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Daniel "Dan" Kerubin Fallorina interviewed by Meleia Simon-Reynolds Part 3 of 3

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Daniel “Dan” Kerubin Fallorina interviewed by Meleia Simon-Reynolds and Christina Ayson Plank Part 3 of 3

Speakers: Daniel “Dan” Kerubin Fallorina; Meleia Simon-Reynolds; Christina Ayson Plank; Anna Fallorina

Date: July 5, 2023

Scope and Contents:

In this interview, originally conducted in-person, Daniel “Dan” Kerubin Fallorina speaks with, Watsonville is in the Heart team members, Meleia Simon-Reynolds and Christina Ayson Plank. Dan reflects on his parents’, Mariano Doctor Fallorina Sr. and Angelina Nicolas Fallorina, home gardening practices. He describes the produce Mariano grew at home using the skills he honed as an agricultural laborer and the flower gardens Angelina tended throughout her life. Dan explains that gardening was a way his parents relaxed after long days working in Watsonville agricultural fields and canneries. He also discusses how his parents shared the products of their gardens with friends and members of their community. This interview is part three of a series of three interviews conducted by the Watsonville is in the Heart team with Dan Fallorina.

Dan Fallorina 00:00

He grafted apple trees. So you'd have like a Golden Delicious and Red Delicious on— on one apple tree. So he had probably about four or five apple trees. And then he that— had that one stone fruit tree that had all the peaches and plums, and nectarines. And then he had another peach tree also. So that was one of the gardens that he had in the Holly Drive. And he also would plant like garlic. He really liked having garlic, I remember planting— him planting corn. But he was really particular about his garden. This drives my wife crazy also too, because like, he would make straight rows, and everything would be spaced perfectly, you know, like near maybe every five inches, that would be a plant, the next one would be another plant. So it'd be specifically laid out. And it would be like in rows. And when— when I do things myself, I like to have everything straight and align it and evenly spaced out and my wife would like, stick things all over and I go "No, no, we gotta have it this way!" And I also— like he would look at the grading of the soil, he would look at it and go, okay, the water is gonna go this way. So, I need to make sure that the rows are in a certain direction. So the water will flow. And he would make sure that the rows where the water would flow that they would flow and there would not be like pockets, you know, where water would just sit and then have to move on. So he'd grade it just right. So the water would just float directly to the plants and evenly to— to all the plants. So like, yeah, he was very particular about how he did his garden. And like some of the photos that you'll see, like the garlic is all lined up straight.

Dan Fallorina 02:15

My mom was the same way with her gardening for her flowers. She loved roses. So she had— I don't know how many different types of roses in her garden— but she would have them all lined up to specifically lined up. And— and she wasn't as— as detailed as my— my dad was but you know, she still would have everything lined up in a certain way and stuff. But you know, my dad was real particular about how he would select his vegetables and how he would do things. I mean he grew bitter melon, garlic, just other fruits and vegetables. I just can't think of all the ones that he had. But he was really into fruit trees when he was at Holly Drive. And then when we moved that to Jeanette Way, he did more of, you know, garlic and— and like bitter melon and some of the— can't think of the some of the other ones right offhand. But my mom, as you know liked loquats, and she planted four loquat trees on my property here and they're really prolific. In fact, we'll give you some loquats before you leave!

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 03:42

Yeah, well, how do you think your parents developed that meticulous skill they had for gardening?

Dan Fallorina 03:51

I think they developed their meticulous gardening— I think was part discipline, you know, and efficiency. Because, you know, if you're trying to get the most out of your— your fruits and vegetables, you want to make sure that they're— they're given the nutrients and, you know, equally and— and, and that every plant is going to get the nutrients in a certain way. So they had to make sure that everything is just perfect. To get the maximum amount of, of the resources that they were using.

Christina Ayson Plank 04:41

Do you think a lot of the things that they learned in the field translated to their personal gardens?

Dan Fallorina 04:47

Oh, yeah, definitely. Definitely. Well, yeah, I believe that, you know, that what they learned out in the fields and their work in the canneries transformed into what they did at home also, you know, I think the skills my dad learned, when he was working out in the fields, I'm sure that they came across when we came home, the way he did his garden and the other things other than his garden, you know, he was was very detail-oriented. And I find that I'm detail-oriented, in lots of ways, and it drives Anna nuts. She's like, you know, "How did you pick that up?" It's like, well, I'm looking at this and— and I think that's part of why I became an engineer. I'm a little bit more detail- oriented.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 05:49

Why— what— or, why do you think it was important to your parents to come home and put so much energy and detail-oriented focus into tending their garden after they may have spent a whole day already working in agriculture or in the canneries?

Dan Fallorina 06:12

I think the reason why they were so detail-oriented, when they came back home, and their details to the garden was sort of like a way to relax. I mean, I don't know if you've done any gardening, but sometimes when you're out there, just planting things and— and watching things grow and the fruits of your labor, right, you know, you get— you know, nice cucumbers or— or zucchini growing out of your backyard. It's— it's an accomplishment, and it's something that— that you're— you're gaining from that. And— and you're benefiting from it. And I think in a way was also a way to have your own produce where you didn't have to go running out and, you know, purchase that, you know, from the store, you could grow it on your own. Yeah, I remember my mom and dad would buy packages of seeds. And then they would plant their own garden from the seeds. You know, they wouldn't buy the little plants, they would just go out and get the seeds and plant the seeds and start it from seeds. But I think it was for them. It was relaxing. You know, it's sort of nice to go out in the backyard and just, you know, garden and then, you know, go back there and pick some fruit. Like— like when we were growing up as kids, you know, it's like, you know, yeah, I'm a little hungry. Okay, well, there's the peach tree! You know, pick a few peaches off the tree and eat the peaches. And, or, you know, we'd pick up the corn and, and, and then we'd have fresh corn that night. You know?

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 08:04

What— I'm gonna go back to the specific gardens at each house. So you mentioned the Holly Drive house, which is where the fruit trees were. Could you describe in as much detail as possible what that garden looked like at the house?

Dan Fallorina 08:20

Okay. So— how can I? So, the way my dad had arranged the garden in Holly Drive, there was one area where he had— 10 by 20 foot area probably. And that's where he would grow his row crops like his garlic, his corn, a bitter melon I think he grow also. Again, they were in nice rows, everything would be a certain way. And then the fruit trees, I think there was like four— I think there was probably about four apple trees. And so he also worked in apples. So he had different apple trees of rare varieties. Now he liked really like Golden Delicious, and there was Red Delicious. And there was a couple other ones, I can't remember, maybe there was a Pippin, and another tree, but the one that— and that was on to another side of the garden. And again, they were lined up in rows. And then there was kind of like a little flower garden there that my mom had growing for her flowers and her— she'd loved roses, so she had roses growing there. And— and one part of the lawn is where he had that one stone fruit tree that had the peaches, nectarines, plums. And I remember him, you know, grafting the tree, he would, he

would get like a branch from a nectarine tree from one of his friends. And then he would go ahead and split the wood and cut the other piece and graft it on. I remember him putting the two branches together. And then putting this special tar around it, putting a rubber band around it, a special rubber band and then putting tar on it. And you did that, you know several times to this because not all all the time the grafts you know, wouldn't make it so but he was able to, you know, get that tree to produce five different fruits on it. And it was always a pleasure to go there. And, and I remember my brother-in-law coming from back east when he came out for the first time and saw that tree and he just can't believe how many different fruits it had. And it was just so— so much fun to just, you know, pick the fruit off of it. I remember, you know, working out in fields and then getting off early. And I remember sitting underneath the tree and just falling asleep down underneath the tree and you know, waking up and like oh yeah, there's some nice fruit up there. Okay, I'm a little hungry, and then just picking some fruit there. But, yeah, yeah, he did a really nice job with those fruit trees. In fact, in our garden, we had a pear tree, and I got a graft from one of Anna's friends. And I tried grafting it, and actually I did the same thing that my dad did. What you do is you you'll cut off a branch off of a tree from a donor tree, and then you'll— you'll match up another branch on your tree that's about the same thickness. And then my dad would cut it in a diagonal, it would have to be really sharp. And then on both ends when you cut them and then you put them together. And then he would wrap it up with a rubber band and then— then he puts this tar— pruning tar on it. So, well so I tried that on our pear tree that we had planted in the backyard. And it took. And we had two different pears on this one pear tree. We had it for several years we had it but then I think we had the drought and then the tree died but— but it was pretty exciting to see that tree produce two different pears. You know.

Dan Fallorina 13:05

So in our yard in Holly Drive my dad— actually when they bought the house, it wasn't landscaped. So my dad also did the landscaping, I think some of the pictures, you'll see my dad and my niece in the front yard. That's roughly about when they first bought the house, you'll notice that all the plants are in line and they're evenly spaced and they're evenly spaced from the sidewalk right in the center. So, he— he was really good at specifically laying things out. And the backyard was the same way. He would, you know, have different vegetables growing and he would go ahead and— and you know, till the land. He would, you know, clear it out. I remember one time— Well, when we first moved in the house the front yard wasn't landscaped. And we decided that we were going to put lawn in, and my brother and my dad and I had to break up the ground, you know, so we broken apart with a pick— a pick, or— Yeah, a pick. And I tell you, my dad outworked my brother and I. It was so, so funny. It's like my brother and I were like, you know, just totally tired. My dad's still picking away, breaking up the soil. And I remember going, "Dad, how do you do it? How do you keep on working this hard?" And he goes "Oh, it's nothing. You know, I've been doing this for so many years. You know, it's nothing." I go, "You've outworked both of your sons here and you're still at it!" [laughter] And he

would just sit there and smile, and just keep on working. You know. But yeah, he was— he was very focused, very per— he had a lot of perseverance. And once he got his mind set on something, he would go ahead and, and follow it through until it get done. And, you know, he wouldn't take shortcuts, you know, try to do the best job that he could, you know, I mean, he would amaze me on some of the things that he would he was able to do. It was just amazing.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 15:39

He had a lot of skill. A lot of skill.

Dan Fallorina 15:42

Yeah. A lot of skills. Yeah. A lot of skills. I mean, yeah, I mean, not just gardening, but you know, just in general. I mean, even working on homes and things like that. He knew stuff about roofing and I'm like, how— where did you learn how to roof a house? It was just amazing. Some of the things that he would do. It's like, yeah, like, we need a roof on one of our houses on Holly Drive. And one day, he started ripping off the roof. And I go, Mom, does he know what he's doing? She goes, "I don't know!" And you know, and he ripped off the whole roof. And he put a whole new roof on and it was all by himself. And it didn't leak. And, you know, I know it's digressing.

Christina Ayson Plank 16:32

It sounds like your parents had like separate gardens like the vegetable garden was your dad's and your mother had her flower garden?

Dan Fallorina 16:43

Yeah, yes. Yeah.

Christina Ayson Plank 16:44

Why did they— I guess like, was that purposeful separation or like—?

Dan Fallorina 16:51

Well, I think my mom was more into flowers. I mean, my dad was more into the garden. My dad was more of the cook of the house. So my mom was not a great cook. So my dad would, you know, do the vegetables and he— so he would know what type of vegetables you'd like to cook. Oh, yeah, that's what I think. I think one of the other ones he did with some type of squash. It's, I forget the name of it, but it's green and it's sort of [indiscernible] You probably— you guys know what it is?

Christina Ayson Plank 17:25

Is it calabaza?

Dan Fallorina 17:27

Yeah, it's like a calabaza. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Christina Ayson Plank 17:32

Why did your mom like the flower garden?

Dan Fallorina 17:36

She loved flowers. She really liked flowers. You know, we gave her a lot of roses on— I gave her a lot of roses. And she had she probably had like, over 20 roses. You know, maybe more than that. I mean, there's still at our place— in fact that she would give her roses away to, you know, neighbors and stuff and she would also bring 'em to church and so everybody knew her for her roses and her flowers in a garden that she would have, as Meleia knows we had people bring flowers to her funeral from their garden because she had brought flowers every all the time to church and then that was a way for people to bring something from their garden for her.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 18:27

When you say she brought roses, what—did she bring cut roses or roses that people can plant?

Dan Fallorina 18:33

Cut roses. Yeah, so she would cut the roses from a garden and bring them in, as well as the flowers. And even after my mom passed, my—, my mom's neighbor would go "Oh, yeah, I love the roses" and she goes, "You're gonna leave them here, right?" And we go yeah. "Oh, yeah, definitely. You know, we have no intention of taking them out." And goes, "Yeah", he goes, you know, "I'll take care of these right here, you know, if you don't mind", you know, I'm like, "Well, you can if you want it, you know."

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 19:04

What— why do you think it was important to her to bring roses to people in the community and in the church.

Dan Fallorina 19:11

She liked to share, she really liked to share and— and, you know, when she had a lot of extra flowers or things she would love to share with other friends and family. She would do that with fruit. We have a she has a couple persimmon trees and she'd get a lot of persim— persimmons and should bring, you know, a basket of persimmons to church or give them away to the neighbors around. In fact, you guys are gonna get some!

Christina Ayson Plank 19:50

Was it common in the community to have this kind of like food and flower sharing practice?

Dan Fallorina 19:58

Oh, yes, yes. Yeah. So a lot of— so a lot of the fruits and flowers were shared between different families of different Filipino families that— they were always sharing, you know, even like if somebody would go fishing, and they would have a lot of extra fish. They would come and go, "Hey, you know, I got some fish", you know— you know, sometimes they would trade fish for vegetables. But yeah, there was always a sense of sharing between other Filipino families and other neighbors. Sometimes I remember when we would go pick strawberries and, and we would bring some home, we'd share with the neighbors across the street. And then, you know, later, a couple hours later, they would come back and give me some shortcake, you know, some little strawberry shortcake. So, you know, they were appreciative that they got strawberries, and they gave us a little strawberry shortcake. So we ate those strawberry shortcakes. But yeah, there, there was a lot of sharing between families. In fact, up until before my mom passed some of her older friends were still coming by and you know, bringing persimmons by or— or bringing vegetables. We would take my mom to one of her friends out on Paulsen Road. And we'd go over there and she'd go, "Take some persimmons!" — she'd give us a whole basket of persimmons. She goes "Oh, well come back, you know, in the fall, and we'll give you some— some more, you know, bitter melon" or whatever, you know. So—

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 21:35

What do you think it meant to your parents and like, to the community to be able to share in this produce?

Dan Fallorina 21:44

Oh, I think it was big because everybody wanted to share different vegetables. But, you know, some— some families would be able to grow a certain type of vegetable because it was hotter where they lived. Or they had more abundant of, you know, cucumbers, so they wanted to share those with somebody else that might be growing, maybe bitter melon. So then they go, "Okay, let's just share", you know.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 22:14

What did it feel like when you were growing up to be able to eat food that was grown from your own home, but also food that was grown by other people and shared with your family? What did you think about that?

Dan Fallorina 22:28

So the food being shared by you know, different families, I thought was really nice, you know, because you knew that it was good food, you didn't even have to go to the grocery store and get it. There was— the food was, you know, pretty good when it was grown by other families

and— and you know, saved you a trip from going to the store to pick up the food and you got a good variety of different fruits and vegetables from different families.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 23:03

Did you— Did it make you feel like there was like, always an abundance of food?

Dan Fallorina 23:13

Well, in that— in that fashion, yeah. So— so yeah, there was abundance of food during the summertime, when— when more the fruits and vegetables were available. So there was abundance of sharing between different families at that time. Yeah. You know, I can't say was always abundant, but I mean, during, you know, the summertime spring and summer, you know, and up into the fall, where there was a lot of fruits and vegetables available. Now there was— there was always food for— for that reason.

Christina Ayson Plank 23:53

It's interesting to me that, like Meleia said, your, your dad was working in the fields, and your mom was working in the fields and like, doing very similar things and for work, and then they would come home and relax by doing the same task it seems like. What— what do you think it meant for them to like, to relax in that way?

Dan Fallorina 24:20

Yeah. So, you know, it's like, I think it's like this is— is okay so, for— for them to work hard out in the fields, and then to come home and do their gardening, it— Yeah, it was work, working out in the fields but yet, when — when you like, something that you like to do— well maybe not cannery work [laughter]. But, well yeah, my mom didn't do cannery work when she went home, but like, you know, my dad liked to garden, and I think, working out in the field, I guess that was just part of him. And— and, in a way he probably enjoyed it. It's like, if you enjoy what you do, then it's not really work, right. So, you know, like, what you guys are doing is like, it's fun, you know. So, so maybe for them, it was it was fun for them to come home and then have that produce be theirs, rather than somebody else's, you know. And— and I get to grow what I want to grow, and what I want to eat instead of, you know, growing lettuce or, you know, having one particular vegetable that I'm working with, or one particular flowers. So I think that it was sort of, like they sort of enjoyed what they were doing.

Christina Ayson Plank 25:58

Do you think like, they felt like because they were doing the work in the fields, they were told, like what to grow, and they were told— and they couldn't reap the benefits of what they're growing. But at home it sounds like they— it was like their domain.

Dan Fallorina 26:17

Yeah.

Christina Ayson Plank 26:17

They had the power.

Dan Fallorina 26:19

Right, right. Yeah. So— so yeah, they— so their choice to come home and garden. They had their own choice of what they could garden, you know, it was their choice. It wasn't go, "Okay, you're a sharecropper, you're going to do strawberries, so you're going to do strawberries for the next five years". So, okay, "Well, I want to grow, you know, beans. I can't grow beans because I gotta grow strawberries. So I wanted to come home and grow beans because I want to have beans. I wanted to have fresh beans". So they would come home and do that and same with flowers. You know, my— my parents also worked in the nurseries too. So— So they did carnations and they did roses. And you know, my mom liked our roses. So, you know, she wanted to have her own roses. So she, you know, had rose bushes and the different other flowers that she grew.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 27:17

When did they work in the nurseries?

Dan Fallorina 27:20

Oh jeez. I'm trying to think. It was probably just before Junior High. Probably in the late 60s or early 70s. But, you know, this is in between doing the cannery work and working in— in lettuce and because I remember they were working in the nursery and it wasn't like— it was sort of full time but I don't remember them working like year round. But I think during the growing— the summer growing season, they were out in the fields and then I think more towards to winter and fall time they were helping out in the nursery. That way they would have work year around.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 28:09

What nursery was it?

Dan Fallorina 28:11

Nakashima Nursery out on San Miguel Canyon. It's actually close to, I think the DeOcampo Ranch — because theirs was out by Murphy Hill, right? Yeah, I think it was like right across San Miguel Can— that is San Miguel Canyon, yeah— right across the way there. There's a big nursery— a Japanese Nakashima nursery. It might be Driscolls now. Driscolls might own it now.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 28:44

What kinds of work did your mom specifically do when she was working in the nursery?

Dan Fallorina 28:50

So they did – Okay, so the type of work that my mom did at the nursery was they would like thin– So, I guess they would, you know, make sure that there wasn't too many buds so you could get a bigger flower. They would, you know, cut the flowers, they would sort them, and then they they would bunch them together. And then I think they would also pack them too. At the nursery, they did pretty much everything there. And believe my dad does the same thing too. So they would basically do the same type of work. I don't– yeah, I can't remember them doing anything else. Pretty much that.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 29:38

Did your mom do that same technique in her home garden in order to get larger blossoms of her roses and other flowers? Did she also thin them out?

Dan Fallorina 29:50

I can't remember if she did or not. But really, she probably did. I mean, it's just, I'm thinking about a garden now. And you know, this was in her later years. And she wasn't on top of it. But you know, back then, the roses were pretty prolific. I mean, they still are, but there wasn't as well maintained the last few years of her life but– but the roses did produce quite a bit of roses.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 30:21

That makes me think like, I don't think that someone who just was like casually growing roses in their yard would necessarily do that, like an extra step of like making sure the bulbs were like most large and like beautiful looking.

Dan Fallorina 30:39

Yeah.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 30:42

Could you tell me if you could picture in your head, your mom in the garden, in her flower garden, her rose garden at home at any point in her life? Could you describe what that would have looked like to us? What– what would she have been doing? What would she have looked like? What would the flowers have looked like?

Dan Fallorina 31:09

So as I would– could picture my mom working in the garden with her roses, she would– she'd probably have gloves on. She would have a hat to keep– keep the sun off her face. And she probably have some type of long sleeve shirt on, that way she wouldn't get scraped up from the thorns on the rose bushes. She would have a pair of clippers, probably that Corona clippers. And she would be reaching in and trimming off the bad branches off the roses and then probably cutting up the ones that you'd want and then she'd take those and put them in in

a vase of course pick off all the thorns off of it. Um, she would– I could see her going out and watering, you know, the roses every so often. And she would you know do one plant, go the next one and do the trimming and– and selecting of the roses. Then she'd go "Oh this is a pretty rose here!" Yeah– she was very on the roses and in her flowers, she was really particular about her flowers. You know she'd go "Oh yeah, this is a really pretty rose it's– it's closed. You know, these petals, these are old you don't want this one." You know, or "Here's this– this bud, it looks really nice. But you know let's take off these these pedals. Oh Look how much nicer this looks now". And then she'll look at another flower and she goes, "Oh, yeah, this, you know, cut it down here, cut it below here, you know, cut it below this dam so that way it's a long stem so you could put it in– in a vase", so she'd be thinking about those, you know, and then she would go like, "You want to make sure that the– the clippers are sharp so when you cut it it's a clean cut", because when you do a clean cut, it's better for the flower because– and also for the plant because it's– when it's a rough cut, more disease could happen on there. And also, when you cut the, the flower stem with a sharp knife, it's a clean cut and absorbs water easier. So, you know, so she would, you know, cut the flowers, put them in a vase and then maybe a couple days later, she would, you know, maybe trim the bottom off again. That way it would be a fresh cut so the flower would be able to get more water. And another trick too is, she would say "Put an aspirin in". Aspirin. Oh, you guys didn't know about that? Yeah, put aspirins in for flowers. It makes them last longer. Just like a tablet, drop it in there.

Christina Ayson Plank 34:29

Do you remember where she would place all her bouquets in the house?

Dan Fallorina 34:34

She would place them like all around. It's– we had a– Okay, so my mom would place her flowers. She would place them around the house like– like in the family room next to the lamp. You know, she– we had a counter, a kitchen counter between the family room and the kitchen and she would always have a bouquet of flowers there and and she would always have one– in fact when– Yeah, she would always have a bouquet of flowers and she would go out you know every few days and go pick up new flowers outta the garden and she would go out to sliding glass door and she would walk through her garden and she would go "Okay, there's some purple flowers" so she would cut those and then she'd walk through the garden to look at for different color then she'd cut those and then she would, you know, look and then she'd like pick a few roses or so. So she would always have fresh flowers in the house. And yeah, in fact just before she passed her garden was blooming with roses and stuff.

Dan Fallorina 36:08

She was able to see roses. Yeah, she– in her bedroom, she could look out her bedroom and see her roses out in the garden. It was really nice for her to see that. She really loved her garden. [Interview pauses as Dan, Meleia, and Christina become emotional].

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 36:42

No no it's okay. I just remember it was just so beautiful— beautiful at her service when everyone had those flowers. What— What were the colors like in the flower garden?

Dan Fallorina 37:00

Oh the colors were — Oh God, yeah, I'm bad at types of flowers. Anna is really good about, you know, which flowers is this, but she had purple, she had, you know, red roses, pink roses, she had geraniums— white ones and red ones—so it was— it was pretty colorful garden. There was— these one— one flower that she had that was just like real vibrant purple. I can't remember what the name of the plant— I'm not good at plant names but it was just beautiful. I'd go ahead and pick some of those. In fact, that's— when she passed away she had one vase and I would always put flowers in. In it every time I'd go by her house I'd go to the garden, walk around in it and I'd pick flowers and I would stick them in her vase. So I did that for up until my brother moved in. So I was doing that. So she— I made sure she had fresh flowers for quite a long time afterwards.

Christina Ayson Plank 38:31

How do you think your parents' practice of gardening influence the way that you see gardening today?

Dan Fallorina 38:45

The way they influenced my gardening was, again, I like to have things in rows. I like— I'd look at the way that the ground is sloping and I try to make sure that the water is gonna slip a certain way and make sure it doesn't puddle. I'm all, you know I'm conscious. I don't like the soil to be, you know, uneven. I like to have it nice and level or, you know, graded a certain way. Because I just know, it's more efficient that way, and it just looks better. It's also safer. I think it's like, you know, sometimes when my wife gardens [laughter] yeah, there's like, dirt clods here and there. And then when I'm walking back there is like, it's just uneven. And so I'll try to, you know, level things off and make it a lot smoother, or more— a lot more, I guess, not graded, but a lot more landscaped. In a way that is— it's more anal. [laughter] When you're, like, in your garden, do you think of your parents?

Christina Ayson Plank 40:02

When you're like in your garden, do you think of your parents?

Dan Fallorina 40:06

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, every day, like, when we sit back there, and we have lunch out in— outside, and I think, well, about my parents, and, and especially the loquat trees, you know, because they're there and,—and my mom, when my mom planted that she go, "Oh, yeah, I

planted some trees in front of your house". And we're like, "Well, like where?" and she's like, "Oh right here, in front of the fence". I go, "Oh, okay!" And now they're this huge, and they're really producing a lot of fruit. And so, you know, we'll sit back there, and we'll pick the fruit right off the trees and— and eat them, you know, for a little snack. But yeah, so we think about them all the time. Or when we're out there gardening or, you know, picking peaches, I'll think about my dad and peach tree that we had with all the nectarines. Any time, I have some fruit, I'll think of my parents in that way. Or even the fresh vegetables that if we go to the farmers market, you know, I think about my— my parents, or like, I would take my mom's shopping and we'd go to the Filipino store here in Watsonville. And she'd be going through and looking at the vegetables. She goes "Oh this one's not good. Oh! This one, yeah, this one". And then should be going through all of them, you know, and— and it'd be funny because she would like, Oh, yeah, I like this one. Oh, no, no, this". She'd go "This one's better". Then she would take that one. And then but yeah, should be picky about her vegetables. And, and,— and yeah, she would be telling me like when we go to our grocery stores she'd, you know, be really picky about this stuff. And I'm the same way to. I go to the store— like strawberries. I know what a good strawberry looks like it. And when I go into the grocery store, I'm like, "Oh, man, that looks so bruised. They look bad!", You know —you know, so there's nothing like fresh strawberries, like what we saw off the vine. It's— it's, you know, it's a world of difference from what you see when you get into the store.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 42:15

Is there a particular memory or picture of your parents that comes into your head when you taste these fresh fruits and vegetables, these particular types that they were growing?

Dan Fallorina 42:32

The particular type of fruit that I would think for— for my dad would be like peaches and nectarines just because of that one specific tree that has so many different fruits and they were always so delicious. My mom— the fruit that reminds me the most of her was probably two. Um, the loquats you know, since she planted those and we have those all the time and persimmons. Fuyu persimmons, because— that's right, I had another home that I first bought, and it's across town and my parents planted two persimmon trees and an avocado tree, and those are doing really well over there too. And, and persim— So for my mom's, it's loquats and persimmons, but she really liked persimmons, and I always think about her— about the persimmons and the loquats, because she didn't have a loquat tree at home. So we would bring her loquats to her house, and she would just go through those like crazy. And, you know, sometimes loquats well, they're sticky, you know, and— and she would eat them. And then she started to get everything else sticky. And I go "Mom! Wash your hands!" [laughter] But you know— But the persimmons, she would also pick those and then the extra one that she would bring the church and she would always be giving people the persimmons at church and her neighbors.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 44:17

I'm gonna stick on the loquats just for a minute. Could you just say, one more time for the recording, when did your mom plant the loquats in your— in your yard at your house?

Dan Fallorina 44:31

It was in 1990. She— in 1990, my mom planted the local trees, she planted— one, two, three, four— four trees. It was three on the side of the house here. And then one out in the front. Actually, when she planted them, the fence line used to be on the inside here, where the trees were. And before we pushed the fence out, the trees were exposed. And we had one person climb up on the tree and broke all these branches on the tree. They actually got up into a tree and were picking the loquats. And— and we don't know who did it, you know, but you know, when we pushed the fence out, we didn't have to worry about that. You know loquat trees have been really prolific. Were you here when she planted them?

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 45:26

Were you here when she planted them?

Dan Fallorina 45:28

No, I wasn't. I was at work. [laughter]

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 45:31

So, could you tell us what exactly happened when she planted them? Or what's the story of your mom planting the loquat trees?

Dan Fallorina 45:33

Well, I think I came home one day and then she goes "Oh, I got a surprise for you". And I go "Well what's the surprise?" And she goes, "Oh I planted some loquat trees in front", I go, "Where are they?" I go, "I don't want them there!" [laughter] And she goes— and I'm like, "Okay, well, you know, they're there. Okay. I'm not gonna worry about it" Because I was so busy with work and stuff. Like I wasn't going to mess with trying to dig them up or whatever. And I was like, "Okay, they look nice". And of course, I'm pretty evenly spaced. [laughter] And I said, "Yeah, okay, we'll leave them there". And I left them there and they just kept on growing and growing. And they were just small little trees, like probably, you know, a couple feet tall or so and, and she grew up got him from seed also from I guess one of her friends and— and then she brought them over a here and then she planted them because— yeah, she doesn't have a loquat tree at her house. So I imagine that's where she got it. Oh, wait a sec. No, I don't— I take that back. So she did plant— she had some loquat trees at her other home. She used to live a few houses down from where I lived also um— where I live now. And so she may— it might have been maybe '91, '92 maybe that she planted the loquat trees because she had loquat trees in

her other home and she might have got the plants from there. So she would have had to collect the seeds and grow them into seedlings from that loquat tree?

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 47:16

So she would have had to collect the seeds and grow them into seedlings from that loquat tree?

Dan Fallorina 47:18

Okay, so obviously you don't know anything about loquats! [laughter]

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 47:20

I don't know anything about loquats!

Dan Fallorina 47:22

So— so the seedlings that my mom got for the loquat trees are— So loquat trees are almost like a weed sometimes. So if you have loquats that fall off the tree and the pits land on the ground, if they somehow get buried by dirt or something, you'll have a little loquat tree growing and they're— they grow very easily. So, and they grow pretty quickly. So a seedling from a loquat tree will start fairly easily. I think that's where my mom got them from the trees. If you'd like, you could take home a seedling too!

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 48:17

Why do you think your mom wanted to grow those— plant those trees for you at your house?

Dan Fallorina 48:25

Oh, I think that she— the reason why I think my mom planted the loquat trees in my house was so that I would be able to have some loquats and I believed in some medicinal remedies with the leaves. Because one time she brought over some friends. Mrs. Ventura— Mrs. Ventura and— Mrs. Ventura and another— oh, Mrs. de Mayas. And they were— they came i— she brought them over here and they were in our backyard and they saw the loquat trees and they go "Oh! You have loquats. Oh, can we have some?" And we said sure. And she goes "Oh, you know the leaves here these are really good for—", I think it was diabetes. If you take the leaves and you make em into a tea it's good for diabetic and then I think they were saying a liver cleanser also too with the leaves were good. So you crush them up and then you make a tea out of them. But I think that she— she thought that I liked the fruit and I did like the fruit. I always liked the fruit. You know, but sometimes it gets messy because you know, we sometimes we get a lot of fruit and it's all over and I got to sit there and pick them off. In fact— Yeah, one day I spent— just last week I was up in the tree picking all these loquats and going through them and getting rid of some. And of course I had like three or four big bags of loquats and then I took them to our neighbors and you know next door and across the street and around give them a

loquats. The loquat leaves are good for was it diabetes is what Mrs. de Mayas was saying I think.

Christina Ayson Plank 50:25

Did your mom do that often? Just kind of like go into your garden and plant?

Dan Fallorina 50:31

No, but [laughter] she was known to you know, just pop in at times when we weren't expecting her. [laughter] But I don't think she would just grow things. Other than loquat trees. What else?

Anna Fallorina 50:50

Gladiolus bulbs.

Dan Fallorina 50:51

Oh, gladi— Oh yeah. Oh, that's right. That's another thing she liked. Gladiolas. We had lots of gladiolas. So yeah, yeah, she she would have a tendency to pop in at times. Like "oh, okay". So I learned that quick after I had my first home. I didn't give her a key.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 51:13

What do the loquats taste like?

Dan Fallorina 51:15

Uh, they're— The loquats taste like— I don't know what type of fruit maybe to describe it because there's a sweet flavor. And it can be like a tart—tart also too, because —what? Well it's a tropical fruit. Yeah.

Anna Fallorina 51:38

Pineapple.

Dan Fallorina 51:38

It tastes like— it doesn't taste like a pineapple.

Anna Fallorina 51:40

No, but, pineapple, mango.

Dan Fallorina 51:41

But it's, yeah, a tropical fruit. It's so sweet. It looks almost like a little plum. The, the skin can be tart at times, like if it's— or, and people like the tartness and the sweetness together. Or some people don't like the skin so they take the skin off and then they just eat the inside which is more of a sweeter taste. I like em just a little bit overripe, you know that's when they seem to

be sweeter but that's when the skins a little bit tougher, but I'll— you know since we have lots of loquats— if— if I'm in the mood for skin I'll eat the skin, if I'm not I'm not eating it, but it's— it's a refreshing fruit. You know, especially if it's hot in the backyard and you wanna— want to quench your thirst. Just picking those loquats and you know having some, it's— it's nice.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 52:53

Um, possible last question about the loquats— I— you kind of said this, but I'm gonna ask you to re-say it again— What— What does it mean to you to be able to look into your backyard and see the loquat trees your mom planted and taste them on a daily basis when they're blooming and blossoming?

Dan Fallorina 53:18

So wha— Say that again?

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 53:20

What does it mean to you to be able to look in your backyard and see the loquat trees that your mom planted and be able to eat them still?

Dan Fallorina 53:32

With the loquats trees in the back, they— they represent to me, my mom passing on the fruits of her labor on to me and— and my wife, you know. It's uh, she— it was a way for her to— to give something that will always be giving, you know, even though she's no longer here, the fruits are here, we're able to benefit from her, from the tree. And it also makes me think about her also, and how hard— of the work that she did and my dad did as we were growing up and to put us in a good position, in a better position that— that they didn't have when they came here. So it was— it just reminds me of the hard work that both my mom and dad did. And to be thankful for the hard work that they did, and— and to show us what hard work was and also to realize, you know that you can make it in life if you really work at it.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 55:21

Thank you. Do you think we're good?

Christina Ayson Plank 55:24

I think we're good.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 55:25

Thank you so much.

Dan Fallorina 55:26

You're welcome.

Meleia Simon-Reynolds 55:27

I'm sorry that was a little emotional.