**Nate Hegyi: Imagine the opening scene of a movie…**

**[CITY SOUNDS IN]**

**A dolly shot with the camera swooping over a major city. In this case, the South End of Boston.**

**[more sounds]**

**…which, by the way is not the same as the infamous South Boston, or Southie. Here in the South End, you see a lot of swanky bars and restaurants**

**[RESTAURANT PATIO SFX]**

**Fancy cars**

**parked outside Victorian brick rowhouses where** [**the condos go for millions of dollars**](https://www.zillow.com/homes/02118_rb/)

**[CAR sfx]**

**[MUX]**

**And then, as the camera passes over this neighborhood, it swoops down towards what’s essentially a one-acre farm…**

**[TRANSITION TO GARDEN AMBI]**

**[FANNY AND ADA CHATTING AND LAUGHING]**

**Where predominantly Chinese gardeners take a break from tending to their plots to chat and share jokes over lunch.**

**It’s called the Berkeley Community Garden. And this is more than your typical veggie patches and raised beds. The trellises here are made from upcycled trash – things like bed frames, refrigerator shelving, and window screens.**

**The structures stand over each square plot, like makeshift rooms.**

*Jeremy Liu: just overflowing with vegetation. And you see… three levels of different types of vegetables being grown, some in the ground, some large melons hanging down, sort of into the middle space. And even on top of the trellis, you had a different type of maybe beans or something else being grown.*

**This type of growing is called vertical gardening – it allows you to grow more produce on less land.**

**Zoom in closer, and you’ll see the melons here - they’re not cantaloupe or honeydew. The Chinese gardeners here grow fuzzy melon, and bitter melon on the trellises.**

*Jeremy Liu: it's a really important vegetable in the Chinese community….It has tremendous nutritional benefits.… But it is lumpy. It is warty….And as its name implies, it's extremely bitter. Extremely, extremely bitter. It's … an affront to sort of maybe a classic Western aesthetic.*

**This is Jeremy Liu (LEE-oo not LOO), by the way - the former director of the Asian Community Development Corporation based in Boston’s Chinatown. He says having this garden here, it forces people to look at cultural difference.**

*Jeremy Liu: The Berkeley Street Garden is still probably the most authentic manifestation of Chinese culture anywhere in the city.*

*Never mind the Chinese art gallery, whatever at the MFA…..*

*This was still more authentic than that because it was alive, it was living, it was present.*

*but not just in isolation, like in the middle of Chinatown just a garden by itself right? No, it was actually at the edge of Chinatown….where you're actually not just expressing yourself, but you're in somehow asserting your expression of your culture in other people's space…in a way that they were going to have to experience.*

[YARDWORK THEME MUX]

**But what *happens* when you assert your culture in a way that others have to experience?  
  
Some people see something really special here at the Berkeley Community Garden**

**But other people…well, all they see is a trash pile.**

**<<NUTGRAF>>**

**I’m Nate Hegyi, this is Outside/In, and for our third and final installment of Yardwork, we tell the story of one community garden…**

**How It sprouted out of the rubble of urban renewal…and how its right to exist has been threatened at every step of the way. This is a story of a place that exists at the edge of gentrification and generational change. This is the story of the Berkeley Community Garden.**

**Here’s Producer Felix Poon..**

**<<FIRST HALF>>**

*Sarah Hutt: Oh, there's Arlene. Hi.*

*Felix Poon: Hi, Arlene.*

*Sarah Hutt: I was just walking along. I would've forgot all about you.*

*Arlene Ng: How are you?*

*Felix Poon: I’m good how are you?*

*Arlene Ng: Good thank you.*

**Felix Poon: Arlene Ng is a middle-aged Chinese woman with short hair, and a round face, and she seems perpetually smiling. At least, when I see her.**

**Arlene’s one of the few gardeners left in the Berkeley Community Garden who remembers when it all began.**

*Arlene Ng: from what I remember, it was just an empty block. Nothing was happening to it. So there was a bunch of neighbors that decided, let's do something about it. And they did. And they they went ahead into the garden and they started cordoning it off, digging, putting soil in.*

*Felix Poon: And these are all Chinese folks.*

*Arlene Ng: Yes. And they took over the land.*

*Felix Poon: And your mom was one of them?*

*Arlene Ng: My mom was one of them.*

*Jeremy Liu: it really was like a rubble field*

**Felix Poon: This is Jeremy Liu again, former director of the Chinatown-based Asian Community Development Corporation.**

*Jeremy Liu: The pioneers of on this land really were folks who were willing to just squat there and just start growing produce*

**Felix Poon: It was the mid 1960s, when Berkeley Community Garden made its place here. Lyndon B Johnson was president – he signed legislation that year lifting immigration quotas, leading to a growing number of Asian immigrants moving to Boston. What they found when they got here, was a city in transition.**

**White flight to the suburbs had drained neighborhoods of tax revenue, and the city of Boston was demolishing whole city blocks to build highways, new housing projects or to sell land to private developers.**

**After the city demolished the block here on East Berkeley Street though, they couldn’t decide what to do with it. It just sat there**

**So the local residents decided to go rogue.**

*Felix Poon: And did they grow the same things that are that they're growing?*

*Arlene Ng: I think it's the same vegetables that you see right now. Today, it's the same thing. It's the bitter melon. It's the fuzzy squash. It's the beans, it's the the red, the… It looks like lettuce. I don't know the name of it, but everyone grows it. So it's basically all the same. Everybody grows the same vegetables. (laughs)*

**When I look at old pictures of Berkeley, it almost looks like you're in the middle of the countryside. Women carrying buckets of water, men building structures, kids running around, they’re surrounded by trees and homemade trellises built from spare branches and sticks.**

**These days those trellises are made from upcycled trash - Jeremy says it reflects a certain low-income Chinese immigrant aesthetic.**

**[MUX IN]**

*Jeremy Liu: reflecting a resourcefulness, but also an ingenuity and a focus on how to maximize the use of this space for growing food and for, not having to spend money to on those things, really it was a way of, you know survival right, and resilience, and making space for themselves.*

**[MUX POST]**

**Felix Poon: But as resourceful as this all was, it was technically illegal. Arlene’s mom and her neighbors had no rights to this land.**

**That is, until** [**1974, when the state passed the MA Gardening and Farm Act**](https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/bitstream/handle/2452/515199/ocm39986872-1974-HB-5653.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)**, allowing people to farm and garden on vacant public land, and the city of Boston decided rather than fight guerilla gardens, they’d encourage them.**

**And so** [**in 1976, the city completed the construction of The Berkeley Street Community Garden with fencing, raised beds, and irrigation.**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XXAsWooF7GoRdsKlpr2H8eVaEAcFJEyf/view?usp=sharing) **[see also:** [**City of Boston Conservation Commission Letter**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ubt0hF8h4_I1F7R1u2GeH1VexYmsq4JS/view?usp=sharing)**]**

**It’s only about the width of a schoolbus, but it runs the length of a full city block, like a ramshackle bridge stretching between Chinatown and the South End.**

**And if you really stop to think about it, it’s a miracle that it’s still here today.**

**There was a growing housing shortage in the 1980s.**

**from the perspective of developers and city planners, gardens were shovel-ready for development. Prime real estate.**

*Betsy Johnson: One of the community gardens in the edge of the South End was in fact raised for low income housing*

**This is Betsy Johnson.**

**Betsy’s not Chinese, and she wasn’t a gardener herself. But she was the kind of local activist that got involved in just about anything and everything in her neighborhood.**

**And the threat to the gardens was a tricky dilemma. The folks using the gardens were really the same folks that were at risk of being gentrified.   
  
They needed affordable housing - but they needed the gardens too - and other community gardens around the city were already being torn up to make way for development.**

*Betsy Johnson: And we saw the need: Uh oh, unless we come really work with the affordable housing community, we're going to lose more of the gardens.*

**But to make the case for the Berkeley community garden, it needed a major makeover. In the years since it was first created, it had devolved into a dumping ground.. And was overrun with rats.   
  
So the community took maintenance into their own hands, with a massive volunteer clean-up. All told, more than twenty-five large dump trucks of trash and debris got removed from Berkeley, and a new internal organization was set up.**

*Leroy Stoddard letter voice over: The Berkeley Street Community Garden is now a proud place…*

**This is an excerpt of a letter to the city, from a non-profit that helped organize the clean-up, called Boston Urban Gardeners,**

*Leroy Stoddard letter voice over: the amazingly productive horticultural techniques of its Asian gardeners, techniques the non-Asians are learning to apply, are themselves alone sufficiently valuable to justify preservation of the entire garden.*

*[MUX IN]*

*The victory of the Berkeley gardeners is a story we all can appreciate and learn from, a story we ought not to cut short.*

**And so… the city agreed.**

**They decided to build housing elsewhere, and not take any part of Berkeley for development. Instead, they CREATED A LAND TRUST that would own and manage the garden. Betsy Johnson became it’s president, and signed an agreement with the city in 1992. as long as the terms of this agreement were met, then the Berkeley Community Garden could keep on growing, generation after generation.**

***But…* there was … ONE LAST THING … that the garden needed to contend with.**

**[MUX OUT]**

*Rob Visconti voiceover: The condition of these gardens is horrendous and trash is used for gardening structures.*

**Felix Poon: Angry neighbors**

*Rob Visconti voiceover: It looks like a garbage dump and as far as I am concerned it hurts the value of our real estate.*

**Felix Poon: This is an excerpt of a 2009 email from a South End resident named Rob Visconti to a neighborhood association in the South End. And just to be clear, this is a voice actor reading Rob’s email. He declined to be interviewed for this story.**

**[MUX IN]**

**Now, Rob said it wasn’t just him - there were a bunch of neighborhood residents that were all fed up with Berkeley**

**And he honed in on a particular grievance: the garden’s construction of a new fence along East Berkeley Street.**

**He said the new fence didn’t meet South End historic district code, and that it would give cover for crimes like prostitution, drugs, and loitering.**

*Rob Visconti voiceover: Enough is enough. The trust has been broken with the neighborhood and something has to be done about this garden trust. If they will not comply with zoning and agreements made with the neighborhood and city long ago, then perhaps we should be discussing petitioning the city to take the land back and create a real community green space or something else that brings value to our neighborhood.*

[MUX]

*Betsy Johnson: he didn't like immigrants. I mean, he didn't like poor people.*

**Felix Poon: This is Betsy Johnson again, then president of the land trust.**

*Betsy Johnson: So he started an online smear campaign about the Berkeley Garden. It was anti-chinese. I mean, it was anti-immigrant.*

**Felix Poon: Rob, didn’t agree to an interview, but he did write us back to say, quote, “Any ridiculous and fraudulent claim of my comments being a strain of Asian hate is outright slanderous.” Unquote.**

**He goes on to say that his email was entirely based on the fact that the land trust violated their agreement with the city.**

**[MUX IN]**

**And Rob didn’t stop with an email - he spoke to the press, created a website, and complained directly to city authorities about the gardens.**

**But I wouldn’t call what Rob did a smear campaign, especially because he is right that the garden violated the agreement..**

**According to that agreement, any landscaping changes - like a new fence - were supposed to have been approved in writing by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, or the BRA. And they never consulted the BRA on this project.**

**As for whether Rob was being anti-Chinese and anti-immigrant in his complaints, well, Rob didn’t do or say anything explicitly racist as far as I know. But I do think back to what Jeremy Liu said about cultural difference, and bitter melon.**

*Jeremy Liu: to have something that is so weird and funny looking and foreign , being grown as a value is that idea that how do you help people understand differences of value to different communities and cultures, right, and how people value different*

**Felix Poon: And when I look at a particular section of Rob’s email:**

*Rob Visconti voiceover: The gardens are not of a benefit to the people of this neighborhood or the city*

**Felix Poon: that’s when I want to ask Rob: Do the gardeners here not count as people of this neighborhood?**

*Rob Visconti voiceover: and this valuable land is being used by a small number of people who feel they are entitled to make this public land their own.*

**There are 159 plots in this garden, most of the Chinese-owned plots are feeding whole families, as well as neighbors, and friends, and this is not to mention the more intangible benefits of bringing neighbors together from different ages, and cultural and economic backgrounds.**

[MUX BEAT]

*Ann McQueen: there was and is a strain of anti Asian feeling in the South End.*

**Felix Poon: This is Ann McQueen, a former gardener at Berkeley. Ann says the garden became a locus for anti-Chinese sentiment in the South End because that’s where Chinese-ness is on full display.**

*Ann McQueen: people would openly say, you know, they don't live in the south end. They're not part of the South End. What are they doing here? Why, you know, why do they think they can develop this property?*

**Betsy Johnson, the land trust president, admits to dropping the ball on getting BRA approval. But it wasn’t because they weren’t trying to do the right thing.**

**She says that they spent years getting feedback from South End residents about construction, and that they consulted with city agencies, who all approved the fence.**

*Felix Poon: Was there ever a threat that they could have taken it back?*

*Betsy Johnson: Yeah. I mean, as I said. There's this reversion clause. And, you know, if if this guy continued his smear campaign and getting these people, all these people to … sign these petitions and, you know…*

*Put it this way, enough, that this said: We need more political clout.*

[MUX]

**Felix Poon: What was at stake was the Chinese community’s right to be here at Berkeley. Protecting that right, in a lot of ways, mirrors the history of Boston’s Chinatown itself.**

**The first Chinese immigrants came to Boston in the late 1800s, settling in what’s now called Ping On Alley. Ping On translates as safe and sound, a name that sums up the simple hope for the new community here.**

**With the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act and the lifting of restrictive immigration quotas in the mid 1900s, Chinatown grew.**

**But then highway construction and gentrification slashed both the size of Chinatown, and the proportion of Chinese people living there. The fact that there’s still a vibrant Chinese community here today is because people and organizations, like the one Jeremy Liu was the director of, fought tooth and nail to keep as much of Chinatown affordable to the low-income Chinese families here.**

**[MUX OUT]**

**The same goes for Berkeley.**

*Jeremy Liu: this was a place where people who normally don't have access to influencing the way the built environment looks had every right to do that unfettered by anybody else*

**[MUX IN]**

**To make a space here, to be safe and sound…That’s what was at stake, when they stood up to preserve the Berkeley Community Garden.**

**[MUX SWELL]**

*Ann McQueen: Finally, we met with the mayor, with mayor menino.*

**Felix Poon: This is former gardener, Ann McQueen again. Ann, Betsy and another garden advocate named Valerie Burns were all there.**

*Ann McQueen: I remember he had a very big brown leather couch. You know, there were big chairs….we sat around a coffee table.*

*Valerie Burns: it was sort of a meeting among friends*

**Felix Poon: That’s Valerie.**

*Valerie Burns: The mayor recognized Betsy and me … he’d known us from many years in our work and in our neighborhood. And so it was very friendly.*

**Felix Poon: Valerie says the mayor just loved the community gardens. Especially how suited they were for older residents.**

*Valerie Burns: It was the place that seniors could come and show that expertise demonstrate it and teach it. And he loved he loved that.*

[A BEAT]

**Felix Poon: And so they ask the mayor if he could give the land trust full autonomy over the gardens.**

*Valerie Burns: And he agreed. He said yes.*

[A BEAT]

**And with that, Rob’s campaign against the garden was essentially over. The Agreement was terminated in 2012, and the land trust was eventually absorbed into a larger, statewide conservation organization.**

**So, ironically, Rob’s campaign actually set the garden on a path towards greater protection.**

**[MUX OUT]**

*Arlene Ng: I regret not having more pictures. But who knew. This is the original.*

*Felix Poon: Is that your mom? Yeah. … It's very leafy green.*

**Felix Poon: This is Arlene Ng again, we’re looking at old photos from 1992 of her mom, one of the original gardeners.**

**[MUX IN]**

*Felix Poon: Oh, that's a very big melon. That's like that's the size of a small human size of a child. And she's kind of disappeared behind the leaves. You see a little head peeking out from the.*

*Arlene Ng: Yeah, but look how happy she is.*

*Felix Poon: Yeah. She looks very proud of that melon.*

*Arlene Ng: Of course they all are.*

**[MUX SWELL]**

*Arlene Ng: … we started assisting my mother probably in the last couple of years of her life. She passed in 2010. So we decided it was time for us to take over because she just wasn't able to do so. And so she and she was okay with it. I didn't want to let go of it. And I want to continue with the garden … I want to keep it going as long as I can, because it's her garden. It will always be her garden.*

*Felix Poon: Even now.*

*Arlene Ng: Even now. Of course. Of course, it's her soil. You know, I just put the plants in, but it's her soil.*

[MUX SWELL AND OUT ]

**Nate Hegyi: Coming up after a break, Felix talks to the gardeners, and listens to their stories.**

**But first, Outside In is supported by you, our listeners. So if you’re liking this story and our yard and garden miniseries, you can contribute at our website – go to outsideinradio.org/donate. And thank you.**

**<<MIDROLL BREAK - SECOND HALF>>**

[LOTTERY DAY TAPE]

*#JM: Good morning everyone, I’m John from the garden, welcome everyone, thanks everyone for coming today. As you can see we have quite a crowd this year.*

[FADE UNDER]

**Nate Hegyi: This is Outside/In. I’m Nate Hegyi. Before the break, producer Felix Poon told us how the Berkeley Community Garden went from a guerrilla garden, to a protected neighborhood institution. Now in the second half of the episode, Felix talks to the gardeners themselves, and he reports on the stories about the relationships growing here.**

**Felix picks this story back up from here.**

**[MUX SWELL AND OUT]**

**Felix Poon: It’s a sunny, brisk April morning. And the mood is giddy, It’s… lottery… day, the one day every year that you can try your luck at getting a plot.**

**John McLachlan is standing up on a stone block, and there are some 100 or so people standing around him, waiting for him to draw names from a bag.**

**I show up with my cousin, Eileen Poon, to help interpret for me - but pretty quickly, she gets roped in to helping John too.**

*John McLachlan: Liu Cui Xia…where’s my translator*

*(claps)*

*John McLachlan: Is this you?*

*Person: No*

**Felix Poon: John mispronounces the Chinese names - he’s white, and a lot of the folks here are Chinese – so it’s awkward, but it starts to go smoother when they decide to just read the phone numbers.**

*John McLachlan: Well, read the phone number…*

*Eileen Poon: (reads phone number in Cantonese: who’s number is this?)*

*Woman: (In Cantonese: It’s me)*

*Eileen Poon: (In Cantonese: It’s you?)*

*Woman: Yeah*

**Felix Poon: A Chinese woman comes forward to say “that’s me”**

*John McLachlan: Well, number one.*

[MUX]

**One of the reasons I chose to do this story about Berkeley, is because I wanted to see it done right. The New York Times and the Boston Globe have sent reporters here to write up stories about the gardens. Professors have come here with their classes to interview the gardeners, and the organization that now owns Berkeley wants to record their oral histories.**

**But as far as I can tell, none of these efforts were or are led by someone who speaks Cantonese or Toishanese, the primary dialects spoken by the Chinese gardeners here.**

**And to really understand this place, you have to talk to them. To hear their stories.**

**So, over these past few months that’s what I’ve been doing. Talking and listening. Sometimes in English, sometimes in Cantonese.**

**Some of these stories are about conflict… like this one story from Helen Ng… about a dispute over pumpkins:**

*Helen Ng voiceover: Some of my vines wandered onto someone else’s plot, produced a lot of pumpkins. “They’re mine,” he said. It was clearly from my plot, you don’t even grow this stuff, how is it yours? Well, I didn’t want to fight, he took them. All 6 or 7 of them!*

**So, not everyone here gets along. That’s the thing about having a plot here, it’s like sharing a space with hundreds of neighbors, but you can see through the walls.   
  
And that’s not always a bad thing - a lot of people here love how close they are to their neighbors. Like Sarah Hutt. Sarah’s white, and she’s one of the garden leaders, and she told me this story that’s a perfect example of cultural *and* literal cross-pollination.**

*Sarah Hutt: some of the ladies started tossing seeds into my garden and they would be like around the perimeter laughing. And I didn’t know what they were talking about. It was fine.*

*And so I ended up with these zucchini and whatever they were growing that they cross-pollinated.**So I got all these really weird shaped squashes. I mean, one looked like a big tuba…, that was just such a hit. They really loved that.*

**SWELL MUX**

**When people talk about Berkeley as a place that brings communities together - that’s what I think of. Seeds being tossed from one plot to another.   
  
But I also think of how the garden acts as a bridge - not just between cultures, but also between generations.   
  
FADE MUX**

*Kim Szeto: I put my name in the lottery. And surprisingly, I got a plot that very first year*

**This is Kim Szeto. Kim got her plot here when she was just 20 years old or so.**

*and my dad (laughs) was really skeptical of me coming down here…he was like, Oh, don't hang out down there too much. It's it's dangerous. But I started growing tomato basil, simple things. And then a year or two after I, I had to go away for the summer and I asked my dad to water my plot while I was going away. And he fell in love with coming down here. And after that summer, he kind of took over the garden and started growing bitter melon and winter melon and trying different things.*

**So it turns out, lottery day isn’t the ONLY way you can get a plot at the Berkeley Community Garden. Although, this story is a bit of an outlier, they’re usually passed down from the older generation, to the younger generation, like family heirlooms.**

*Chun Lee: (In Cantonese: Call me Mrs. Lei)*

**Felix Poon: This is Mrs. Lei. I spoke to Lei along with her daughter Sue. And Lei’s been gardening here since the 1990s. I asked her how she got the plot. Was it through the lottery?**

*Chun Lee voice over: Not the lottery, a friend gave it to me.*

**Lei met her friend at the Lei family association. Family associations are social and civic organizations that provide a lifeline for Chinese immigrants of the same surname, who might otherwise feel pretty isolated in their new home country.  
  
You can find them in Chinatowns all across North America.**

**So Mrs. Lei’s friend, was of course named…Mr. Lei.**

Chun Lee: (In Cantonese: He was Mr. Lei.)

Felix Poon (In Cantonese: He was Mr. Lei too?) Oh yeah, of course

**She met him at the family association after all.**

**[MUX IN]**

**Anyway, Mr. Lei had been gardening at Berkley for decades.**

**But then in the 90s…**

*Chun Lee voice over: He got sick, couldn’t tend to it anymore. He was in the hospital*

*Chun Lee voice over: He was 90-something, had no kids, nobody.*

*Chun Lee voice over: He was really sick. Nobody was visiting him, so the association members, we were always bringing food for him.*

[MUX]

**Felix Poon: Mr. Lei’s garden plot might’ve been the only thing of value he had left. And Mrs. Lei was probably the closest thing to family he had.**

**So, just before he passed, Mr. Lei said to her the garden was hers.**

[MUX]

**But Someday, Mrs Lei will pass the plot on again… to her daughter Sue.   
  
Mrs. Lei is eclectically dressed: bright yellow crocs, a camo colored cap, and a maroon colored shirt with repeating geometric patterns. Plus she’s donning a blue surgical mask, and pink latex gloves. It’s a style I can only best describe as covid-era Chinatown grandma.**

**Felix Poon I ask Mrs. Lei, why grow these veggies when you can buy them at the store? What does having this plot really do for her?**

*Chun Lee voice over: Because it tastes better! Gardening lifts my spirits and I get some exercise, that’s why! I’m retired with nothing better to do. My kids are all grown. My grandkids are all grown. Am I right?*

*(Mrs. Lei and Sue talk over each other)*

*Chun Lee voice over: You can’t buy veggies this good!*

*Sue Fong Lee: It’s more organic! (laughs)*

**This is Sue jumping in here, Mrs. Lei’s daughter.**

*Felix Poon: (In Cantonese: Is it organic?)*

*Chun Lee: (In Cantonese: Yes, it is! She buys fertilizer that’s organic.)*

*Sue Fong Lee: I spend a lot of money on fertilizer for her okay? The good stuff..*

[MUX] **Passing Down Plots From Generation to Generation can be a Source Of Tension.**

**It’s like a family Business - Some Kids Don’t Want To Take Over The Garden. Others Want To Do It Differently - Ditch The Bitter Melon for things that are easier to grow, like flowers and herbs.**

**Sue Says When She Takes It Over Completely, She’s Just Going To Grow Flowers - I Ask Mrs. Lei What She Thinks About That.**

*Chun Lee voice over: I’ll be dead then! What do I care?*

*Sue Fong Lee: My next door neighbor will give me side eye. My neighbor will be like, why you do that?*

*Chun Lee voice over: when I’m dead, she can do whatever and I won’t know about it, right? I’m already 80-something now, as if I have a long time left? Come on!*

Felix Poon: You don’t have any wishes for her to continue…

*Chun Lee voice over: Let’s see if she can even grow veggies! See if she’s lazy or not!*

*Sue Fong Lee: She have no faith in me. Because she says I’m too lazy.*

*Chun Lee: (In Chinglish: If she’s not lazy then okay. If she’s lazy then no.)*

[MUX IN]

**Felix Poon: These stories are a window into the authentic, living relationships here.**

**But I think the true essence of the relationships at Berkeley is contained in the many mundane moments that happen in the garden, oftentimes in the leafy enclosures, like this one moment,**

**I’m walking in the garden, and Fanny and her friend Ada say hello from inside Fanny’s plot. I step inside the doorway. Ada’s sitting on a stool on the ground, and Fanny’s being a busy body, and pretty quickly offers me a *juung*.**

**Felix Poon: A juung is kind of like a tamale, a fist-sized ball of sticky-rice and pork wrapped in banana leaves. It feels rude to accept it, I have nothing to give in return. But it feels rude *not* to accept it. Plus, *Juung* is comfort food, it’s one of my favorites.**

**Fanny hands me the juung in a plastic bag, it’s one of those bags that says thank you on it, with a yellow smiley face. and I happily take it. And then she just keeps OFFERING ME MORE AND MORE VEGGIES.**

*Fanny voiceover: what, you know tohng hou (tohng-HOH)? Do you want some? I’ll harvest some for you.*

**Felix Poon: Fanny’s generosity makes me a bit uneasy. Like, who am I to her? We’re basically strangers. I’m not used to this level of sharing and generosity, not between strangers. Not in Boston.**

**Felix Poon: Fanny and Ada’s conversation turns to other things: like an electric bike that Fanny’s son bought her as a gift**

*Fanny voiceover: hey, what do you think of my little bike over there, pretty sweet huh?*

**and their children, whether or not they help out in the garden. Which, their answer is not really, you know how it is.**

*Fanny voiceover: not really, you know how it is.*

*Ada voiceover: they don’t help, it’s just us*

*Fanny voiceover: we take care of it ourselves; let’s eat, I’m hungry!*

**Felix Poon: Fanny pulls up a stool next to Ada, and they both unwrap the banana leaves off their piping hot *juung*, and eat their lunch. I say thanks and goodbye.**

**[MUX IN]**

**Back at home, I lightly boil some of the choy they gave me, add some oyster sauce to it and have it with the juung. And I think about the generosity from Fanny and Ada, and from a lot of the gardeners at Berkeley. I mean, where else? Honestly. Sure, sharing and generosity exist in other gardens as well. But I think, here at the Berkeley Community Garden, they really do the “community” part really well.**

Sarah Hutt: Hi how are ya?

Sue Fong Lee: Today is cleanup day?

Sarah Hutt: Yeah, Monday

Sue Fong Lee: My mother go, “oh, it’s clean up, where are you?” She’s like, “make sure you sign the name,” I say, “sign what name?”

[fade it out]

**[MUX SWELL]**

**Felix Poon: This episode was produced and reported by me, Felix Poon.**

*Felix Poon: What’s in the bag?*

*Helen Ng: Gau choy.*

*Felix Poon: Gau choy, hou heung*

**Felix Poon: Special thanks to Helen Ng for the gau choy**

*Felix Poon: you take it Arlene!*

*Arlene Ng: Nope! I’m good.*

*Felix Poon: No?*

**And special thanks to Sarah Hutt, for taking me on our walks through the garden to introduce me to the gardeners.**

*Sarah Hutt: But this is Arlene that I mentioned to you.*

*Felix Poon: Arlene, hi! Nice to meet you.*

*Arlene Ng: Oh hi!*

*Sarah Hutt: This is the guy from the NPR…*

**Also, a big thank you to Michelle Slater, and to Julie Stone, Zach Nowak, Mark Gardner, Michelle de Lima, Vidya Tikku, Peter Bowne (BOWN) and Jessica Holden. Thank you to Lauren Chooljian Nick Capodice, Jason Moon, Hannah McCarthy, Julia Furukawa, Christina Phillips, and Rebecca Lavoie for their voiceovers. And to my cousin Eileen Poon and her family, *jan hai m goi saai lei dei*!**

*Sarah Hutt: … Unbelievable! Look at that! You have to come help me!*

*Felix Poon: Look at this row of healthy vegetables!*

**Felix Poon: If you want to see pictures of the Berkeley Community Garden, or take a look at old city records about the garden, we’ll post them on our website: Outsideinradio.org.**

*Gardener: The lettuce?*

*Felix Poon: Yeah, she’s got some lettuce there*

*Gardener: You want to try?*

*Sarah Hutt: Yeah it’s beautiful!*

*Gardener: You want to try? For the garden?*

*Sarah Hutt: Okay but I have…*

**Nate Hegyi: This episode was edited by me, Nate Hegyi, and Taylor Quimby, with additional help from Justine Paradis, and Jessica Hunt. Rebecca Lavoie is our Executive Producer.**

**This was our third and final installment of Yardwork and we want to hear from you what you thought. Should we do something like this dagain? What topics do you want us to cover. You can hit us up at** [**outsidein@nhpr.org**](mailto:outsidein@nhpr.org) **or give us a call at 1-844-GO-OTTER.**

**Some of you already have gotten in touch! Liz called our hotline from Austin, Texas, after listening to our episode on heavy metals and gardening.**

Liz: which I thoroughly enjoyed listening to, but i notice you did not mention soil bioremediation.

**Liz shared a few projects that use fungi and plants to remediate soil and remove contaminants, including in New Orleans, Louisiana, where contamination is a big problem in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Sounds like a great subject for a future episode!**

Liz: be well and keep up the good work

**Thanks Liz!**

**Nate Hegyi: Music in today’s episode is from Walt Adams, Blue Dot Sessions, and Airae**

**Our theme music is by breakmaster cylinder**

**Outside/In is a production of New Hampshire Public Radio.**