um

32:14

and so that's really i don't know over the this year that's become much more um

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i've just gotten a deeper consciousness around that and a lot of gratitude around

32:25

having a role in the world where i do i do interact with others and i do get to

32:31

engage in this really cool like really rich community

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yeah that's so wonderful and to me kind of like an unexpected side of

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your job i am really curious about like the role that mentors have played for you speaking about people and connections so could you speak a little bit about like just throughout your

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career the role that mentors have played for you sure um

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that's a great question that i really appreciate and i've um i've been really fortunate to have a

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number of just very impactful people in my life from my youth having a friend of my

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father's who had been a graduate student of his who really took me under his wing and

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he started an outdoor education program when i was a teenager and took me in and

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was like you're going to be a teacher and that that really i think that experience got me on the

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road to where i am today and you know in farming

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gosh i've just had so many you know my friend amanda cathers is one who always comes to mind who she's a farmer

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down in maryland now running her own operation and um she really codified for me

33:46

a lot of ideas that had kind of been floating around you know believed in me and my ability to

34:00

to run a farming operation she hired me as an assistant or she hired me as an

34:05

assistant grower on a farm and then i moved into the assistant manager position and she

34:11

left to go to maryland to start her own position she encouraged me to take

34:16

on the role of manager of that farm and it really that changed my life it totally changed my life she changed my

34:22

life she believed in me very deeply and challenged me i think that's one thing

34:27

that i'm very grateful for is i have had strong people in my life who haven't

34:32

been afraid to challenge me that's a scary thing it's you know it's not comfortable to be challenged and i

34:40

you know physically i like a challenge i think i've uh alluded to that but um the emotional challenge i wasn't

34:47

necessarily ready for and i've had people help me learn how to take that on and to push me

34:54

in that in that realm and um you know another manager

34:59

i've had melanie hardy who i started with when i first started farming it's another queer farmer in the area

35:06

and she really she really pushed me and again i'm super grateful for that and she believed in me you know she put

35:12

tools in my hand and was like go fix that tractor figure it out and

35:17

you know i'm very i'm very grateful for that i try to be that sort of that sort of mentor today

35:24

like i try and carry on those principles and like i said before like in the role that

35:30

i'm in now like i i work with a number of different staff members and people who are new to to production

35:37

growing and to farming and um i really enjoy uh introducing people to the work

35:43

and to teaching them and to um you know helping them along and challenging them and it's an art like being being a teacher being a

35:48

mentor and also being a mentee um there's totally

36:00

there's an art to it and it's a learning process you know i don't always get it right

36:05

[Laughter] um and that's okay you know i think that's another part of it is just like

36:12

making sure that i'm i'm still learning and that i have so much i can learn from others

36:18

be they somebody who's been in this type of industry for you know decades or
36:24
somebody who's new to it um approaching all of those relationships with curiosity and um
36:31
and an open mind and an open heart and yeah and also sounds like a lot of like honesty and transparency too and i think
36:37
like when i think back to like the mentors that i have or teachers that have been
36:42
like really impactful for me it's not the people who've like pretended that they know everything
36:48
you know it's like you know i'm i'm also learning about that like that's a great question like let's look in that together
36:54
and um i i sometimes forget that you know i
37:00
it's like as someone who's young who has mentors you know i like look up
37:06
to them so much um but also just like expect you know almost they just like they do everything
37:13
so flawlessly you know in my eyes and so like as like i start to get students i'm like okay you know what like my
37:20
mentors probably aren't perfect as much as i want to think that they are and i don't have to be perfect either because
37:25
sometimes it can put a lot of pressure um at least i felt that like a lot of pressure um you know to be a certain way
37:32
or to you know i don't know be the perfect person that they expect so
37:38
yeah i think transparency is really important and you brought that up too yeah i feel like it's really important
37:45
to have a mentor that obviously can teach you stuff but also is like willing to grow with you and
37:50
learn something from one another is something that you don't really find
37:56
that often because a lot of mentors aren't willing to kind of give up that control but if you find it it's such a
38:02
special thing for sure um do you have any
38:08
sort of like advice that you would give yourself in high school or perhaps like in your higher education
38:15
um considering where you are now i think you know i'm very fortunate in that
38:20
where i am now even though i didn't imagine the details like i like high school me would be like wow
38:29

that's super cool like that person's super cool um which is i don't know i say it out loud
38:35
and it sounds kind of funny but you know i'm i've worked really hard and i've like
38:41
been open to experiences i've definitely had some hard knocks and like fallen down
38:47
hard but gotten back up from those things and um i think one thing is
38:52
that i would say to my high school myself is um don't be afraid to ask for help you know i
38:59
felt like in my youth and my young adulthood like i really i
39:05
had i had something to prove that i could do it on my own um and that
39:10
i didn't need other people's help in a lot of ways and
39:15
i think it would have been a lot easier had i've been a bit more open to asking for help but it's not you know it's not
39:23
a sign of of inability or weakness i think it's actually a strength to be
39:28
curious and humble i try to do that today you know i was talking earlier about like our the
39:35
community we have here in eastern massachusetts and like i've been doing this for a while now and
39:41
like i ask for help and you know i reach out and um
39:47
you know another mentor i have who i didn't mention earlier is uh chris growler who's the president of green
39:52
city growers and like i ask him for help and i
39:58
am you know stronger because of it and um
40:03
you know i i work
40:09
i work to build relationships so that i can do that and also i really
40:14
try to be open to others so that they feel like they can come to me if i don't know the answer to something that's
40:20
totally fine like like you were saying like we'll figure it out together um and i get to learn something new
40:26
which uh i absolutely love um and i think is like that's a strength to
40:32
continue learning and you know i don't it's so funny people sometimes ask me questions and like i
40:37
don't realize what i know until somebody asks the question and then i'm like oh i know so much about that topic when they
40:44

ask the question and i'm like i don't know let's call somebody else who i know is an expert

40:50

yeah yeah yeah that's so true thank you so much for sharing that

40:56

um it has been just like an absolute joy talking to you today and i'm really excited to see where my career takes me

41:02

so thanks so much for sharing so much about your background absolutely it's been a total pleasure and so glad that

41:08

you all reached out you know this is an amazing industry there's a lot to learn it's a growing industry and i just

41:15

really encourage folks if you have any inkling of interest to explore it there's really there's a place for

41:20

everyone here so please come join us i love that sentiment thank you

41:26

yeah thank you so much for talking to us it's just been so amazing to hear about what you're

41:32

doing and kind of what's going on up there thank you so much for coming

41:37

absolutely the garden gate was created by kyra berba and caroline mcdonald as part of

41:44

the learning by leading initiative with the smithsonian gardens this team includes emily warsha as the

41:50

education specialist jena yu as the marketing specialist nicole kelly as the recording

41:56

assistant and megan hastie as the audio engineer the music is by royalty-free

42:01

music on soundcloud special thanks to cynthia brown and paula healy learn more by visiting

42:07

gardens.si.edu thanks for listening

42:13

[Music]

42:21

you