

Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project
Interview with Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin by Chris Keeve
Conducted on July 6th, 2023 in KY

[00:00:00] **LuAnna Nesbitt:** The following interview is a part of the Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project. It was conducted in Kentucky by interviewer Chris Keeve on July 6, 2023. The narrator of this oral history is Tiffany Belfield El Amin.

[00:00:12] **Chris Keeve:** Just to start us off, I'm wondering if you want to introduce yourself and talk about some things about yourself that you feel are important.

[00:00:20] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, yes, uh, my name's Tiffany Belfield El Amin, and I am first and foremost a land steward and a protector of the land from Blue Estates, my great grandfather Atchis Blues. Land that my grandmother, Bessie Blue Johnson, steward, I think that's probably one of the most important things in my life, um, conserving that land and making it a very essential part of the ecosystem.

Outside of that, I'm very big about, um, policy, food and social justice, um, around black and indigenous folks, especially in this region around the Ohio river valley and in the Appalachian rural areas. Um, so I'm doing a lot of work with organizing and assessing black and brown communities. I'm very big about food accessibility and food sovereignty.

Um, our, one of our businesses, Alfalfa's Restaurant, um, we move a lot of food throughout the community and help make plates and dinners and boxes. We help Food Chain get food down to East Kentucky after the floods. Um, we're just really big on advocacy, really big for stepping up for folks that, um, may not have an opportunity to step up for themselves.

[00:01:28] **Chris Keeve:** I'm wondering a little bit how you came to the work of land stewardship.

[00:01:33] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** So okay, so even in the previous question, there's other things that we do, right? Like I'm a doula. I plan to be a midwife. Um, but I was trying to be very focused on the agricultural pieces, but they all are connected, as a woman of the land.

And so that goes into your follow up question, you know, how did I become a student, become a midwife, into stewardship and it's always been a part of my life. Um, my grandparents, I was, I was raised on a farm. Soon as I was born, I was on a farm. You know, I've been outside barefooted since I was crawling.

It's been on my knees. Like it's just been, um, my life and it just isn't the way of life. So we've always taken care of the land. It used to be more than this to be taken care of. Um, farming is something that I remember as long as I can remember. It, it, it's just, it's like second nature. It's nothing that I ever thought like, is this what I would do?

It's something that it's like my responsibility to do.

[00:02:24] **Chris Keeve:** What do you think about this land in particular? And you think about growing up here and walking here barefoot. What comes to mind when you think back and those memories on the land?

[00:02:37] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, lots of rain, mud. I love mud. Um. My grandma used to tell stories about how I used to mess up her beautiful pink bathrooms when we moved into the new house, um, because there was just mud everywhere, mud between my feet, my toes.

I remember, you know, digging up earthworms to go fishing before a day that it's raining. I think it's because I'm looking at my land right now, like, this is like, this is like a normal day, right? Like, there's an overcast. I probably would have been fishing, you know, putting my feet on the fresh cut yard.

But before that, it was just a field of bluegrass. The smells, the way it feels, just feeling connected. That's something that I always felt. It's nothing that I grew into that. I always felt connected, barefooted. I was always barefooted. I think they had to force me to put shoes on and force me to come inside.

Like, that, that was me all the time. Oh my gosh. Um, I feel like you can smell the rain coming. You can smell. The soil, I feel like I can smell the iron in the soil. You can smell the fish, I feel like I can smell the earthworms. It's like, it's a different smell out here. It's like as soon as you get out here and you put your feet in the ground, it's like you tap into a whole nother sensory load.

I feel like I can smell like every flower in the field. Yeah, for sure.

[00:03:58] **Chris Keeve:** I'm wondering how your grandmother, introduced you to this land, if that makes sense.

[00:04:05] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Yeah, that makes sense. This land that I live on right now, it used to be a garden. So, when I was little, I remember Grandma telling me like, we're gonna go pick up, we're about to go pick blackberries.

And I would put on something old, some old tennis shoes, and we would go down the road, down Meadow Lane, and go find, or down in Bybee, and go pick blackberries. And then, she'd be like, next day, we'd go barter, she'd go make something with the blackberries and go pick up a thing of peaches. And then she'd come and make, like, peach ice cream.

Um, and it was always through food. I mean, like, I'm thinking about it now, like, it was food. That's how she introduced me. But she would show me how to, you know, she She would, you know, take seeds and she would make her own stuff and she would grow her own stuff and she knew which farm to buy from to get the best pie, the best jam, the best seed.

Like she knew, it wasn't like she just went into Walmart and bought some stuff. Nah, not grandma. Um, but watching her just cultivate like the different pieces of the land, even to, you

know, having to go outside and get a switch a time or two. Yeah. You got introduced real quick and trees are strong. Yeah. Um, but like rolling in the, you know, she would let me like the day that it was time for me to get my hair done.

She let me roll in the grass and. You know, climbing the paper trees and telling me how paper trees really, you know, were processed down to make paper, and like, she really made me understand the full spectrum of everything that I touched on the land, for sure.

[00:05:40] **Chris Keeve:** Where'd you make that peach ice cream?

[00:05:42] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** She had like the actual old school peach thing, she would use the um, so peaches, there was like pieces of peaches that she'd put inside the machine as it froze up or whatever.

She didn't cook the peaches down, I think they were fresh. Um, and then she would take the sauce of the peaches and then she would just kind of like drizzle it on top of it and that's it. She didn't, I don't think she whipped it up in there, but there was definitely peach chunks, peaches and pineapples.

She would just put it in there as she put the ice in there and salt and everything and it would all form together. It was on the bomb.

[00:06:14] **Chris Keeve:** I want to hear more about the, about the blackberry bartering too, or the blackberries, but also at the blackberry bartering.

[00:06:20] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Yeah. I mean, yeah, I was just talking to my family reunion folks and I was just like, you know, we never really had to go into town for anything because everybody had something and that come from the repass to the wedding days to, you know, rooting for somebody in, in the community.

Like we, they all, I always watch these elders and people of the community come together. So it's like, If Grandma knew that Miss Emma had green beans already and Grandma's green beans ain't came in yet, she would bring her some, some tomatoes. We would go out there and pick her green beans. You know, if, if we didn't have fruit trees here, um, but we would go, we didn't have the blackberries that we have here now, they were here, but not like there was places where they had actually made it for you to come and pick, or the, there was fences of them.

It was easier to access. So grandma would go do that. And then if it was somebody in town that couldn't have access to it, but they had some frozen peaches, she'd be like, okay, well, I went and got me some blackberries, I'm bringing some blackberries, I'll pick up some peaches.

You know, there was no web, no phone. It was just, I know you got them. Come get them, okay? And same thing with meats. My grandfather was like that with meats, too. Like, he liked to quail hunt and stuff. And I would come home and there would be a deer, but, hanging, but he might have bush hogged their land for them.

And he'd be like, when I get you, when I get a, you know, a kill, I'll bring it to you. And they'd bring it to him and help him butcher it down. We would have deer in the freezer. So it was just a way of life. Yeah.

[00:07:39] **Chris Keeve:** Most Blackberries were growing here naturally?

[00:07:41] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Mm hmm. Yes, most of them are now natural grown.

There's a strip of natural grown, and then there's a strip that were transferred. But since then, we transferred those in maybe like, I'd say about five, six years ago. So some of them have cross pollinated for sure, yeah. Um, and then the ones in like directly behind the shed, those are natural that have spread.

The natural back line is just spread. I just keep, you know, I'll cut a little bit to keep them kind of from not going crazy, but I'm, you know, expanding the territory so they can keep on growing. Yeah.

[00:08:14] **Chris Keeve:** So there, the blackberries, peaches, green beans, tomatoes. When you think about that, that bartering system, what else was moving?

[00:08:22] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** What else was moving? Um, services, haircuts. Um, you know, people needing stuff, like I said, bush hogging, people needing their stuff to get plowed up, moving something, hauling something, you know, there was a lot of labor exchange. There was a lot of times Papa would have folks come work for him to help him out with something.

You know, in town, um, but I mean, there was still money, you know, people still wanted their coins, but there were times where, you know, family friends or close to family, you know, there was, you know, I got you if you got me, um, this unspoken type of system. And what I really think about is, like, when we used to have repasses out here, and Like, this is the blue estate, you know what I'm saying?

So a lot of the churches, we would have family reunions, stuff out here. And it was like, you know, the funeral home had the tents, and the church had the tables and chairs. There was no rentals, you know what I'm saying? Like, everybody had something, and everybody who had a mama in the house brought a side item, and there was no, well, what are you bringing?

Everybody knew who had what. And it wasn't even because who made it the best. Like, she's got access to that, so she makes the best that. You know, when my grandmother did have, The beans and stuff rolling, she would bring a pot of beans or a pot of green beans. She made a lot of chow chow, what they call, you know, old school chili relish from her peppers and onions and, um, tomatoes off her land.

She'd bring that into the place and then of course, you know, grandma's always baking stuff and baked goods was always a thing. It just, you didn't have to worry about feeding people, the church would take care, you know. I don't know, it's just not as tight as it used to be, but that

bartering system, it was bigger than just the farmers, but there was a farmer in almost everybody's family, like you had to have land.

Land was the currency, so it just flowed to make sense. You know, I guess, for a lack of better words, yeah.

[00:10:07] **Chris Keeve:** Speaking of land, I'm wondering about your family's history with this land, and how the stewardship has shifted over the generations.

[00:10:16] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Well, you know, when I tell my story, it's very centralized on Giddy Boos, Atrus Ballew, and then me, me, me, around him and his last four years of life.

Oh, so, the history of land, like I was saying, it's always been very focalized on Atris. I, I lived in that white house with Atris, my grandfather, my grandmother, um, my father and my mother, we had another old place, but like here on this land for him, I just remember him being older and just, you know, and then my grandma and what her and my grandfather did just is, you know, keeping the land clean, it was always really cut short.

It was not nothing. We had a garden and we had. Um, you know, it was a typical country house, right? And so when I was younger, that's all I felt like. Well, this is normal for us, right? But then as I got older and I started to tell my story about, you know, living with coal and outhouses and tobacco farming, literally living on the farm, you know, people were like, your story is different from the rest of ours.

And I got to learn more about my history, cousin Jim living next door. Like he's literally knows everything about our family in Madison County. And, and I listened to my grandparents story. And when elders would sit around, I was definitely listening. I was the only grandchild. So I got to go everywhere. Um, all the homemakers and everything, reunion, meetings and stuff.

I'll just be listening, you know, and you know, what I did learn is that, you know, um, the Ballews, the Ballews specifically, but just everybody that we are akin to. Right? And most of this kin is blended between marriage and biological, but, um, you realize, like, you know, it was our family who were the first educators, and it was our family who were the original farmers who worked with USDA.

Bought land was actually making a living, um, to the point where generationally I can own the same land, right? There was a Chautauqua that was here that Cousin Jim reminds me of where they brought, um, you know, George Washington Carver and other folks to talk about literally what we're doing right now, right?

Um, it's like history's repeating itself, um, and even to that, you know, the work that I'm doing. It's work that our family has been doing over and over and over and over again. And, and through agriculture and through education, through, uh, land sovereignties, like we keep bringing it back. Um, and so the history of all of that, you know, past our family, you know, like we were talking in the tour, you know, this was white man's land that they removed indigenous people of the Cherokee nation away from.

And these people. You know, look like me, you, you know what I'm saying? Um, and that's what a lot of my cousins look like. And so that history, but also knowing that we too had a barter system with the white man that were here and was able to use his land. To, um, you know, birth babies and, and, um, baptize people in their ponds before Atrus bought it.

It signified that there was, you know, a, um, there was some type of infrastructure of services, you know, like I was saying, you know, my great aunt was a doula. My great great aunt was a doula midwife, you know, she was catching babies. And a lot of our family knew the land, you know, foraged the land, knew how to heal.

Um, something that I feel like I definitely have gotten spiritually, um, but it's like, we have those, that history here and it's just, when it pops back up like it is right now, it's like, it's totally repeating itself. Um, the history is rich, you know, some of our families are the first to do a lot, first people.

To go to Berea, be teachers at Berea, you know, step foot in the first desegregated schools, the first segregated schools, the first schools that would allow us to come in there and actually whole classroom was, was a classroom that my grandmother, Bessie Johnson, who raised me sat in that class, you know?

So it's like, um, it's definitely rich. It's definitely intense here. Yeah.

[00:14:14] **Chris Keeve:** I mentioned tobacco farming, can you speak more about the history of tobacco on this land?

[00:14:20] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** So on this land, so my grandparents had different, had different generational lands. So here was my grandmother's father's land and that's where her parents here on Ballew Estates. Um, Andrew Johnson, his, her husband, he had lands in Fayette County, which is.

Basically, the outskirts, like Richmond and Madison County, like I live in Madison County, technically, it's the outskirts near by the river, um, and things of that nature. And so he had like 200 and something acres there. So that land had an old place. That's also where I was raised at. As our elders died, we moved to the next elder.

So everybody was there and then they moved here. Yeah, it was a lot of migration. That is something that they did well. Migration. The migration here. It's almost like, like an insect migration, how we just move, sit, and then get, you know, move, sit, it's, it's crazy. But anyways, so, um, what Pawpaw would do is do his starter plants out here.

Like where this sits is, it was just a big ol garden. I mean, the whole, all of this, where the, the house is, it was all garden. And then where the hot tunnel is, that was where he treated that land. That's the reason why I put the hot tunnel there. And he would start his, some of his plants there. Um, by getting a head start with plants, he would have a one up on a whole acre of tobacco and then he wouldn't have to, he was trying to cut his costs, but he knew he didn't have the capacity or the space to really do all his plants because, I mean, it's a lot of acres and so he

would buy some, but that was, that was, that was life, like that tobacco was it, like, I don't remember them doing anything else, my mom grew up at a time where they did a lot of agriculture, the cows, the chicken stuff.

I grew up completely commodity crop, just tobacco. And that was a year round thing. I stayed with my grandparents a lot. I lived with them a lot. So it was like, in the 12 months, there was no days off, none. If you weren't weeding the tobacco, I mean, in the movie, it would just be so exhausting and then you'd come here and just crash out, you know, like, and still try to have a normal life, but it was a lot.

Tobacco farming is a lot, honey. I mean, I've been kept between cow suckers and tomato and tobacco worms, which I love tobacco worms. Um, I would just, there was even more untouched. So I would find arrowheads and indigenous tools in the yard and there was a creek there. And it's important to talk about because when you think of the Fayette County, Madison County, Jessamine County lines, and all of those hamlets, like, you know, Bobtown, Gentown, Catontown, Concord, all these different ones, it was a group of us migrating, but we literally are a blended of the same peoples.

And it's just, it's just cool. It's just how connected it is. But yeah, tobacco was here, but when my grandparents told me there was a barn in the back and they did a lot of horses and mules, and if you go out there, it's like, there's still these. Waves from where it was plowed the same way for years and years and years.

It's not been plowed in even my generation, but you can still feel it because that's how much they did. Grandma used to talk about having to go back there to the cemetery and try to bring the cows back. Scared as hell because she knew the cemetery is back there. Um, and it didn't look, you know, at night it looked different out here.

And so, you know, they did a lot of hay and grains and things out here too. So there was different, it was diverse out here before my time when my grandmother was my age. Yeah.

[00:17:43] **Chris Keeve:** What are tobacco wards?

[00:17:46] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Like, really big, fat, juicy, neat, bright green, um, worms that like to eat on tobacco plants. They get big by that.

They create their silk from eating on the tobacco. But some people think they're grossed out because they're really gross and grubby looking. They're not even gross. They're very silky. I think they're pretty. They got like slimmers of like gold and silver on them. Like, but they're just huge. They're like, they're like grubs.

They're like big. Yeah. And then, you know, cow suckers, they just get big. Off of sucking on cow teats and we had a farmer out on that land and that's where they would come and then they would come and get cool I guess and would hang in our barn and were hanging tobacco so you will reach up to think you're about to get tobacco and there's a big old cow sucker and they're huge they look like pythons they look like they're ready to kill you but they're not they're just lazy

and fat the fatter they are the lazy they are and they're full of milk I don't think they even eat meat or people or anything I don't think they can suffocate you or nothing like I think they're pretty harmless.

Yeah. Now I'm talking about the snakes. Snakes and worms are two different things, but the worms are like this big and they're like as big as my thumb. I think they're adorable. People think they're gross. But the snakes were things I ran into a lot too, and we were there through all the weathers. All the weathers.

And, you know, even to the point of part of this conversation about seed saving, there would be times that grandma would bring stuff up there and she would have napkins, pawpaw tubes just full of seeds, from where we had brought stuff off our farm to eat, like slices of tomatoes or, uh, cucumber or something.

And they would save the seeds in a napkin and come home, take them out, dry them out. Oh, there would be like a countertop just full of seeds, cantaloupe, melons, watermelon. Yeah, they were efficient people.

[00:19:27] **Chris Keeve:** Do you remember how, how they would save them?

[00:19:30] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, most of the time, there was a lot of sour cream containers.

Ha ha! It's a whole bunch of different containers. Grandma would write what they were. And sometimes there was a year or a date with them with tape. Stick it on there. Um, and she would put them like in a cool, dark place. Same way she'd do her canned vegetables. Um, and that's really how she stored them, saving them.

For the most part, it was just a paper towel or a newspaper. And just As they ate them or as they cut into something, just putting it off to the side, put them in a, like I said, a container or like in a plastic baggie or something.

[00:20:07] **Chris Keeve:** You also, earlier you mentioned foraging out here. Um, I'm wondering if you, if you could talk more about what was foraged and how people were out, were out foraging.

[00:20:18] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** I did not know much about foraging as I just knew that we knew what we were supposed to get off the land. Like these titles that they give things now, I'm just like, Oh, okay. Cause I never heard about it like that. When I first got back out here to the land, cause I lived in Lexington with my daughter as she grew up.

And when my grandfather died, I knew my grandmother was going to die. And it was like a year later. And I told her then like, I'll, I'll move back home. I'll be the one. My mom's not really, she's like, I had that life. I'm cool. And so when I came back out here, I came out here to like, what I felt was a different land.

Um, and I wasn't gone, gone. I was here every weekend. I picked my grandparents up. I come in grocery shop for them and everything like. I was here, but like now it was mine, you know, and, um, I, I didn't hear it at first. And so, like, I, I did actual classes on foraging went to Clear Creek, to the schoolhouse, um, hung out at Susanna's.

She taught me some things. I took the Master Herbalist class. You know, I really started to understand what Forging was and then me and Cousin Jim was out and he pointed out a couple of things. I think the first thing was the plantain and I was like, Oh my God, it's everywhere, right? I messed my ankle up and I made a post its out of it and it was, it had helped.

Um, and then it went into, um, us really going, letting it not get cut, like how it is right now. We went through this stage and we did some things with NRCS, but. We went out there and there's, you know, wild rose, wild carrots, there's, uh, some edible flowers, there's some, you know, lots of dandelion for dandelion greens, like a plentiful amount, um, borage, yarrow, um, you know, it's just a lot out there and I, because I didn't have the knowledge of it, I really didn't.

Think about it, you know, and now that that's where I'm at, it's like we could forage and find almost anything out there. Now, I don't know about survival, um, but there is enough to heal for sure on our land. And so, um, you know, we bring people from urban areas out here and we forage simple things like that.

Um, but then, you know, we'll go deeper into, like, we, we have some cool stuff here, but there's even cooler things, the more deeper, the deeper you go into Appalachia. Um, the more things like black cohosh and, um, a lot of ginger is growing, natural wild ginger, wild garlic, you know, more of those things, cause they have like that.

That mossy, wet terrain, which we're getting here, but nonetheless, um, because I was able to learn on my land, I'm able to identify when we go out into other spaces, ,

um, but yeah, I was just saying that, um, learning how to forage on my land helps me get women out more foraging on their own spaces, and then we go into spaces and we get to identify things, really listening to the land, and that's really the biggest thing about foraging, is listening to what's there, really knowing on my land.

Cause there's this stuff, you know, we got some sumac out here and that, you know, you cultivate it, right? It's helpful. But if you don't, it's deadly, you know? Um, and so really understanding what's around us. What was the, are we still foraging? Oh, okay. We can wrap up foraging. I think that the biggest thing is just knowing that I, there are other places near me and being able to teach about foraging based off of what I've learned from the land myself.

Um, I think there's other things out there that I don't even know it's out there, right? Like I told you, I just learned about mimosa tree bark. Right. There's different, uh, methodologies, and I think it's more of a, of a holistic healing foraging. Um, some places, you know, there's enough stuff that you could live off of it, like the mushrooms and, you know, different things that grows naturally that you could literally survive.

Um, I don't think we have that much. Much to forage out here, but I think it has the opportunity to, but like I was talking about the sumac, like you just, even if you're not using it for survival is also knowing how to protect yourself and not die from a plant or wipe yourself the wrong way, end up with some, you ain't supposed to have knowing four leaves versus five leaves.

So it's a, it's definitely educational and as well as a healing. You know component. Yeah,

[00:24:25] **Chris Keeve:** So I'm wondering, you know, what do you think back to your childhood here and now your adulthood here? I'm wondering what what you've carried with you over time that that resonates with both you and with the land?

[00:24:37] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, I mean, I feel like most of the time I'm just a big kid out here anyways Like, there was a lot of inner child healing that I had to do as an adult when I got detached from the land, had to move into the city.

You know, this is, this is my, my safe space. And I think that's one of the things, like with the women's retreats, I realized, like, the mirroring component. Like, if I feel this way, there's other women that feel this way too. And they're the conversation of healing your inner child, coming back to the land.

And I had to do that. Like, I went through some stuff in the past seven years, right? Eight years. Heck, I think it's longer than that now. I think we're at like nine, ten, something, but you know, um, it took for me to settle myself in the land and I show, show and tell. So people come out here and they know, well, if Tiff can do it, I can do it, you know?

Um, but I'm always telling them like, this is me healing parts of my inner child, getting the fun out, being back out with my shoes off and reconnecting myself to land in general. Like I like to go hiking. I like to go to other places and get in the land. This land is special to me and I know I'm pouring back into it, but it's almost like I charge up at other spaces and bring it back to the land.

So, it's very, you know, it's just very important to, it's very important to me, um, to keep the tradition, to keep the tradition of when you're trying to center yourself, come back to the rawest parts of, to get to, I'm sorry. I think it's very important to me that people understand that they have to get back to.

The rawness of things and it literally is just a little kid sitting crisscross applesauce in some grass playing with lightning bulbs like it's that pure, you know, um, and it works like people come out here and that's exactly what they do. Um, also knowing where your food comes from, um, the importance of land ownership, like my grandparents did not hide stuff from me.

Like, they taught me, I had my own little tomato business when I was 10, made all types of money. I was excited. Um, sold it by the pound. They told me how to weigh it out, you know what I'm saying? Like, it was definitely, um, I watched them at the tobacco places do things, you know, um, I watched him. Go sell the bills and go pick up the materials.

And so he put that entrepreneur into me and he also put in, you know, how important it is to know, take care of yourself and knowing where your stuff comes from, like from the seed to, you know, they gave a lot of stuff away, you know, like, but they didn't do it just because they did it with intentions.

Like the intentionality of growing food and having land and having this position. Like this is a position. This is a responsibility in your community. Um, and, you know, I just remember, like, card games out here and, you know, the sense of community saying, like, you won't, as you can see, there's always somebody out here popping up.

Um, I'm always inviting my family and friends out here. That's something that's always been part of my grandparents culture as well. Yeah.

[00:27:37] **Chris Keeve:** I'd like to hear more about, we'll start with, with what you're, what you're growing out here.

[00:27:41] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Mm hmm. So we have the blackberries and there's some red blackberries in the back.

Some are natural, some have been transplanted in. My cousin Ra had healed some for me and then we spread them out and they've been growing for the past three or four years. Um, I transplanted some elderberry in the high tunnel, um, and pulled them back out to bring 'em closer to me. Um, 'cause I, you know, take those two, dry them out, um, plus the pollinators like the flowers.

And then I have around the house, down the front. Peppermint, Spearmint, Chocolate Mint, and Pineapple Mint. Man, I could've sworn I planted some orange mint out there. Maybe that, that orange, cause the pineapple has the white ridges around it. And the orange, they both give a tropical vibe. Um, but I could've sworn I had some orange mint out there.

The chocolate mint, literally, is like, it's like my other way of making, um, hot chocolate. I just, yeah, it's delicious. But yeah, so, yeah, that's pretty much what we're growing out here. Um, the plan is to add sweet potatoes, um, collards, kale, yellow squash, and zucchini to the front. And then the wish is to have big blocks of

herbs in the backyard.

Yes. And flowers. And fruit trees.

[00:29:02] **Chris Keeve:** So when you think back to growing up with your grandparents, um, and you think back to walking in the kitchen, what, what do you, what do you see? What do you smell?

[00:29:18] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Grandma was always cooking something, and she loved to bake. Everything was from scratch. You always knew that if she came over there that she

was gonna be up cooking something. She took every piece of the lamb and made something out of it. Like, there was rhubarb pie, there was blackberry preserves, strawberry preserves.

A lot of the stuff she didn't necessarily grow on her farm because tobacco farming, like, we would plant stuff that was more sustainable, like tomatoes and watermelons and stuff that would just, you know, weed it and they'll grow. You plant, you pick it, you know. Um, she did do green beans. Um, green beans and those seeds were one of the most important seeds, I feel like.

Her tomato seeds. Um, she liked, uh, the Kentucky, the Kentucky Wax, the Wax, uh, Green Beans and the, and the Runners. Um, and she would keep the seeds of those. Those are the ones that I remember all the time. In East Kentucky, they have this podcast, they used to have this podcast called Breaking Beans. And it literally is just the stories of This, you know, homesteading, the normal way of life, just getting up breaking beans, um, um, picking your greens, putting slow cooking, uh, whole foods, and all these hashtags today, like literally that was my grandmama's kitchen, you know what I'm saying?

Like, um, there was some seeds she would buy from Southern States. I think that's the only time I saw them buy seeds. Um, but other than that, like I said earlier, there would be a table that just had random different napkins and paper towels with seeds being dried out. Um, there'd be a little room that had, uh, canned green beans and canned, um, tomato juice.

And, um, just, I mean, like, when my grandparents passed, I think I threw away maybe 30, 40 jars of canned things. And then they had a freezer full. You know, our grandparents grew up in the Depression. And so, my grandparents always made it that they would always have everything they need. You know, and they taught me that.

Um, it's like in the freezer, you'll see a whole lot of stuff, like when I had to clean the downstairs, it was just seeds, seeds, seeds. Which were old by this point, had water damage, like I had to throw them all away, but there was just seeds, canned vegetables, deep freezer, two deep freezers full of stuff.

Squash, what else? Squash is the last thing I remember at the top. Um, diced onions, like, it's basically if you went in the frozen aisle. They had their own frozen now. Um, and a lot of people don't have work, you know, it wasn't what didn't grow up like that, but you know, again, I was born in 84, but I grew up with this type of lifestyle of you want watermelon and keep the seeds, you know what I'm saying?

You want watermelon, you better grow it. I'm not buying none. There was only a few things that we went in town for. Like I said, there was always something for her to make. I think the meat and cheese was the most. When my mom came up, they made their own butters and things. So like, literally, they didn't, there was no reason to go to the store.

Like, it was preservation. And I'm very thankful that I was taught that, you know, with me and seed saving, I want to be more progressive with it. And I think that just like the rest of society, I'm overthinking it. With my grandparents, there wasn't a science to it. It was just like. That's what you're supposed to do after you eat the fruit, like take the seed and do it again.

Um, and I think teaching myself that again and reminding people of that simplicity. And I mean, grandma didn't have no pot. She didn't go to a dollar store. It was coffee hens and um, old pot bottles and she would put those seeds in there and germinate it in the house. And I don't even think she really thought about it in those science terms.

It was just what she was supposed to do, you know. So yeah, there was always plants, always dirt, always miracle grow. Frozen bag. There was always a pie or a cake on the table. She was always making a sauce or something. Um, there was always a meat. And it was just, uh, there's always vegetables. Like, there was always something to eat at Grandma's house.

Like, and I would just go outside and just, like, pick tomatoes and just eat them. Like, there was no cleaning it, there was no washing it, it was straight eating it. Corn, straight eating it. Sweet peas, straight eating it. Even some of the green beans, straight eating it. Straight off the vine. Yeah.

[00:33:56] **Chris Keeve:** So when you would walk outside into, into the garden?

Where you are right now, where would you go to first?

[00:34:01] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Oh, I'm definitely going to the tomatoes. I think I had salt in my pocket. Definitely going to the tomatoes. Um, and it was like a secret garden, too. Like, it was like, the moment you step into all these vines and tomatoes and stuff, it's like there's no houses around you and there's just garden.

And, you know, we rarely did corn, but like, just walking through the corn, like, I always felt like I was like, in a whole nother continent, in a whole nother country. Yeah. Mm hmm.

[00:34:29] **Chris Keeve:** Were there any seeds, or, or plants in general, that your grandmother really focused on?

[00:34:36] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Like, really was like, this is Beans. I think beans was the main one.

Yeah. We transplant blackberry plants and elderberry plants, things of that nature. Those are not grown by seeds. Nature drops some seeds and keeps them going. That's how those grow. But, um, beans, the wax beans, the tucky runners, uh, those. I just remember all the time, like that's what Papa was buying by the bag loads, those seeds, um, and then tomatoes.

She would make, I feel like she was like a botanist, and she would like, make these tomatoes. They were just juicy, they were just so big, and they weren't, you know, sometimes they get so big they're mushy. But they were like, big, and they were just good, um, and, uh, she would save those seeds and just keep growing those same types of tomatoes.

Um, and if she found a tomato, tomato, I feel like she was more like she was cultivating. Like she knew the different types she liked. She had tomatoes galore. Whereas the beans, she knew

what kind of beans she liked. And that's the only bean that she would plant. Period. Like, nothing else. Yeah.

[00:35:44] **Chris Keeve:** And she would save those bean seeds?

[00:35:45] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yes. But I don't think there was never enough. I think she would save them just because that's what she knew to do. But she would buy those seeds and plant them for the next year. Yeah. Mm hmm. It was a lot of beans. Beans and tomatoes. Beans and tomatoes were what I remember the most. And squash.

Um, and cabbage. Still a lot of cabbage, yeah.

[00:36:11] **Chris Keeve:** What did that cabbage look like?

[00:36:13] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Oh, my God. First of all, Grandma's fried cabbage was slap. It didn't even matter. And peppers. So she had peppers. Um, so she would make that, she'd make soup beans, and she'd make green beans. And, um, it was, it was so good, oh, my God.

Grandma's greens and cabbage and, and just the bomb. And then, like I told you, she makes chow chow, where she would, like, uh, dice up. Tomatoes and the peppers and the onions and all its juice and we didn't have a dryer. So all our clothes were clothes dried and she would put, uh, put them in a, it's like a grinder that connect to the table and she'd grind it all down.

It was like a relish and it goes into a potato sack and she would hang it all day. Like she'd hang it and like I'd come back from school the next, you know, you know, the next day from school or something and she'd get it. It's like, I think it lasts for like eight hours outside. Um, and then she'd come in and she'd do something to him, put him in jars.

And you talking about, I think there's like a pickling to it. I don't know. Listen, and people in the East, in the country knows what I'm talking about. That stuff is amazing, and she would just have jars of it, and like I said, she'd give it away. People that didn't have peppers and didn't know how to make it, you know, didn't know how to can.

She'd give cans away for different stuff, so. Chow Chow was one of my favorite things to watch her do outside. It was just this big ol process. All day process is what I feel like, yeah. That and making blackberry cobblers. I remember watching her clean the cobbler, like you have to clean the blackberries.

And then you have to put them in sugar. She usually let them sit like overnight in sugar, and then she would make the syrup. It's like she, from one pot of straw, uh, one pot. When grandma, grandma used to make the blackberry cobbler, I was just saying that when she used to have fruit, she can make something like a drizzle that goes over your ice cream, then she can make the filling for the blackberry cobbler, and then she can make some of it.

For Blackberry Preserves or Blackberry Jam, like, she, like, one thing, thousand things out of it. Same thing with her tomatoes. She would make her own tomato juice, her own tomato sauces, um, she would make, like, um, bricks of, like, these little spice, like, she'd take some of the hotter peppers and mix it with the onions and, like, freeze it.

And so she would take a piece of it off, break a piece of it off, and put it in her greens or her green beans or, you know, throw it in a pot with the roast or something. She was very big on making more than one, but I was saying because of that, I would think she's gonna make one cobbler. She'd be up to two o'clock in the morning making a thousand things out of this big old bag of blackberries we got, you know, that day.

So she definitely knew how to, to, to put things together and they had like homemakers associations, um, where they would sit and, and teach one another how to, you know, yeah, you know, I got this rhubarb and I made a You know, they would sit around and talk about how they made it. Um, they would compare each other's crusts it was such a cool time to be alive. Like, the way they learned from one another. Because stuff that grew good over here, different stuff grew differently around Madison County. Madison County is like a melting pot of different Excuse me, um, I don't know, like it's wetter here than it is on the Lexington side of Madison County.

And then if you go towards the back and it gets more Appalachias, you know, more hilly, um, more, like, the wetlands when you go towards Berea. And I just feel like, and this is just my assumption, you know, when they did come together, like, the elevation will make things different, the way they bake stuff.

Like, it's just a a science to it all, and they would talk about that stuff, like whose eggs was better, you know, um, but back to the conversation about Blackberry Cobbler, um, it just was, it was always nice, like, I knew that I was going to be able to sit, usually fall asleep, but sit and watch grandma make something after we got back from work, and that was another big part of it, like, grandma, like, you want to make, you want to go, you know, pick blackberries, or you want to go pick peaches, and I'm like, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Because not only am I going to get to eat it, there's going to be something amazing at the end. Maybe two or three things amazing at the end. Um, and I learned, like, I know how to make butterscotch pie from scratch. I still have her, her whisks and her double boilers and all this stuff. I know how to make my crust and my blueberry cobbler.

It's literally just from watching her do that stuff. Yeah.

[00:40:44] **Chris Keeve:** So I'm wondering what else you're carrying with you from your grandmother.

[00:40:48] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, grandma was really big at, um, Representation. Um, she understood like every time she was out that she was representing like her whole family. Um, She, she taught me, you know, how to be public speaker.

She always put me out there to, you know, at church, you know, I was the one who had to stand up and read Christmas carol in front of everybody, you know, she had me cooking in the kitchen because, you know, everybody's grandmother cooked in the kitchen at the church. That's just what it was. And so our grandma did the cornbread.

Cornbread was a big thing. People would come from all over to eat grandma's cornbread. And it really wasn't like something off the way, it's not nothing connected to the land or nothing like that. But I mean, it's connected to the events out here because I mean, like grandma, there will be people here to stay the weekend.

People who came for other family reunions that would just stay out here and grandma would be up cooking cornbread. Like, like people go crazy for grandma's cornbread. My mama can make it, and I can make it. But it's that generational thing, like, can you make a little scotch pie? Can you make a cobbler? Can you fry the cornbread?

You know, it's like, it's, it's crazy, um, how things are handed down. Grandma was definitely, she took a little and made a lot, you know, and I'm trying not to say minimalist because I mean, grandma, if she wanted something, she got it, you know? But I mean, like, she just, I don't know. She was so resilient and if grandma wanted to do it, like she started painting at 40 and won the Duveneck Art Show in Newport, Newport, Kentucky.

Yeah. At like 60 years old. Like the artwork that's inside our house that my grandma painted all this stuff And some of the buildings like from the first, you know, african american schools houses and everything. They're in the house painted And watching her do that watching her like raise me watching her and Papa get up and do this land work in their 50s 60s, you know, I'm just like I could do anything and she always made me feel like that Like I was an honor roll student, you know, I was you know, she always told me like You have to dress nice and clean, keep your fingernails clean, and, you know, just different things about being a woman, but being a human being.

And so it's like my morals, I talk to the young folks, because a lot of young folk don't have morals and values. They've been allowed to be manipulated on what morality is, um, with our new generations. And I'm, like I said, I'm 39, I got a 17 year old. So it's like, I get the generational differences, but it's like the morals and values that my grandma put into me.

It doesn't want me to climb up a, a, a corporate ladder. It doesn't want me to be in a commercial living situation. Like I was never taught that. I was taught to work for my stuff, to own my home and own the land that feeds me and my family, um, to tap into resources because resources are there for me. Like it wasn't, you know what I'm saying?

Like it just was a different morality. And so I've been able to, to use that, you know, and. Influence other people that are helping me do this work. And I feel like that's what I watch my grandparents do too. You know, I've seen my grandparents pick people up and be like, you know, You wanna come to the farm?

Do you need a place to chill? You know. Can I connect you to a resource? You know. And that's the same thing that I'm doing, you know. Like, I can't. And, and it's, it's all immorality. It's her family values that I think stick with me more than, uh, practices and farming and all of that. And because that comes from our morality, like it's, it's a profitable business.

Yes, but it's deeper than that. The connection to the land is again, my responsibility to mother earth. Like, this is our land to have, I was taught that, I was taught that I was here, this was ours, I'm just, I'm stewarding what is mine, period, like, so, that came from them.

[00:44:40] **Chris Keeve:** So I really loved it out, actually, uh, with the bite of scotch pie, with the cornbread at the repast, or the reunion, uh, what, what is everybody else bringing?

[00:44:52] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Oh my god, what are they not bringing? Like, grandma will be in the kitchen frying chicken, I mean, frying chicken, frying cornbread. Um, she might bring a cobbler. You're also gonna have chocolate cake, chocolate icing. You're gonna have caramel cake, cake and sauce, caramel icing. You might have a butter, uh, another butterscotch pie, or a chocolate pie, and you gon have, um, what else?

That's just the desserts. Like, you're gonna have fried chicken, you know, you're gonna have mashed potatoes, you're gonna have macaroni and cheese, greens, green beans, rolls, cornbread, sweet potatoes, um, potato salad, pasta salad, like, I mean, there was always a whole bunch of food, and that would come from the church.

Um, or, you know, other people would bring stuff. Um, but grandma, I, like, grandma had, I still have her containers down there with her little stickers on it that says, Property of Bessie Johnson. You really knew what, who was gonna bring what. Like, I knew what Miss Nanny Peaston was gonna bring. And I knew what Miss Emma was gonna bring.

And what my grandma always brought to the table was, Maybe a cobbler or a cake. And, uh, and if it's at her home church, she was gonna fry cornbread. She wouldn't fry cornbread if she wasn't at home, home church. I don't think I've ever seen her fry cornbread at somebody else's church. Yeah, but it's always, it's, it's, it's, it's a, it's a lot, it's a lot.

And I think it's still like that for our repasses. Um, it's just different. It just looks different now. Yeah, it's sweet tea.

[00:46:25] **Chris Keeve:** So I want to change gears a little bit because I'm wondering also, with your work now with, with Herbs and Herbalism, I'm wondering how you came to that work.

[00:46:36] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um. So whenever, when my grandfather passed before my grandma passed and maybe the right after grandma passed, um, I had picked up some more weight and I was trying to find another way to detox my body. And I was going to a lot of herbalists and folks of that nature. And then in the stream of that, that's when the foraging conversation came and I started to get more connected to like holistic, you know. practitioners people who are really tapping into healing their self, their selves, um, herbally and just holistically. And when I realized what I had on the farm, I was like, I need to learn more about

this. So I took a course, got a certification or whatever, but it still wasn't the same. It still wasn't the same.

So then I took the Clear Creek. Um, we went to the Clear Creek Schoolhouse, which is in Rockcastle County, and I did a foraging class. And, you know. Went through some things with that, and then still in that, like, I'm making stuff to heal myself, my gut, my liver, and things of that nature. And it just became something that was, like, second nature.

Like I, it was never, it was never a time where I don't hear the plant. And some people are just good at certain things. And it just seems that I know how to blend the tea, some herbs. I'm good at putting the herbs together. I understand what I need. I understand the science to them. And so like, I just, you know, they give me an element.

I learn more about it and, and I, and I like to learn from people who have used it and they grow it themselves than just like a course, like textbook definition of things, like, yes, I understand that. But. There's there's not just ginger. There's not just lemon balm. There's not just mint. Um, there's so many variations of these different plants and there's difference from stuff we have in America and things they have in Asia.

Um, the East versus the West, their ginger looks totally different. So it's like, I use ginger because it's like a very diverse. Uh, type of thing. It's like saying onions and peppers like, oh, use onions and peppers. What kind of onions and peppers? What are we trying to accomplish here? Uh, because eating bell peppers versus some good cayenne is going to two different things to your body system.

And then even to the herbalism part, understanding fruits and vegetables. Um, the different parts of the fruits and vegetables, the leaf to the root to the bark to the seed. Um, and all the things that they could do for you because you could be saving pepper season using your own seasonings, right? And it is, you know I like thinking of all the different ways that you can take one plant, of course, coming from my grandmother and being able to share with people, like, you can have six plants and do these things with this six plants, you can make this six plants, 24 plants, you know, and with the herbs, like there's things that just spread and can heal you and, you know, you can plant one plant and dry it, eat it, you know, smoke it, you know, um, and it's just, it's a niche for me now.

Like, it's like, And I know the more that I get comfortable with herbs, I can cultivate them better, like with salves and with, you know, lotions and potions and oils and, you know, putting them in different places. You know, I'm learning like sublingual versus orally versus anal. Like you could put them in different forms and fashions and they do different things in your body, which I just think, I just think it's so cool, but I'm a science geek.

So I think the botany to it, the chemistry to it is what really. Lures me into, um, herbalism and then like healing yourself. Like I had strep throat the first year I really dug into it. I was just like, I'm not doing none of that stuff. Like I'm not, and this is not a public service announcement. I feel like everybody should do what they need to do medically, if they need to get things done.

But for me and my own personal body, my choice was to try to heal myself naturally. And I use oregano oil and, um, I increased my electrolytes naturally. Um, and, uh, I did a lot of, of, uh, holy basil. Elderberry and, um, what else did I use? Mullein, some nettle, and I hibernated and I, I, uh, stopped eating and flushed my system out.

And I literally got rid of my strep throat patches in the back of my throat, gone. It took about a week. I think people don't like to suffer through, but, um, your body builds such a different immunity to it instead of killing your own, um, antibodies or getting all these medicines to age your antibodies so that they get to basically carry week.

Nervous system, instead of letting your nervous system get beat up and come back stronger. Um, and I, and I ain't been sick like I used to be at all, like, and I think the evidence based work of herbalism, like, it's there. I feel better, you know, like, this could be preventive, you know, some little bit of preventive, you know, holistic health right now, so, yeah.

Yeah, herbalism is a rabbit hole for me because it could be, the conversation is so diverse.

[00:51:22] **Chris Keeve:** Mm hmm. I'm wondering if there are any herbs, even like varieties of specific herbs that you really feel connected to?

[00:51:29] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, I really like the mint family, um, but like lemon balm and um, bee balm are two of my favorites.

Bee balm is my friend. I totally rained on and hailed on, I was so sad. I really, those are some of my favorites. I like the way they spread. I love the flowers on them. My pollinators absolutely love them. They're easy to cultivate. They're sustainable and they're perennial. So it's like, they're a win win.

Um, but I also really, really love, uh, edible flowers. Which I know, they, for me, they fall in the Earth family because, you know, I picked the Echinacea, Echinacea and the Calendula and the Yarrow and all of that and those get dried out and get added to teas, you know, um, some, some of the Rose family, they get dried out and added to steams and other, um, you know, I call them my witchy things, but different potions that we use to heal and help with inflammation and things of that nature.

Violet, lilies, you know, I think people are tickled when they can come through the herb garden and eat the flowers too. So, yeah, yeah, it's pretty, it's pretty cool. I blow people's minds away with that one. Um, the flower part of it. Um, people have their ups and downs about mint. Um, but mint, we've used it in such a literal edible sense that we forget about all the other properties it has, with like headaches, muscle aches.

acid in your stomach, things of that nature. So, it's one of the things I like about the mint. And then when I saw the orange mint, the pineapple mint, the chocolate mint, all the variations of it, I was like, yeah, this is cool. I like this. Lemon balm is one of those things I put in everything, though. I put lemon balm in everything.

And holy basil. Holy basil is another one. The basil family. But holy basil is a sweet basil. And I love mixing it with lemon balm. Like, I can just drink holy basil and lemon balm tea straight.

[00:53:21] **Chris Keeve:** What else do you do with it?

[00:53:22] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, so lemon balm goes in a lot of my women's teas. Um, lemon balm is also usually the base for a lot of my teas because usually I'm dealing with some type of inflammation with most of my teas.

And lemon balm is the base for a lot of, of uh, skin saps and things of that nature because of its anti inflammatory properties. And then with the mints and everything like that, for the most part, mints go straight into my teas, whether they be the liquid teas or just dry herb teas. Um, I use mints for the, some of the Yanni womb steams as well.

My postpartum uses a lot of lemon balm, calendula, yarrow. The women, once they get like four weeks postpartum, they can steam. And that steam literally is like, what, um, can't even think of what I'm looking at. Oh, eucalyptus, how eucalyptus is for your chest. It's how it is for your woman postpartum. Um, that's for the most part what I use them for.

Teas, steams. Here at the house I might, you know, put some stuff on the stove and simmer down some oil, some grapeseed oil or some arnica oil or something if one of us is having an ache of pain. Like I told you, uh, plantain, I'll bring that in and make a pulse to send a heartbeat when we have a little sprain.

A little muscle tenderness or something like that. But, it's like I use them for short term things. Like I want to build like an arsenal of this stuff, like it's safe. Shelf safe stuff, you know, like, Oh, your head is hurting. I did make, I've been making some, um, uh, I want to say extract. Technically it is extract, but that's not the word I want to use.

Um, tinctures. I've been making tinctures out of rum and alcohol, um, to use sublingually for fevers and muscle aches around viruses and things of that nature. So, you know, I'm, I'm very, um, holistic is also a hashtag, but when I think of holistic, it's your whole body. Right, so whenever you, you do something, if I say it's healing your liver, it's because it's healing your, your liver that's healing your gut, that's healing your skin, that's making your head clearer, that makes your appetite better, and it gets rid of, you know, some of these toxins.

Like, it's a holistic thing. Approach and then when you think preventive, it's like if you can touch into the herbal way of life, then you can maybe eliminate some of the systemic and chronic disorders that you're going through because these herbs again, are going to heal other parts of your body. So you don't feel the cravings or the urges to eat some of the toxic things that we do.

So when it comes to the land and herbs, it is a hay list is from the bottoms of your feet, literally to the tops of your head and everything in between. So, yeah, I'm. I need a t shirt that says that. I know.

[00:56:02] **Chris Keeve:** So in this process, is there anything that is bouncing around in your head right now?

[00:56:10] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Um, I feel like I have so much more work to do.

I really wish that I was able to save some of the seeds and some of the plants that I remember grandma growing all the time. There's been a really big gap in gardening here. Like, I've tried. Um, finding the right space, the water, we've had to cut some trees down, um, just so the sun can get, can hit like it needs to hit.

But I also feel like Grandma's like, this is dope. You know, like if Grandma, you know, for lack of better words, she'd probably be like, this is nice. Like you, you know, have maintained it and you've expanded it and it still has the same feeling as it did, but you have definitely added, she'd be so tickled that we have chickens.

But I always am thinking about, like, what have I done and what can I do to make it better? And just sitting here looking at our back half, like, I can see it mowed down. I can see the expansion. I can see the fruit trees and the herb boxes and things of that nature. Like, I can see it. Yeah, I'm pretty excited about it, too.

Ha ha ha ha.

[00:57:12] **Chris Keeve:** Have you mentioned which, which fruit trees are in this vision?

[00:57:15] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** I don't know for sure. Um, I know pear for sure. It's like one of the top trees for pollinators. I would like an apple tree or two, pears, apples. I would like to have some bushes. Blueberries do all right, but they gotta be in clusters.

They can't be too spaced out. They'll just, it's like they need a friend. Who knows what I put out here. It's like the first two to pop in my head, but I want like fruit bushes. Like I still want there to be some blackberry bushes that are accessible in the back, possibly some grapevines, strawberries, you know, something simple, but I definitely want fruits.

I want flowering fruits and vegetables to be out there for sure. I want it to be pollinator focused still, but something. That we can go out there and grab and eat.

[00:58:06] **Chris Keeve:** Do you have anything else to add? You can think for a minute also, if you will.

[00:58:10] **Tiffany Bellfield El-Amin:** Not really. I think the biggest thing is, like, I think this is the first time in a while where I've sat and really thought about, like, you really ain't got no seeds of your grandmas.

Um, like I said, they had all dried out. I think a few years as I was in college, they kind of eased up on You know, seeds, but like, I don't know. I feel like if that's the issue, then I have to cultivate

something that produces seeds. So my grandchildren and my godchildren and my kids can keep that going because it's so important.

Like I said, they didn't think about the importance of it or even like keeping a generational plant going or having What's the word the heirloom thing? Like I don't think grandma really thought in those contexts, right? But it would be her crop that I would be an heirlooming And so now it's I feel like I now have another responsibility I have to make sure that everybody understands the importance of it and we keep these blackberries and this elderberry and the things that we've created on this land growing outside of here, like, take our heirloom crops and grow them other places.

Yep.