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# GROW TOGETHER

I was an aspiring engineer, and what I find so inspiring is how resourceful and ingenious our growers are at addressing real-world problems. Farmers function as scientists and observers and participants and artists. They are resilient people.

Agriculture and farmers in the modern era connect us to our heritage, providing a foundation for building community. I've had exactly that experience myself. I still remember spending time with my grandparents in their prolific garden. Smelling and tasting fresh foods awakens our sense memories, and observing the growing process helps rewire our brains about how the natural world functions. We need that reminder and that shared experience. We can communicate to kids that if they want to spend more time in that environment, the best way to do it is to grow something!

When children work on projects like the Edible Schoolyard, or visit the farm of a PASA member, or when families work in community farming programs, they start to understand the living world together. I remember helping to build one such garden in Wilkinsburg a few years ago, starting with big slabs of cedar wood. A woman in her late 60s and her grandchild joined us. To hand them a tool was powerful. They made a commitment: "This is my garden bed now. I'm going to watch and care for this garden and help these plants grow."

In sustainable agriculture, the community helps to cultivate itself and each other. That's how we move from "me" to "we."

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole

