Bill Taylor and Jaye Moscariello, narrators

Anneliese Abbott, interviewer

February 14, 2024

BT = Bill Taylor
JM = Jaye Moscariello
AA = Anneliese Abbott

AA: This is February 14, 2024, and this is Anneliese doing an oral history interview with

BT: Bill Taylor.

AA: So Bill, thank you so much for taking the time to do an interview today!

BT: You're welcome.

AA: So why don't you start and tell me a little about when and where you were born, and if you had any connection with agriculture when you were a child.

BT: Well, I was born in Hartford Hospital. I lived in southern Connecticut, near the Connecticut River, up on a hill. When I was really little, my dad had a big asparagus patch at his place in town. But then we moved up on a hill, and that's really when I started remembering life. It took a while for him to get the garden going, probably one or two years, which to a kid is a long time. I remember digging up that first little patch, watching it happen. I think I was trying to dig the sod and just really couldn't quite hack it. I was probably four or five or six, somewhere in there. Then he built a garden, had an asparagus patch, which was his pride, and strawberries, and all kinds of vegetables. As we were growing older, we would help with the garden. We had to do chores. We had a family of seven, there were five kids, so there was a lot of food coming in.

We were in a peach orchard. He had bought the peach orchard property as a separate thing when he bought the land that we lived on. It was eight acres in all, about one acre peach orchard. He kept those trees growing for many years, and the garden was sort of in amongst the trees. I think that gave me the thought of intercropping and biodiversity and all of that. I didn't know those words, it wasn't even spoken, but that's just what it was. It was a garden in a peach orchard.

And then when we were in high school, we were each given our own garden plots. Ten by twenty-five feet or something. And I remember growing rutabagas when I was probably 17 or so. It got down to 9 degrees. I was going to store them there all winter, and I might have even had a little mulch on them, I'm not sure. But they all froze, and I was really devastated and realized, no, you can't always just store vegetables in the ground. People talked about, oh, yeah, you go out and pick them when you want to, they're there all winter. Not true. Not true in that case, anyway, and with voles [and gophers] in California later on, it seemed to not be true there as well.

So anyway, that's the long answer. When I was really little, I remember crawling around and eating sheep sorrel. I was definitely into food and foraging, too. Those were early experiences that informed most of my life, actually. (2:58)

AA: Did your dad read *Organic Gardening* magazine or anything like that?

BT: My dad had Rodale books. I don't remember if he got *Organic Gardening*. He probably did. He was very much influenced by the Rodale movement. I think J.I. Rodale, the father of Robert, was what he knew about, because he was quite a bit older than me. He was born in 1912. This was in the '60s, when I was growing up, '60s and '70s.

That was probably the books at that point. Later on I've got a lot of other things that influenced me. (3:44)

AA: So then, when and where did you go to college, and what did you study?

BT: From when I was eight years old, I thought I was going to be an astronomer. So I continued with that belief until I got into college. I majored in astrophysical sciences at Princeton. I was the only major in my year. And then I started graduate school after that. And after two and a half quarters, I decided, "This isn't for me. I want to be outside. I don't want to be working inside." Astronomy is not looking at a telescope outside on the deck, which is what it was when I was a kid. It was sitting in front of a computer and analyzing data and writing computer programs, and I just didn't think that really fit into my persona. So I left. For a while I tutored math and physics. I always had a garden wherever I lived. I would try to do a garden, and sometimes be successful. I continued that interest.

It was after I worked at a physics teaching lab, writing teaching manuals for the students, that I realized I wanted to do something that was really outdoors. So I started an environmental organization. All during this time I was having my own gardens. But I started an environmental organization, and one of the volunteers saw a poster or banner we had of someone planting a tree. It was kind of a symbolic thing, planting the future, and we were doing a lot of petition drives and letter writing and so forth. But she said, "Why don't we plant trees?" And I said, "How about fruit trees?" When I had lived in Seattle before this, my partner and I had a big garden and planted fruit trees on our land and were really into chestnuts and visited Brian Caldwell out in Ithaca, who was doing a lot of American chestnut research. So I definitely had that interest the whole time, leading up to this time, and she and I talked about doing fruit in public areas.

When Earthworks was doing this—it was called Earthworks Projects—we started a fruit and nut tree program. In a year or two we changed the name to Urban Orchards, which was a little more catchy. That was a long path to doing that. I still wasn't doing selling. This was growing fruit in public places for disadvantaged people, people in lower income neighborhoods to have food in the city where people didn't have access to good food. There were community gardening organizations like Boston Urban Gardeners and others that were doing the vegetable garden aspect. And so I wanted to do something with the perennial crops, something different. And actually before me, there had been Mel King in Massachusetts, he was a state representative and had gotten a bunch of funding for a fruition program. And one of the people who had been involved with fruition and was still maintaining sites got involved with the organization I started.

So that organization was fading away, they would more just give people plants and they were on their own.

We decided we were going to create training, materials. We got community involvement in planting and in the maintenance of trees. We would go over there and lead workshops. It had gotten formalized, I was dating a biologist, and she quit her job, and she and I co-wrote the fruit horticulture training book that we used for teaching a six-class series. We were teaching and doing, and I was learning grafting and other skills that went into the orcharding. And John Bunker, I would say, was a mentor during that time. He was with Fedco seeds. [There was Robert Kourik's book, a few Rodale books, and others when we formalized the training.] That [training] sort of morphed into the environmental group. (8:25)

AA: What year was that, that you started the Urban Orchards project?

BT: It was 1989. We started planting in 1990, but we laid the groundwork in 1989, ordered trees, got in touch with some community organizations, people that were doing community work. They helped us find places to plant. We worked with schools that were interested in having fruit trees and berries and so forth in their schoolyards. That was 1989. 1990 we planted 20 orchards the first year—mini-orchards, with two to twenty trees, and berries and so forth. We were always encouraging organic practices: not spraying poisons, using mulch, using compost. When we built the nursery, there was a horse stable that had gone out of business, and I remember hauling bike trailer loads of manure.

We hardly ever used a truck. A friend of mine had a truck, and we'd occasionally use it, but usually we would show up at a planting site with tools in one trailer and soil amendments in another and the trees in a third one. We had three trailers going. I was building bike trailers for that. I very much believed in the environment, not using fossil fuels as much as we could. Occasionally we would have a big planting with a lot of material, and we would borrow a friend's pickup truck to deliver things.

In all we did 60 sites, throughout the '90s. We did some replanting and expansion of sites, so we didn't do 20 new sites every year. We started working with what we had and improved those sites, added to those sites, and added new sites each year. (10:37)

AA: What types of management practices did you encourage people to use on those trees?

BT: Well, mulching, pruning, building a compost bin or some method of composting on site, using the materials from the site to mulch. Sometimes we would bring in some hay or straw or other materials, but usually we were using on-site materials to mulch the trees, leaves and so forth, mowings of grass, and such. (11:18)

AA: How did you feel about pesticides at the time? Were people really using those?

BT: Generally not. There were some sites where we didn't have complete control. It was about empowering the organization. We certainly encouraged people not to do that. I think there were sites that were planted in areas that demanded using that, say, using chemicals to control pests in buildings. But we were pretty adamant about them not doing that on our plantings, and teaching those methods. We had actually, in the fruit horticulture training book, we had a whole section on organic pest and disease management. As I look at it now, it's outdated. We don't have a lot of

the Michael Phillips information, Nigel Palmer, and the people who have really pioneered the competitive colonization and foliar feeding and so forth. We weren't into all of those things yet. But we were doing the best we could with the knowledge that was pervasive at the time in organic gardening books, Rodale books and others. (12:25)

AA: So what really got you interested in organic farming? What books and people influenced you?

BT: Well, I was on a bike ride way back when I was still in graduate school, or had just dropped out of graduate school, called *Successful Small Scale Farming*. I read it from cover to cover, and it had all these charts on how to balance nutrients, how to do the whole farming thing. And it wasn't something I was doing then, but it kind of percolated in my mind. When we did the Earthworks projects, we had Robert Kourik's *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally*. We had a couple of organic pest and disease books, *Fruits and Berries for the Home Garden*, and a number of books. I can't remember the name of the pruning book, but I remember that the pruning style was not to stub the tree and let all the branches shoot up afterwards, but was to do more thinning cuts. It was a very intelligent approach to pruning. Unfortunately, in a robbery, I had a pannier full of books, and that was one of the ones that was stolen, and it was out of print. I'd love to get that back at some point. But anyways, many books over the years have influenced me, but those are the early ones.

We used the Stella Otto books at one point. She wasn't completely organic, so we didn't use that part of her book, but we had her come and give a class on fruit growing. She was a cherry grower in southwest Michigan. We brought her in, we had some grant funding, and we were doing a fruit horticulture class and added a special class for her teaching people, and they were buying her book. *The Backyard Orchard Book* and *The Backyard Berry Book*, I think were the names of those books. But again, there was some mention of pesticides in there that I wasn't real happy with. She was also into organic methods, too; she was just trying to reach a broader audience.

We had a tour of the orchards. We would do a bicycle ride, and people would raise money, and that would help buy the trees. It later helped match some grants that we got for the education work. We got a USDA grant and local foundation grants to do the education. And then the Outdoor Classroom program, we had some volunteers and later staff that wrote curriculum that fit with the curriculum standards that a lot of states were doing, teach these things in third grade and these things in fourth grade. So we worked on exercises that the kids could do that were matching what they were supposed to teach in school, so the orchard was integrated with the regular teaching and we weren't just pulling them out of class randomly, but were actually doing activities in orchards with that classroom program. And, of course, the kids were planting and doing cover crops and everything else, mulching was part of that.

So that's kind of Earthworks. That was a big chunk of time. And meanwhile I was doing my gardening, but I wasn't selling. I started an edible landscaping business, to do that for other people, because volunteer community work wasn't a way to pay the rent and I had to do something else. It wasn't until I moved to California that I decided, "I'm just going to farm. I'm going to have my own farm. In this arena of work, in gardening, I'm going to grow and sell produce." It was still hand-scale ways. So really, that move is what prompted me, and going to a place that had a long growing season was very enticing. (17:05)

AA: What year did you move?

BT: 2002. The end of 2002, beginning of 2003. I was setting up gardens January, February, March of 2003, setting up gardens all around this house that my first wife and I had bought in Mendocino County.

AA: So then, can you tell me more about your farm in California?

BT: The first farm was in amongst redwoods, but there was some cleared open area. It had been a chicken farm previously. The soil was pretty rich. It was a pretty good place to start. I created some raised beds—mostly raised beds, I'd say. I started doing that, actually, back when I was in graduate school, doing the French Intensive method I had read about. I don't remember where I read about it; I think it was an article. I had these raised beds in the backyard. So I was still doing that, using wood from the buildings that were falling down, redwood to line the beds. Very rustic, I'd say. And it was all hand tools. Later on I used broadforks to break up the ground, because I moved to where the soil was heavy, heavy, heavy clay. But this first place that I did in Philo, the soil was pretty good. It was called Zeni-Ornbaun soil, some of the best soil in the county to work with, in terms of its texture.

So I did mulching and small amounts of selling, and I also co-managed the farmers' market for [three] years with other people. One of my co-managers my third year started a market match program where people with EBT, food stamps, could double their money. I helped with that, but she spearheaded that. She knew about that program, she was from Ohio and they had it there, so she brought it out to where we were [and ours was the first market to offer it]. And then I continued [selling at that market] after that. I had a landscaping client, and he said, "You can have a garden here," so I added some land there that I was growing on, because I just needed more land. And then I worked at a former retreat center, it was bought by the CEO of eBay, I think it was. I did some work there, and on my off hours I did some extra work and grew my own things for the farm. Kind of a scattered farm. (20:16)

We started having interns in the late 2000s, I think it was 2008 I had my first intern on the farm. It was a small-scale market garden operation. We sold at the farmers market in Boonville [the one I had comanaged], and then when I met Jaye, who I'm married to now, in 2009, we had more interns. She helped teach them cooking methods and good eating, healthy eating, which I was into the whole time, too.

Probably the most creative thing we did was the salad mix, with herbs and flowers. It was like a fifty, sixty-ingredient salad mix that looked like Monet on a plate. I started doing that pretty much from the get-go. I remember an article in the Earthworks newsletter said I was going to go out and grow lettuce. Well, I grew a whole lot more than lettuce in terms of the salad. Lettuce was one of the many ingredients in the salad. I had Calendula and borage, mint, coyote mint, fennel, bitter, sweet, sour [flavors], French sorrels, the wild sorrel that I'd learned about when I was four years old, we put that in the salad, too. A lot of wild plants, dandelion. Sweet would be anise [hyssop], fennel. There is a cress that's both spicy and sweet, so we kind of balanced the flavors.

And then in 2010, I decided to do something called Salad University. We would do workshops and teach people about using wild plants. That was pretty rewarding. I gave talks at grange halls, different places. Signed people up for the series. It would go over the whole year. A lot of people just came once or twice, but some people would come to several classes, learn

about all four seasons. Because out there, there really were four seasons to garden. Things didn't grow fast in the winter, but you could still harvest a little, because they grew slowly.

In addition to salad, we did kale, chard, I think we did cabbage the first year, carrots. But I intended to move away from row crops and do, other than the greens, mostly focus on salad. And then Jaye got us involved with some value-added products. I tried to make kale chips in the oven and they burned, so she said, "Well, I have a dehydrator, let's do that." So we've been dehydrating kale chips ever since for the past fifteen years and selling those. They're a great seller. We have a special mix [Jaye created] that's different from the cashew mix that you get when you buy them commercially. We wanted to do something that people with nut allergies could eat. We're always trying to find a niche, something a little different from what other people were doing. (24:12)

We moved out to Elk. I had a small garden, the place I was renting there, and then we moved inland in 2012 and continued doing the classes. And there we had 190 acres. About two acres of gardens and orchards. That was a bigger operation. We had a number of summer interns that would come. Some years we had five or six, and some years we just had a couple. Again, we were doing the lower maintenance, not row crop, but more encouraging plants that liked to grow there.

Mallow was a major, major weed, but we discovered you can use it. You can make mallow chips with it, you can use it for bread, you can put the less fuzzy leaves in salad, the more fuzzy leaves you can make bread out of. We were even selling bunches of mallow because people liked it so much. It's a nice thickener. You can use it to make a bread, add it like egg or flax to make a non-gluten bread hold together. We did a lot of that kind of experimenting and working with the plants that grew instead of fighting them. We did have to sometimes take the mallow out because it was so happy there. But every site has its favorite plants, and there the heavy clay drew plants like mallow and yellow dock that wanted to break up soil and make the nutrients more available to other plants.

And it was during that time in the inland valley, in Redwood Valley, up on a mountain. I always seemed to pick not the best soil, except that very first garden. Even that was on a hill, pretty steep. But to accept the challenge of not doing bottomland farming, but working with what you could do at high altitude, I was influenced a little by John Jeavons. He was farming on a mountaintop in Willis, California, and working with the worst soil. And I just sort of took that as a challenge to find sites that didn't have great soil. And out there, limited water was a big deal. I tried to find sites that didn't have forest on them, because I didn't want to clear forest and pull out stumps and degrade the environment and vaporize all that carbon just to grow some vegetables and fruit. So we would do more tree planting in areas that didn't have trees, instead of trying to turn the forest into something else. (27:34)

You asked before about books that influenced me. *Four Season Harvest*, and *The Holistic Orchard*, Michael Phillips had several books. *The Apple Grower* was the first one he had, but in each book he progressed more into understanding the biology of farming and going deeper and deeper into it.

We did a CSA for a short time. We just had a couple members. We really liked the farmers' market. We lived three miles from a paved road, a mile from our nearest neighbor, so we needed a social life other than doing fun things, which we did a little of. We were working really hard on the farm. So the farmers' market was a chance for us to not only make a little money, but see people on a weekly basis. It was a year-round market, so it was much more continuous. Here [in Massachusetts, most of] the markets close down, where we have moved to, which we'll talk

about later. Out there, the markets were year-round. Even though it may not have been the most cost-effective way to do it. We would take a few weeks off in the winter, but mostly sit every week, at the Ukia Farmers' Market and the Willits Farmers' Market [?]. We tried Redwood Valley for a little while, for a couple years, but it was really small, and we needed to go somewhere that we could make it work financially for us to take that time. (29:37)

There were many different models. We happened to use that one. We did mulching. We used a lot of manure. I'd start out with minerals, figure out what the soil needed mineralwise, and adding the minerals. There are some people who say that most soil has everything you need, you just need to get the biology in there. That was a few years later, after adding micronutrients, I realized that the practices we were doing, whatever organic matter we put in the soil was burning right up. So we had to do something different in California, or really anywhere, with mulching but also with having plants growing all the time. It changed my philosophy about weeds.

And another weed that my philosophy changed about was thistle. We thought that thistle was this horrible weed, and I would dig out huge amounts of it. I would put it into barrels of water, ferment it, compost it so that none of the seeds would be viable, and it was just an enemy that I was trying to eradicate. Then, through our Salad University classes, we branched out into having someone come who had written a book called *Wild Wisdom of Weeds*.

I'm kind of going ahead of a context that I want to mention, which was a radio show that we started in 2012, a farm and garden show. And the way I started that, actually, the first time I did a radio show was [in 2005]—I'm going back a little bit in time, we're jumping around like I always do—in the late '90s, Earthworks got involved with the invasive species removal and planting native species back which was going on at that time.

And I say a fad, not completely disparagingly, but a little bit, because there's that mentality—I read a book called *Invasion Biology: Critique of a Pseudoscience* by David Theodoropolous. He made an analogy between that and some of the eugenics movement, some of the Holocaust-type movements, that you see something that you want to get rid of, you try to get rid of it, you kill it because it doesn't belong. And that belief can go really crazy, and it's alive today, unfortunately. The other needs to be destroyed. And the reality in the plant world is that, over a few generations, those plants adapt, and natural enemies come to control them. I've never seen anything really take over. It takes over for a while, and then everything changes. I'm old enough to know to not react to invasive things coming in, to know that they will go on. And it doesn't mean that I look out and see Winged Euonymus in the yard and don't pick [cut or pull] some of it out, use it for biochar or mulch. But I don't see things as enemies anymore. His book kind of turned me around.

So I did a radio show. I was terrified to be on the radio. I had performance anxiety, so I asked a friend who did a radio show, a farm and garden show actually, to help me do the interview, to manage the board and maybe interject if I needed some help. We did that show, and then I kept thinking, "I want to do a farm and garden show." There was a farm and garden show on the radio, and there was an opening, so [my wife Jaye and] I decided to do it. Before our show, we were interviewed by another farm and garden show host, sort of introducing us to being on the radio. And she said, "You should have your own show," so we did. A few months later we started a show. We interviewed a fellow from Sturbridge Village, actually, who had a garden that grew some of the herbs that were in our salad and many others. Rich Giordano. So that was our first show. And then we did shows with people like Toby Hemenway and Gabe Brown later on. Michael Phillips. Dr. David Johnson. Christine Jones. Elaine Ingham. And then

some local people. All the big names, and also some of the local people in our area that were doing interesting things.

And one of those people was Katrina Blair. I had seen her at the heirloom expo in 2016, I think it was, in Santa Rosa. So we had her on our show, and we decided to have her come do a workshop. Because [what] she did with the *Wild Wisdom of Weeds* was similar to what we were doing with the salad. She had a book, she had a following, so we had a lot of people come out to the farm and go to a community garden in town and give a talk in a church and so forth. She had, one of the thirteen plants that she had in her book was thistle. She made a thistle drink and used honey and lemon in it. We do it a little different; we add lemon and apple to the thistle. And we filter it. And then we put it in jars. It's a liver tonic, an energizing drink. I used it when I was doing a musical performance. That's another part of my life; I do a lot of music. I was not feeling focused. I drank a pint of the thistle drink, and boom, I was on. Did the best I'd ever done. So we swear by thistle drink. And we sell it at the market. We sell it to this day. We started that, I think, in 2017, 2018. (36:25)

AA: So then, at what point did you move from California back to Massachusetts?

BT: I'm going to take it back to 2017, when the idea gelled that we had to move. And that was because we had a wildfire in July. A truck caught on fire on the road to the west of us. We knew that road was not going away. We knew that carelessness wasn't going away. Usually it was people dragging chains behind an RV or vehicle, that were dragging and would spark something. In this case, a truck caught on fire and pulled over to the right, which was where the grass was, instead of into the median, which [in] hindsight he should have done. We were out on the coast with our interns, to treat them to a concert, and Jaye was doing an art show out there.

[At this point in the interview, Jaye is contributing to some of the words spoken in the recording] And we got frantic calls from our neighbors, so we drove back. The fire had already gone through. Thank goodness, the fire department was there. They saved our house, but they broke an irrigation line, so I was running around shutting that off and later repairing that and getting things back. But our orchard burned completely. The house did not burn. The garden had some damage. Our berry patch burned. Which actually is not bad for berries, it turned out. We learned a lot from the fire, what comes back after a fire. But I said, "Well, at least we're safe for a year."

Well, three months later, in October, a fire started in the middle of the night and came in from the east. [The first] one had come in from the west, so it burned the other few acres of our property that hadn't burned in the first fire. Hundreds of structures burned. We had nine people die in the fire and several die as a result of the trauma later, of cancer and other diseases that came because they just couldn't handle it emotionally, the stress. And we were stressed. Our thought of moving back East became almost a certainty after the second fire. We said, "Okay. They say lighting doesn't strike twice. Well, fire does."

And we'd been watching fires every year before that. We'd always been a little on edge about being there. It was a brittle landscape. It was on a mountain. But we made it into a permaculture paradise. We had fruit trees and berries and lots of things that were planted. It was a paradise. It was just starting to become that. The trees were really maturing. The orchard soil wasn't as good. The trees were starting to produce that first year, and the crop burned. And we had roasted garlic in the ground, that we hadn't harvested. Some of the garlic that we hadn't harvested roasted. Most of it we had harvested. (39:4)

So that made us think. But I said, “We’re not moving right away. We’re going to regraft and replant.” So we replanted the orchard. We regrafted a lot of the rootstock that came back up really vibrant, because the roots underground were still fine. We put rooftop sprinklers on the house, and we brought in sheep grazing to keep grass down so that any fire that didn’t come wouldn’t overwhelm us. We had one of our interns who had built a cabin. I thought it had burned, but it hadn’t because we’d been trampling around the outside of it. So I realized, if you have the grass low enough, the fire is almost harmless to the structure. Unless embers are blowing up through the vents. We learned a lot of things about fire safety. We felt like we’d be okay.

But then the next year, our neighbor was doing some careless work with a chainsaw during a dry spell. And his place caught on fire, and we saw the helicopter go up with a water bag. We said, “This is crazy. This is crazy to stay here. We can be as careful as we want, but those around us aren’t going to be careful. We’ve got to get out of here.” And meanwhile, Jaye’s sister had gotten sick. And her other sister with special needs, we wanted to have more time with her. They were in their late ’50s, early ’60s. Well, actually, her middle sister had a near-death experience. So we decided for that reason also, they weren’t going to move out anymore because of the fires. We had a site prepared for them to build. They didn’t want to leave where they were anyway. But the fire made it certain that they weren’t going to move.

We looked for property at the end of 2019. Right before we came, her youngest sister with special needs died, and we were pretty devastated. We were like, okay, we’ve got to move back, because Sylvia’s alone now, and Jaye’s the only family she’s got left. Everyone else had died, parents and other siblings had died.

We decided we were going to bring California to Massachusetts. We found a property with a much smaller area to grow in, because I had really overdone it. The farming had caused me some health issues, I was overdoing it a little bit. So we had to find a smaller place, like 12 acres and maybe close to an acre planted. That brought us here. The house brought us here, a wonderful energy-efficient house.

Another practice that I didn’t mention that we started doing out there was open burns. Here, with charcoal pits and biochar, we were making our own biochar and pulverizing it, putting it in compost piles, getting biology into it first. If you don’t do that, it depletes the soil. We actually found that. Putting biochar in doesn’t give you an instant increase in productivity. It takes some time. I would say it increases the cation exchange capacity by creating a habitat for microbes to colonize. But you have to get the microbes in it first, because they’re going to populate it before they do much sharing. (43:47)

JM: Hi, this is Jaye Moscariello, Bill Taylor’s wife and farming partner. What we learned a lot from the fire in California, I started exploring more and more, what did the Indigenous people do? And it was fascinating how they had managed the land for thousands of years with fire, with cultural burnings. We realized that was something we needed to do, and we did do it. And when we came to Massachusetts, we continued some of the practices, in a very different way. It’s a different landscape. And people were a little nervous about, I think that’s one of the reasons people stopped doing it, because there was this public fear that they were going to lose their houses. But they weren’t doing it properly. So that’s one of the reasons we had a problem with fires.

BT: A lot of people like Mark Shepard, I asked him about using fire, and he said, "Well, actually what we do, is we do a lot of mowing and cutting because there are permit issues around doing fires." And, in fact, here we could only get a permit for a burn pile. We couldn't get a permit to burn acreage, which we wanted to do. We would do that out there, as well, just do a fire during a safe time when it could be a slow-moving fire, which is what the Native people did, too. And actually, what we learned about in the [2017 wild]fire we had is that the miner's lettuce, which is a wild winter green—a wonderful green in the winter—grew three times taller, more richly. An area where I had looked in vain for watercress for years bloomed with more watercress than we could sell. We were selling it to this big place that had a CSA, we were supplementing their CSA with many, many bunches of watercress. And our berries came back amazingly after the fire. We had the best berry crops for a few years after the fire. So there is a place for burning, but it's been hard to get it accepted.

JM: Also, another thing we discovered was that, after the fire, the ground contains so many seeds, and after the fire there was the ability for many of these things to germinate and come out because they had space now. It was the most beautiful [spring full of wildflowers].

BT: The wildflowers were incredible after the fire, too. The first thing after that fire that I saw coming up was a milkweed. I think it was the native milkweed that grew out there. I think that was the first thing that came up. I may be mistaken. It's amazing how the earth regenerates after a disaster like that.

So where were we? (46:57)

AA: You moved to Massachusetts. So did you grow the same crops? How was that different, after being in California for so many years and then coming back?

BT: Well, we grew a lot of the same salad plants. We discovered that mallow, which had been a major plant for many uses, didn't do well here, but something called sow thistle did. That has amazing properties, too. It's a wild lettuce, not really a thistle. We actually brought thistle from a farm here who didn't want it, we brought it over, so we now have bull thistle along with the native Canadian thistle here, to make the thistle drink. We do the salad. We do kale [and sunchokes]. Not as much chard yet here. I had a seed bank of chard that I'd been saving over the years, and I left it in California. Can't really get back to it now.

JM: We don't have as many berries.

BT: The berries we had out there were incredible. We don't have the loganberry. We had an amazing loganberry patch there. They barely survive the winter here. So we haven't been selling berries here. We sold a lot of berries there. And we don't have figs anymore, of course. But we have planted orchards. We have apples, there were some mature apple trees here, and a few mature pear trees. We've been planting more apples and persimmons, pawpaws, plums, peaches. We didn't have a peach crop last year because of the freeze in February. We planted nut trees also, hazelnuts, chestnuts. There were actually some chestnuts here already. Heartnut, which is a butternut/heartnut cross. So as far as what we sell, I would say it's mostly kale, herbs, salad mix. Kale chips, wild chips, a thistle drink, our salad. We are growing some herbs like elecampane and teasel, that we sell, [along with sunchokes, but other crops are for us, not for sale].

JM: And the typical plants, like tomatoes.

BT: Oh, right, I forgot about tomatoes. We also make dried tomatoes. We make fruit leathers with apple and pear, that we infuse with some ginger or fennel to give them a flavor, so flavored fruit leathers. We do a lot of value-added things that no one else is doing. I mentioned the thistle drink. And I have a book project in mind that I haven't finished, to write about all that stuff. It's going to be a book about salad plants. I think that will [still] be a big part of it [along with recipes and growing ideas]. (50:22)

AA: You mentioned that you used to present at the NOFA-Massachusetts conference. Do you want to tell me more about that?

BT: Yes. Back when I was doing Earthworks, doing the urban orchards planting, I would do a fruit horticulture session, an outdoor class and a session where we talked about what we were doing in the schools, the curriculum. I did that for probably four or five years, presented usually two workshops at the NOFA conference in Amherst.

AA: You mentioned you did some water conservation work in California. Do you want to say anything about that?

BT: Well, we did berms and swales. Our beds in the orchard were all, there were raised beds between the fruit trees. The fruit trees were on and near the beds in different places, depending on whether they wanted wet feet or dry feet. We put the peaches higher up on the hill. And then we had tanks where we would collect rainwater off the roofs. We were catching the water, keeping the water on the land for longer so it didn't run off as fast. The gophers made frustration in that because their channels, the water would flow through them, but I think we were keeping more water up on the land. Of course we had drip irrigation. We used the [in-line emitter] tubing, not the drip tape, which you throw away every year. I couldn't stand the mountains of plastic I would see where people were using that stuff, so we used the stuff that lasts for decades. The only reason we had to replace it was because the fire burned most of it. We had to replace it.

In the first place, at Philo, I had a six thousand-gallon water bladder, and I would pump that using a silicon pump up to a small tank, up [by] a cabin, and feed that to the garden. We had very little water at that place, the spring would almost go dry, and I was sharing that water source with my then ex-wife. During those two months when the spring was almost dry, I would pump that water up and irrigate with just the rainwater I'd collected. And the rainwater was great, because it's a little bit acidic, and it would clear all the minerals out of the irrigation tubing that the spring water had put in there, because the spring water was full of minerals. It was a way to clean the irrigation tubing every summer.

I did a few workshops on that. We had a little not-so-simple living fair in town. Not-so-simple, because it wasn't simple. It wasn't that small, either. We had a lot of people there. That was the water conservation. I would teach people about how to slow the water down on the hill. Mark Shepard, we followed some of Mark Shepard's practices, the keyline plowing and the berms and swales. (54:27)

AA: So I have a question for Jaye, do you want to say anything about your background and how you got interested in organic farming?

JM: I think my background, I'll be happy to talk about that. I went to grammar school at a time when, almost every year, children were told, "What do you want to plant?" and given an offering of seeds that you could grow something. And I think from a very early age I was fascinated with it. It didn't mean that I actually did anything [besides growing the plant I chose in school]. My dad actually had a small garden almost every year. We were in the Northeast also, in Connecticut. Of Italian descent, he would be growing tomatoes and peppers, things like that, garlic, on a seasonal basis, and just for his own use, just for family use. But it was always a dream of mine to grow my [own] food. Meeting Bill when I did made that dream come true.

I wanted to walk my talk. I was very concerned about the environment. I was concerned about what we were doing to ourselves in respect to food. And I saw farming and food, really well-practiced food growing and cultivating, as the revolution. And I don't mean to sound revolutionary, but maybe that is what I'm going to say. I felt that, if we could do that, if we could convince other people to do that, we would be revolutionizing health care fields, you'd be revolutionizing the greed aspect in large corporate food production, and if you have people driving those industries to do better practices, then you're going to accomplish a lot.

So I would say, meeting Bill and seeing what he was up to, I was fascinated, because he was doing something that I hadn't seen anyone else do. He was walking his talk. He was making incredible food. You could see it. I'm an artist, that's what I've done my whole life. You could see the vibrancy in his food, and the way that he cared and tended for the food. So I'd say that my life really got started when I met Bill and got to participate.

BT: Your farming life. You were a very accomplished artist for years.

JM: That's true, but the whole 360 degree life really began with Bill, because I was really able to live in a way that I felt was much more suited to humans walking on the earth, living on land that we carefully tended, growing food that was locally sourced, saving our own seeds, teaching the next generation, the younger generation here and here, mostly in California. We had some wonderful young interns who came and wanted to participate in what we were up to. Learning about food nutrition, learning how to cook properly. We had a rule, because we knew we were dealing with young people who would come and be our interns. We would say, "Fine. You like that Nutella? Great. You find an organic kind, or you make it yourself with organic ingredients." Those were our rules. If it came in the house it had to be organic, or you had to make it yourself. I think that kind of fascinated a lot of kids. It was empowering for them to realize, "Oh, I can do this. Oh, I can make my own cookies. They're really good. I can make my own food. It's not that difficult."

So that was exciting for me, because we had a mission, and our mission was that we wanted the next generation to live longer than us. Because I had read so many articles about how the younger generation, those who were in their 20s and earlier, were not going to live as long because they were not going to have access to good food, and more and more they were going to be relying on pharmaceuticals, and that was very upsetting to me. We really wanted to provide something, some kind of a model. You can look good and feel good even into your 70s, 80s, 90s, and 100s. We were designed to live a lot longer than we're told we are. Does that sound too fairytale-ish?

AA: No, I totally agree.

JM: We were lucky doing that. We didn't have children of our own, so it was wonderful to have the opportunity to be with young people who had open minds, to check it out. And some of them went on to do community gardens, public gardens. Others worked on farms. Others just took that practice into their own lives, eating better. (1:00:03)

AA: So then, both of you can answer any of these following questions that I'm going to ask. Do you think there was any connection between organic farming, the environmental movement, back-to-the-land, or any other social or political movement?

JM: I do. I think so. I think the more you become aware of what you're eating and what you're putting into your body, I think the clearer your mind is, and the more aware you are of other people. There's an old saying, before you can spring forth, you have to fill the well, which I interpret as, you have to take care of your own body and take care of yourself so that you are a good example. And I think that there's a definite link to all of those. I think as you're aware of the food you ingest, you're aware of where it comes from, you're very concerned with the soil. And as that awareness grows and expands, you're aware that one of the leading causes of climate chaos is the erosion of millions of miles of topsoil, which we need to ameliorate, we need to heal that. So I think that it's like this wonderful flower that starts leafing out in all different directions. We keep unfolding with the awareness. (1:01:30)

BT: For me, the Urban Orchard program emerged from the environmental activism and letter writing petition drives. When we started the program, I remember the slogan was, "Food and clean air for the 21st century," was what we were saying. I would say, "Healthy food and clean air for the 21st century." That word didn't get in there, but that's how it's always been for me. Healthy food. I mean, my dad was an organic food, health food person growing up, so some things didn't get expressed because it was like the air I was breathing. But when I did have a chance to, I would. Really, Earthworks was a political involvement. We also had a bicycle transportation side of Earthworks and a forest protection side. We had someone who was appealing timber sales up in New Hampshire, and we had a success or two there. We would lead people on walks through some of the old growth of New England. We would do those walks. And, again, the transportation. We were promoting mass transit, but especially bicycling, because everyone was talking about mass transit and walking. Bicycling wasn't as big of a movement back then. We made some changes in the Boston transportation scene. And to me, that just fit with an environment where people can live and thrive and be healthy and be in good shape, getting exercise and eating good food. It was all sort of one thing for me.

JM: And for me, I came from a family of two parents who were social activists. So they were very aware of the injustices and the imbalances in society. So that was always present in my mind, how do we make things right? And my dad had been a crypyoanalyst in World War II, so he had been present to a lot of horrors. I think just having grown up during the Vietnam era, there was a lot going on. I'm going off on another tangent, and I apologize for this, but there are so many wonderful movements when you're talking about organic that have to do with veterans. That was another thing that we did. I did an art show in 2016 called the Anthropocene Show. It

involved local students, fifth graders, [asking the questions]: How do you feel about your future? What do you perceive? I gave them a forum to express those concerns, which they had. These are young kids, which are having these heavy concerns. When I was a kid, it was the Cold War, and you hid under a desk because you could get bombed by Russia. I mean, that's really how we thought. And these kids are thinking much more globally. And I thought that was really something. But that's what I'm saying, we created this show, the Anthropocene Show, and people had the opportunity to really consider everything. And we wanted to show just the different aspects and strata of life.

So we had a forum for veterans to speak. And through that, we also had a screening of two films. One was called *Terra Firma* and the other was *Ground Operations*, about how there were these wonderful programs of introducing veterans to the concept that the Romans had, that when a soldier returned home he was given a number of acres and a couple cows to start a farm, to heal, actually, and to start a life. And there are now programs [like that] happening [today].

BT: Farmer-Veteran Coalition. We had them on the radio show. We also had someone from there come and speak at the show, at the Anthropocene.

JM: Like I said, it's a multi-layered thing. I think one thing fed another. And also, during that show we had seed bomb creation. We weren't doing those other kinds of bombs, but we were doing wildflower pollinator bombs, with clay that was from our own land, and putting in the seeds, and then just throwing them into different areas where they would spring forth and make maybe a wildflower patch, a pollinator plant patch. And we did a seed and scion exchange. I'm not sure I answered your question, but I just wanted to let you know about that aspect, that all of it works together. It's not just one thing we're doing, but how else [and where else] can we affect [positive change]? (1:06:58)

AA: So what are your perspectives on the relationship between the land grant universities and organic and sustainable agriculture?

BT: I haven't worked too much directly with them. I used to get my soil test from the cooperative extension, and it was very much based on the pesticide model of growing and NPK. I stopped doing soil tests with them, but in the beginning, with Earthworks, we would get the soil tests from them that were inexpensive. I didn't feel like the advice was that great. The Bionutrient Food Association, which Dan Kitteridge started, has a little different take on it. They still look at minerals, but they look at all the minerals, at trace minerals and also at the biology.

We had Dr. David Johnson, we had him come do a workshop the year after we had Katrina Blair. We did something at Mendocino College through the ag department. They're not a land grant university; they're a community college. On our property and at a place called the School of Adaptive Agriculture at Ridgewood Ranch, near us in Willits, California. We had him do workshops. Anyway, he was at Las Cruces, University of New Mexico, Las Cruces, New Mexico. And he felt like he was treated as an outsider, because he was given the task of treating manure that was way too saline. How to compost it. And his wife helped him, after doing too much of his dirty laundry turning compost, let's do a no-turn bioreactor and do that. Well, that got rid of the salt. The salts got locked up somehow and were no longer causing salt pollution. He was able to turn dairy manure into a good product. And now he's doing other things with it. I think he either retired or left that university. He's doing his own independent work. But Dr.

David C. Johnson is amazing. If you haven't interviewed him in your oral history, he's really doing some good research on the biology. He makes a high fungal-to-bacterial ratio compost that he uses as an inoculant.

JM: It's a batch of compost that is a one-time application that yields a 20 percent increase in productivity.

BT: You have to maintain all the plants on the ground, keep those plants growing, altogether good regenerative practices. But it's a kick-start to wake the soil up and get all the microbial diversity in there.

JM: Plus it absorbs a lot of carbon from the atmosphere. That's the other reason.

BT: So I think he had some differences and didn't get the support that he should have for this groundbreaking work from the university. But as far as my own experience with it, it's just gotten soil tests. I haven't gotten into that. I've read about it. One of the resources I use a lot is *Acres U.S.A.* That's sort of my go-to favorite publication on organic growing. A number of people that we've interviewed, we use the radio show to teach us better practices and to share that with other people. I think you had a question about how many people we reached. In Earthworks it was hundreds of people, at least, maybe a few thousand. With the outdoor classroom program, probably thousands. In California, it was probably hundreds that we reached through our salad classes. Just the market, teaching we did at the market, and the radio show, a lot of people listened out there. And we're doing a radio show now with WBCRLT, a low-power station here. We're continuing the show. These shows are edited, so we're going to get them onto a blog and start sharing them with people. I've still got to get a little better with the technology of how to do that. That's a big part of our education, is the interviews we do. (1:11:37)

AA: So if you were to summarize your philosophy of organic farming, what would that be?

BT: I'll say, first do no harm.

JM: I was just going to say that! That's so funny.

BT: Let nature do the work. Let natural systems do the work, and guide them in directions when necessary. Use disturbance judiciously. There are people who are adamant about no-till. However, there are situations where a fire goes through, and you get an incredible blush of miner's lettuce. Berries come back strong. So there is a place for disturbance. It's just, use it judiciously, minimize it, focus on perennial crops because it's less work, and it's less disturbance needed for that. The more a full, rich biology can work, the more you're going to get all the nutrients you need for your own microbiome to work. It's kind of tending that wildness that nurtures us. There needs to be guidance at times, and when things get out of whack, you can get some serious diseases. Some people get very fearful and want to kill, and just step back, look at the big picture before you go out. Whether it's chemotherapy with cancer, there are many other ways to do cancer that aren't as lucrative for the big industry. You can use foods and herbs and attitude. I think being in a more mediative space and nurturing the mind and the spirit as well as the body.

JM: And talk to the plants. Communicate with plants. They will communicate. They will let you know what they need. I don't know if that's a philosophy, but one of the things we learned when we were in California is that the Indigenous people sang to everything. And we did that practice. There was a time when we were in a really tough period in terms of water, and Bill and I just sang this rain song.

BT: I draw the rain.

JM: I draw the rain. We sang it for two and a half weeks or more, all the time, all day. We were thanking the spring, thanking the plants, thanking everything. It was June and there was a [freak jet stream cutoff low]

BT: It came down from Idaho and dumped two and a half inches of rain, which was unheard of. And I [previously had] told our interns, "You're never going to see our waterfall." They saw our waterfall.

JM: It was amazing. And other times, Bill and I would continue to sing the rain song. And I remember there was a gal who was coming to take photographs of us for a newspaper, and she said, "I knew I was getting to your farm when I saw the clouds gather over and there was mist everywhere." It's amazing. But all of the scientists said the same thing. One we interviewed, Dan Kittredge of the Bionutrient Food Association, I interviewed him and asked, "Okay, Dan, you're talking about all the science, how do you feel about this?" He said, "I am a scientist, and I put the science first, but ultimately everything communicates with everything." This is the way of the universe. They have a lot to teach us if we just listen. (1:15:42)

AA: So would you say that your religious or spiritual beliefs have any connection to your philosophies about organic farming?

BT: Yes. I think what Jaye was just saying, and I'm not really of any particular religion. There's this thing called Bahai, but I think there's a particular person who's involved with that. There is some life force in the universe that I don't understand, that we can tap into and accept and receive the bounty that that can produce and let that happen, help make that happen, be a steward and not try to control it too much, just a little nudge here and there, and see what that life force is trying to say and do. I think that's pretty much it. I do play piano at a Congregational church, and it's a very open, affirming church. I think there's a lot of good lessons in that religion, in any religion. I do think that each religion has its own peculiarities, its little stories, whether it's Buddhism or Judaism or Christianity, and they're all sort of trying to get to the same thing. And that same thing is what I subscribe to. I have siblings that are into the dogma of Christianity. It makes them happy, it works for them, it's great. That's not me.

JM: I resonate a lot more with, I was raised a non-practicing Jew or a little-practicing Jew. My father, who came from [a] cardinal to the Pope on one side, and my mother's side came from something like fourteen generations of rabbis, so it was an interesting mix. I tend to resonate most with the Native Americans' approach, which is that all creatures are people. There are four-legged people, and there's two-legged people, and then the plants and everything all have a life

force that feeds us and supports us and loves us. And I'm sure I'm not quoting perfect Native American spirituality here, I just take a little from here and there.

BT: We wrote a piece of music called "Nature's Dream," and the last line is, "Act for the welfare of seven generations, act for the future of seven generations." My music also comes into this. I've always gravitated to the Paul Winter consort type of music and have written music, different but similar. I just wrote a chamber piece last year about regenerative farming. The first movement is monoculture farming. It's very mechanistic. And then the next movement is in this much more open tempo, 13/8, if you're a musical person, all these different groups of 4 and 3 and 2. It's more like a dance. And it's all about microbes and biodiversity. I'm looking at your questions here, but I want to let this happen organically, so I won't say any more right now. (1:19:46)

AA: Is there any person or publication that has strongly influenced your philosophies?

BT: Every book that a person who's been a guest on our farm and garden show has influenced. I can walk into my bookcase and mention all those books. *Acres U.S.A.* has a lot more people in it. Robert Kourik. We actually used him for a fruit horticulture training book back in the '90s. His book *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally*. He's written a book on demystifying roots and on drip irrigation.

JM: Eliot Coleman. So many people.

BT: Eliot Coleman. Nigel Palmer's a recent person. He makes his own biological amendments based on Korean natural farming. I started doing that. You take bones, dry them, and then put vinegar on them and make an extract and use that as a foliar spray to keep your plants happy. I've done some of my indoor plants in the winter, and they're looking so much happier this year from my doing that. I'm using it as a drench; I'm not spraying because it would get all over the floor. I'm using it as a soil drench here. And it seems to be making a difference.

JM: When he says, "indoor plants," he means plants that we take indoors in the winter.

BT: Yeah. The citrus, the pineapples, the things we're just doing for fun. And I'm also using it in the greenhouse, where we have kale [and salad plants now in the winter].

JM: That's a geodesic dome, because we wanted to have some of our salad all year round.

BT: We get a jump start when the markets get going, too.

JM: With this cold climate, we need to have some kind of protection for those plants.

BT: Mark Shepard. Michael Phillips. Recently Michael Palmer. Eliot Coleman. I've been doing cold frames for a long time. And then from way back, this is from the Earthworks time, *Uncommon Fruit Worthy of Attention* by Lee Reich. I don't think he was completely organic in his approach, but he had things like pawpaws and jujubes and things that we've successfully

grown. Not pawpaws. I haven't had any success with them yet. I keep planting them and moving. It may take a while. (1:22:28)

AA: What are your views on the current USDA organic certification standards?

BT: I think allowing hydroponic vegetables to be organic is weird. Because organic, to me, should be all about life in the soil. Organic means "carbon-containing." Well, everything has carbon in it, even burnt toast. All those things came from life, and organic should be about using the diversity of life. I suppose a very crude definition of organic can include anything that has carbon in it and anything goes, even carbon-based, petroleum-based pesticides. But I don't think that's what was meant. I think that's one thing that shouldn't be allowed. I think the philosophy of nurturing life that I was talking about with the spirituality, getting out of the way and first doing no harm, there are a lot of poisons that are allowed in organic growing. I think there needs to be more emphasis on the Nigel Palmer/Michael Phillips approach and John Kempf approach and more people doing the biological amendments. That should be the first defense against problems. I think [the organic standards have] been way watered down. There probably needs to be something new. You mentioned Real Organic. I've only vaguely heard about it. You mentioned those other standards that are possibly out there.

AA: Yeah, I was just wondering what your opinion was on Real Organic or regenerative.

BT: Regenerative has some great ideas. Because there's no certification process, you have to take it with a grain of salt. When someone says they're regenerative, you have to ask, "What did he really do?" But since it isn't defined like USDA organic, it's almost like saying "natural." But for the people who are really doing those practices, which is keeping the soil covered, preferably with green plants, minimum tillage, biodiversity, having multi-species cover crops, if you're doing those practices, I think they're great. I also think that if they're people who are doing those practices and maybe doing one or two poison sprays, that may be better than people doing strict organic that are using every natural poison in the book and not nurturing your soil and growing hydroponically. I might rather see someone working with soil and going off the path occasionally. Not that that's good. The best thing is to not go off at all. We're never going to make a system that is no disturbance, but let's minimize it. (1:25:43)

AA: What do you think are the most important aspects of organic farming history to preserve and pass on to future generations?

BT: I think some of the recent work of James White at Rutgers, about the rhizophagy cycle, just some of the groundbreaking biology that's confirming what some of the older organic people are saying. I think looking back at what they were saying when they didn't really have the scientific proof, and adding the science to that, I think it's really interesting, would make a really interesting project. Someone may have done it already. I think that needs to be preserved. The history of it, people doing it and not knowing why, and now doing it.

We are going to interview later today, actually, for our radio show, a fellow, Joseph Lofthouse, who's doing landrace gardening. And philosophy of seed saving, which is certainly what I've done without always knowing why. He believes in promiscuous pollination, he believes in crossing, and that the idea of keeping a seed pure is along the lines of fighting pests

with poison, along the lines of killing invasives because they're new. Keeping the seeds pure means that you get inbreeding depression and they lose their vigor. Hybrid seeds try to bring that back in, but the best thing is to have the promiscuous pollination. Now, he does do some selection, and he does do some isolation of hot peppers and sweet peppers. I don't know why I'm going off on this one.

But that aspect of saving your own seed I think needs to be brought back in, because too many people rely on this fairly recent practice of buying all your seed. I used to think I would only save lettuce and tomatoes and beans because they didn't cross as much. I was saving some maxima, because those crosses seemed to always make a good squash. But I might start saving some *Pepo* seeds and see what happens, and plant doing mass plantings like Joseph Lofthouse does. Anyway, I'm just jumping off into a new thing. But that's an important aspect of seed saving, and then that idea of marrying the new science with the practices that were not understood and often ridiculed before science came in. (1:28:34)

AA: Is there anything else you would like to share before we end the recording?

BT: We did cider pressings. That was part of what we did in Earthworks, is we would do cider pressings at the school. I think I did mention the biochar. We were making biochar in an open pile. Now again, there's another practice that people are afraid to do it because they have to do it a certain way and make a retort that does it perfectly. If you can just do an open burn and move the brush as you're going through the burning process, and then douse the coals with water, you can take your normal burn practice—which a lot of people do, they burn brush piles—and they can spray down some of the coals before they're completely out and use that as biochar. It may not be the highest quality biochar, but it's better than just burning it all the way to ash. And I did do an article in the NOFA *Natural Farmer* [Spring 2021 issue] about that method of biochar. And then also making a pit, which keeps the oxygen from going into the bottom. You can just dig the pit. You don't have to buy a thousand-dollar retort. There's some really cool designs out there that are metal and portable, but if you're doing it all in one place, you can dig your own pit and do biochar year after year, which is what we do.

And we've gotten a few NRCS grants, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Their way to do high tunnels, which we haven't done because of the disposable plastic issue. We have done some pollinator hedgerows, mulching, and other practices. I think there's another conservation program that the fellow at NRCS said, "Actually, I should put you in for that, because we're going to do some shrub plantings here." It's a support for the farmer to do that through the USDA. Most farmers probably know that, but they should know that if they don't. I think that's everything. Is there anything else, Jaye? I think that's it.

AA: Well, thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview!

BT: And if people want to hear about my music, they can go to touchtheearthmusic.com, and if they want to read about the farm, they can go to floodgatefarm.com. It's touchtheearthmusic.com and floodgatefarm.com. And my wife's art site, if you want to look at her art, which much of it's nature-inspired. jayesite.com [also jayealison.com and search for Jaye Alison on Singulart website]. This is not a call to buy anything or do anything, just if you're interested in what we're up to.

AA: Thank you so much!

JM: Thank you!

BT: Thank you!