



## SEEDHEADS TRANSCRIPT

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### Episode 3: Audrey Logan English

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#### **Steph Benoit // Audrey Logan**

##### **Steph Benoit**

Hey, welcome to SeedHeads, the cross-pollinating podcast where our Canadian seed heroes, tell their stories, share their how-to tips, and talk about the seeds they love. I'm your host, Steph Benoit, coming to you from Vancouver, BC, on the unceded and ancestral territories of the xwməθkwəy̓ə m (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh\_ (Squamish), and Sel'ílwitulh' (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

For today's episode, I had the honour of talking to Audrey Logan. Audrey is a Nehiyaw/Metis Knowledge Keeper currently living in Winnipeg on Treaty 1 Territory. They founded the Klinik Teaching Garden, a regenerative community garden rooted in Indigenous permaculture principles at 545 Broadway in Winnipeg. They also run Dehydration Nations, a grassroots initiative which hopes to empower individuals and communities to harness the traditional method of food dehydration and pair it with nation-to-nation trade as a way of promoting food sovereignty in Treaty 1 territory and beyond.

Audrey has had an incredible life and their depth and breadth of plant knowledge is formidable. I was lucky enough to talk to them over multiple conversations, which have been condensed here into one episode. We talked about building a thriving Indigenous permaculture garden from an empty lot, climate adaptation, stewarding rare heritage seeds, traditional perspectives on cross-pollination, a lifetime of urban foraging, and so much more. Thank you for listening. I hope you enjoy.

*SeedHeads is produced by The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, a program of SeedChange*

**Audrey Logan:**

When I start getting deep into things, it kind of has a mind of its own. And as my auntie shared with me, you know, that's that's what we call when the spirit, moves you to be able to share, you know, that in our DNA, we carry our grandmothers and our great-grandmothers and our great-great-great-great great-great-great grandmothers. No matter who they be and that it's not just Indigenous grandmothers and grandfathers we carry. We carry the DNA of all the ancestors. So, you know, I occasionally like a little bit of fiddle.

You know, explains my music diversity as well. You know, that it's not just one thing I like. And that goes back to being a humanist more. So, you know, being separated by so-called race. Race is a contrived thing that's actually very new, considering. And you know, when we go back to the history of growing and plants in every culture, there were diverse growing methods and diversity in plantings.

No one did the monoculture except for ones who were forced. And, you know, whether it was a Greeks or the Romans-- one of the two. But there again, they can go back as far as the Hittites and others who there again, would subjugate others to grow food for them, for their military services. And that's happened many times in many different times. And that there would come a time, though, when enough people would get together and be able to see that, you know, it's the diversity of seed and the diversity of people that can help heal the planet in a good way or at least be able to adapt. Adaptation is what we do. It's ones who don't adapt, the ones who don't allow change to happen that fall victim to their own demise. Your own ideology of perfection.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh that has so many carryovers into dominant agriculture today, where everything is seen as competition, amongst plants, instead of the ways they cooperate. And everything is just grow one thing on as big of a scale as you can. And yeah, we are seeing very clearly today what a lot of people have known for a long time in terms of we need diversity within our systems otherwise, they don't keep going.

**Audrey Logan:**

But it does not mean to say things are gone forever. And, you know, and things that work in, it's up to us to change that and that's why I think, you know, there is a lot of real want to go back to the old ways, but yet that's a lot of work. Anyone here, anyone who tries it? You're like, oh my God, this is impossible and it's like, well, yeah, because it took community and unity in order to do all the things that are needed in order for society to thrive. So the old, the old adage of "butcher, baker,

candlestick maker.” Basically was saying that you know, without the butcher, the baker can't bake the bread without the lard. You know, and the tallow is needed for the candlestick maker.

You have the Candlestick maker is not going to become the butcher. Right? Right. And Indigenous culture. That's why when one had a gift, they would spend that time honing that gift. So a person who was a maker of baskets would not turn around and say, I'm going to now be a gardener. Because their gift is basket-making, or their gift is working with the clay. Some of the clay pots that were made by our people even here in Thompson were four feet wide. Oh my gosh.

Yeah. I ain't carrying no pot four feet wide through the forest being no hunter gatherer, but I think that's a myth that was spread because at that time of European incursion, that in order to justify taking over land, they had what was called the Doctrine of Discovery. That was allowed by the pope to say that if you discover lands that are not being used like *we* use it, with the till, and you know killing of the soil, then you can claim it in the name of God. And that's how many of the lands here were justified in being taken over. Because they did not understand the method of permaculture, which is a modern word for traditional knowledge, and you know, and diversified growing.

People know the three sisters, corns, beans, squash. There's actually seven because it goes along with the seven teachings and the other four were the sun root, sunflower, tobacco, and then self because women were the land stewards at the time and here in North America, most of it was matriarchal passed on. And as we know from the writings from Mr. John A. Macdonald, he did not wish to talk with ones who wore pantaloons and so on and so imposed the Indian Act to put men in charge instead of women. And those got rid of the Clan Mothers and the hereditary chiefs, which were passed down through the female side, not the male side. Hmm. And so, and then you know, there again, it adds another sense of divide when it comes to what is a status Indian compared to a non-status Indian, compared to enfranchised, you know. And when you look at it in the same way as seeds, what's the difference between an heirloom seed and hybrid seed, and you know, genetically modified? And a lot of it, when you look at it, is almost pertains even to humans, you know.

There we have the heritage seed and some think everybody is but in reality everybody's hybrid. Cause nature is like that, you know, they're not gonna stop a bee from visiting a certain flower unless you cover that puppy up. Yeah, you know and even then there's no hundred percent guarantee that it's not gonna eventually revert to its parentage seed anyway. Yeah, so this idea of purity is something that

many Indigenous groups were not cool with. Because they knew that was very unnatural and the only thing purity brings is sterility.

Yeah, when I, there's a-- I used to love this one. It's called butternut squash, but now it's been bred so much just for the size and the shape of it that it no longer has the nutty flavor that it used to have. Same with certain tomatoes. Now just, they don't have no flavour. No taste. They've been so in-breed.

But it's not different than the Habsburgs. If you learn about the history of Germany and Habsburgs, that's what happens. Too much inbreeding and you eventually become sterile and a little crazy.

**Steph Benoit:**

Well, I remember you know in one of our previous conversations talking about, I think the first thing I asked you is, okay, so, how do you get a tomato or a seed to grow true to type? And you're like, the first thing you need to do is get over trying to grow it true to type. And it was just such a reflection for me of like, wow, that is such a colonial mindset of trying to reproduce everything exactly as it was before and trying to like control either cross-pollination or just, I mean nature as a whole. I think that was a really profound point that you made.

**Audrey Logan:**

And I feel it too. In that sense of, you know, the colonization aspect is I'm taking something from here and I when, when I take it over there, I wanted to look the same. Without taking into account that the air is going to be different, the water, the soil, the way you cultivated, the environment is going to be different. So why expect the same result? That totally changes. That's why in a micro environment within a city. You can go from what's considered a Zone 3 up to a Zone 5. By just having a microclimate within your own city and within your own block, you can bring it up to a Zone 7. I've known people who've grown kiwi here in Manitoba.

**Steph Benoit:**

Wow.

**Audrey Logan:**

I've seen pear trees here in Manitoba. Out on a farm. The thing is 30 years old. They're as hard as rocks, mind you.

**Steph Benoit:**

*(laughing)* Yeah, they're not good pears.

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah, wear a hard hat when gathering. I gathered it. And I found that the trick to getting it to taste actually good is to freeze it. So what I found was that by freezing many things, it does break down the fiber and breaks down the sugars. And from that, I poach them in tea. Delicious as a dessert. And then I've also made them into wine. Yeah, nice little extra dessert. But by freezing them it broke down the textures and fibres to where then it would become very palatable and delicious and sweet.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh my goodness. I think-- I think yeah, there was something that you were alluding to there that I, I think about sometimes is like, just the importance of embracing place and where you are and not having everything available everywhere. There's something really beautiful about something that you can only find in one place or under one set of conditions and instead of trying to replicate that and making it grow on the moon. It's kind of nice to embrace that like, this is a sense of where you are. This is a sense of what grows here.

**Audrey Logan:**

And because our Indigenous people did pan-American Trade, that's what threw many of the archaeologists off. They were analyzing the phytoliths in pots. And phytoliths are the microscopic residue that plants and animals leave in a pot when people have been cooking it. And our traditional parts were not flat bottoms, like westernized ones because we didn't put them on grates over fire. We put them in the coals like you would like a slow cooker. So they were cone-shaped.

And because they're a cone shape and you can snuggle that into the coals, you could constantly have something on the heat in the slow cooker, right? And if you know about our native meats, you know, you have to do it low and slow. If you do it at a high heat, quick, it toughens the meat up like you wouldn't believe. I can imagine, if I was someone who had to eat a mammoth, I want that puppy low and slow.

**Steph Benoit:**

You need to get your Crock-Pot out for the mammoth, for sure. I feel like you know a little bit about everything. I'm always so amazed in talking to you.

**Audrey Logan:**

Oh yes, even as a kid I was so intrigued. And it was my escape. As a kid in foster care, where you move from home to home. For me, the books always brought me home into a sense of knowledge where I could constantly read. Even though I was

dyslexic, I still found a need to read because I had a teacher one time say, “Oh you Indian, you’ll just always be a dumbass Indian.” And I kept thinking, “Eff you, I’m going to be a smartass Indian.” So I worked really hard at reading and really hard at audio books and other such things too.

And because I have, I wouldn't call it insomnia, but a natural cycle of, I only sleep like three to four hours a day. So the rest of the time, I’m awake, so whatcha gonna do? I literally remember this, in foster care at every home I went to, they would find books under my bed.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh, wow.

**Audrey Logan:**

That I snagged from the school library, and you know, eventually the school library would be like okay where's the books? They’d be looking for them and they’d be underneath my bed, and I’d have stacks of books there or, you know, a closet. So I've read so many things from not just knowledgeable things, but science fiction, science fact, and such. And when I was a youth, homeless, my escape was the library because I knew the librarian and she said, as long as I was reading, she couldn't kick me out.

**Steph Benoit:**

Wow

**Audrey Logan:**

So yeah, I read.

**Steph Benoit:**

Could you talk about your community garden a little bit and how it got started? And some of the things that you're trying to implement in it? Because I think it's its own story of resilience in a way. A lot of people telling you you couldn't and you did anyway.

**Audrey Logan:**

So, in 2004 I convinced my greening coordinator at West Broadway [Community Centre] to approach Klinic which at that time owned the property at 545 Broadway [in Winnipeg] and they just had grass there. And it turns out the reason why they just had grass there was because no one could really put a garden because underneath that grass, that couple inches of sod was gravel. There at one time had been a brick

house there back in 1950-something and so when the house got demolished, well they just filled it all in with gravel and it became one large lot. Well, yeah, you know so I approached Klinik, you know, because they had been using the greening coordinator asked them way back in 2004 and they instead put up a lot of these westernized kind of raised bed things and eventually it got to where people could not really grow there because it cost so much in water from the Klinik. They were kind of getting like, I don't know if we want to continue this, this is costing us a lot of water... And so I said, asked, thought about it and said, you know, everyone's always asking me for my methods and that and want me to do theirs and I'm not doing theirs. So, you know, I'm not there to see what's happening during winter to see what kind of you know, ground coverage they got and what moisture and environment but I know this plot of land.

Hmm, so I approached the Klinik and I said I'd like to ask for a 4-year land use agreement. Where I have full reign over the four years to convert it from a westernized garden to a permaculture, traditional garden. I know it's a challenge on gravel, but I guarantee you, there will be no water costs, no importing of soils and total care. As well as the garden will be a free-pick garden. So anyone in the community is allowed to pick from this garden. There will be no private plots and no privatization of space.

And they said yeah, sure. We're tired of all the groups wanting it but then nobody took care of it. So in the fall of 2014 is when I took it over. And we did a major flip of soil onto this to leaf material and straw and other materials, which I utilized some young people in the community who wanted to learn as I'm not allowed to dig because of my neck injury and such. But utilizing them and then utilizing the method of bringing in leaf material in the fall.

I contacted a couple of guys in the community that were landscapers and needed a place to dump their leaves instead of taking them to Brady landfill. Dump them at my spot.

And the gete okosamin squash - I was given two.

**Steph Benoit:**

Two? Two seeds?

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh my goodness.

**Audrey Logan:**

That's what I said, oh my goodness. Oh my gosh. I got two seeds of some rare heritage squash and I better be good.

**Steph Benoit:**

This has gotta be your best work. Wow.

**Audrey Logan:**

And there again, because I did it in a more traditional method of growing to where it was in a drought environment, which is what it was used to, it wasn't used to rich soil, and when I did it that way, in a 20 by 20 spot, we got 20 huge squash.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh my gosh.

**Audrey Logan:**

Each one 11 pounds and up. Where ones who had instead babied it and did it the westernized way, got two. So when you go from 20 squash where each will have a hundred seeds to two squash... Yeah, yeah, I'll go with the old method and with that, I've been able to pass out seeds galore, and I pass out more than two.

**Steph Benoit:**

Yeah, that would be so much pressure.

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah, because now we're seeing it now interbreeding with other varieties. So some people are like, "That's terrible. We need to keep it pure." And it's like, no, we want it to interbreed with other things so it brings that sweetness and that heritage and strength to the strain. We have make us different varieties that will be, you know, be able to handle there too drought situations that will be coming up. The archaeologists I know of, Dr. Lee Sims told me, he said, in 20 years Winnipeg's environment is going to be like North Texas. Gonna be dry as a bone. So he was like be ready for it. And I'm like of course, I know to be ready for it. And that was 11 years ago, though.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah, so we only got nine years to change over and adapt to more of a permaculture method and drought resistant plants, which originally were drought resistant anyway, and stop watering those poor squash, man. Some of our native beans are like “please stop, you know, I can't flower if you keep on watering me.” Yeah, and because of the method we use at the Klinik Garden people see that. They're like, oh, “you must water all the time” and I'm going, “Nope.” So that shows that the dew alone is a water source. And our native plants are used to that water dew at nighttime and not this heavy watering. As long as you prepare the soil and the ground in the natural way of having that hummus material in it that holds that moisture in your pathways as well as in your soil and you're good to go, man.

I gave teachings out for free because the way I saw it, people were like, you know, you can, you can charge people a lot for these teachings on food security and I'm said yeah, but who am I going to teach? The people who can afford to come to a \$50 an hour, you know consultation thing. No. Those people who can afford that don't buy local food.

Yeah, they're not in need of food. I'm low income. I am on disability and I get \$3.95 a day for food. That's not enough to live on. Those are the ones I want to reach as well as groups and can help facilitate the fact that we need to get back to collective growing and support your local farmer instead. Just like the Good Food Club does. They are one of the few groups in the city that actually got it properly done. Where you have a farmer you supply him with the money to be able to plant what's needed. He plants it, he brings it into the city for every week and everybody's done. If every community adopted a farmer in that method and that way, our local farms would be totally supported. And not even worry about those main corporate farms that are screwing everything up. Eventually they're going to go under anyway and it'll go back to small farms and regenerative growing. I just gave a talk with Food Matters with about 40 farmers, who are small farmers and it's like no, they're, they're vital to the sequestering of carbon in their soil, because of their methods, as well as getting back to real foods and real minerals and such in that food, which is lacking now because of desertification from monoculture. So it will be key to the new way of food production.

**Steph Benoit:**

There's also, people love to-- anytime someone looks you up, they find this kind of “fun fact,” if you will that you have been self-sufficient food-wise within the city for many years now.

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah, 13 years I haven't been in a store.

**Steph Benoit:**

Yeah. Wow.

**Audrey Logan:**

My daughter took me a while ago and I was like a deer in headlights going “What the frig, I have no clue what’s here.” Everything smells. Thank goodness I was wearing a mask because the smell of the detergents and everything was like, ugh. I make my own detergents from orange peels and lemon peels from other people that I’ve gathered. And I make my own vinegar from it, which makes my own cleaner, as well as a great vinagrette, and I locally forage, and locally foraging within the city is fabulous. I just go knock on a person's door and say “I noticed you have an apple tree. Care for me to take care of it?” I'll take care of it and clean up after it then in return I get to use it. My daughter has an apple tree and that one apple tree last year got me five, 5-gallon pails of apple chips. 25, yeah, 25 flats of fruit roll-ups, as well as more than 20 bags of apples I gave away.

**Steph Benoit:**

Oh my gosh.

**Audrey Logan:**

Yeah, so do you think that we need a whole orchard? Please. People won't even know what to do with the whole orchard. So we don't need as much as we think. Even myself, once I started doing this, I was like jeez, I don't need to dehydrate 40 pounds of carrots to get me through winter. I barely got through 10. Right? So now I got carrots for another four years.

**Steph Benoit:**

No need for carrots this year.

**Audrey Logan:**

You know, when you have to think outside the box, right? Because with my condition, I couldn't process stuff through the winter. Then people go, you got to eat fresh during winter and I stopped and thought, did my ancestors eat fresh through the winter? Heck no.

And I’m only second generation introduced to westernized food. This follows how you’re eating it, like beans, traditionally, we didn't eat them like beans like

westerners do. We would cook them, and then dry them, and then grind them up and use them for flour.

Cooking them up first and then grinding them up. It takes away that gassy part. So I make my tortillas and my breads from bean flour that I do that way, as well as my squash flour and other green materials I use for flour. Which, you know, if it wasn't for the people of Winnipeg taking those dry goods to the Selkirk settlement way back in the 1800's, they would have died.

People of the Selkirk settlement lost their crops to the weather, and many of the animals died because of the cold weather as well. And so the women of Peguis told the chief to go to them with these dried food and dried vegetables as well as dried meat and dried fish and bring them back from death. And that's happened with every single European incursion. Jamestown, to, you know, every single one. If not for the Indigenous people sharing how to eat those foods they all would have died off.

**Steph Benoit:**

Ironic.

**Audrey Logan:**

And it's part of our own traditional prophecy, though, that we were supposed to help

**Steph Benoit:**

Right, mhmm.

**Audrey Logan:**

And it would matter on how we would be treated. And if you were gonna be treated wrongly, that would last for eight generations, but then that would change. And dramatic change would happen to where it would go back to the Indigenous peoples' knowledge. Either way, they're going to get it.

**Steph Benoit:**

Yeah. Yeah, I was thinking as well... I mean, it seems that seeds present this, you know, can present this really fertile opportunity to explore decolonization as, as people return to traditional Seed Ways and traditional ways of knowing and gardening and there's a huge opportunity for decolonization there, you know, amongst Indigenous people, but also amongst westerners who are learning to unlearn some of these things that we brought over.

**Audrey Logan:**

And also learning that many laws were put in place to stop Indigenous people from the economic aspect of food growing. You know, the Indian act itself, if you ever looked up the-- I think every Canadian should be made to look it up and see what the native people were subjected to and still are.

Many still are not allowed to have their own farms. There are many who still are not allowed to use modern machinery and much of their lands is still being leased out on hundred year leases to westerners, who farm it for the hay for their animals, thus depleting the soil. But, you know, it's taking time. Any Indigenous people who are gardening right now are doing so under secrecy, basically, it bothers me, more so, that people are sitting there going, "Oh they're just lazy. They don't want to grow food." They were the original freaking farmers!

**Steph Benoit:**

Absolutely

**Audrey Logan:**

And the original carriers of all these seeds. But most people don't know that because that knowledge was not allowed to be passed on. In order to subjugate people, you make sure they're considered dumb. They didn't know what they had and all this other stuff. And ones who are Knowledge Carriers know that's not true. And we are trying our best to share that with many non-Indigenous, right? And that's why many of those so-called white customers that come for my teachings? Not all of them return.

**Steph Benoit:**

They don't want to hear it.

**Audrey Logan:**

I've heard feedback from some who felt that they felt guilty. It's not to place guilt as much as to place atonement. You want truth and reconciliation? Well you gotta get the truth first.

**Steph Benoit:**

Yeah, sometimes the truth is hard to swallow, but you can't have one without the other.

**Audrey Logan:**

Exactly. And I will state every single time that you need to know the truth first before you can expect me to so-called reconcile, or feel fine about this whole situation. When you don't even know half the truth. Learn the truth first. Truth hurts, yes. And it's through that pain that you then can heal but you can't heal if you yourself are sitting there, "What I have- no, I had no nothing to do with it." Excuse me, you're benefiting from it. Your family is benefiting from it and the family's families benefiting from it because that family can use that land as collateral, you know, Indigenous families can't. They can't use their land as collateral to buy any farm machinery, because they're again, the Indian Act in itself says, are not allowed to use modern machinery, on their land. To this day.

So until people get that in their heads and understand that by actually looking it up, reading it. Playing out - even if you were given a permit to be allowed to grow, you were not allowed to share it. And if you're given the permit and you pay the permit in order to grow, you still were not allowed to take it off your land to the mill to be sold. And even if you were given that permit and you were able to take it off your land to be sold, you had to have a certain amount of that product in order to sell. So you became what was what the government deemed as a peasant farmer. As a peasant farmer, you cannot sell your goods on the commodities trade. You had to have over 10,000 pounds worth in order to do so. You ain't going to get ten thousand pounds worth from the mere 60 acres.

**Steph Benoit:**

I think another part of your story that I just find very inspiring is that you didn't learn a lot of this through I guess, kind of like conventional methods. Like you didn't grow up with mentors who were really there through every step, guiding you and teaching you necessarily in your younger years or you didn't grow up, you know, going through formalized agriculture education per se. And yet you're able to reconnect with all of this knowledge and to continue to share it and amplify it so widely, beyond just yourself.

**Audrey Logan:**

I appreciate that and there again, I guess it took a lot of, well, years of sleeping in between garages when I was a kid. And sitting there starving and having an empty tummy for days on end to the point that I literally would salivate watching someone eat a sandwich, but, you know, I also knew that if I took care of people's backyards that, well, a lot of times grandmas and kookums-- I didn't know them as kookums, I knew them as babas-- they would come out and they'd bring me some haluski or some pierogies and all, "Oh, you're working so hard, here's some food..." You know.

I will find another way to do it. Whether it be digging in the dirt. I'll dig in the dirt. I love the dirt. 'Cause dirt's fine. And it's not dirt, it's soil and soil is the oil that gets your whole body and your whole life going, you know, and without it, we die. And I guess I'm just too tenacious to let that happen.

**Steph Benoit:**

Audrey, I was wondering if you would be able to sort of like, share your life, "your entire life story." No, but like the, you know, kind of how you how you came into this, this realm and this kind of like this knowledge and this space in your community of like-- if you feel comfortable-- sort of your story of like learning agriculture through different foster homes, and then taking care of people's gardens and that because I think that's like, I don't know. It's a really incredible journey.

**Audrey Logan:**

It's called desperation, my dear. It's called being so hungry. That you're willing to eat the weeds on the side of the road. Because you have no other choice. So when you're faced with these more walls of, you know, just more walls. And so it's through desperation that I had to do this. I had to find other foods to eat and dress it up. Make it taste good.

At least I know the wild sorrel. I can walk along anywhere and find it. I can eat that. I can eat, you know, add some hyssop into some water or some mint. And that'll help cool my body down from the heat of the day or help stave off some hunger. A lot of our native plants that we use for tea help with that. And so when you are put in that position, you will find ways to survive. We do have that resilience in us as human beings to, well, to make it, right? I mean to be, to be honest when I was as young as the age of five and it's not say, I didn't try suicide more than once in my young life. Didn't work, obviously, but it is also the reality when you're faced with those kind of hardships and such that you just don't want to live. You just don't want to continue on. But then, you know, they're just something in with you, whether as we were saying earlier, about your DNA, your mitochondrial DNA. Your grandmothers. Your great-grandmothers are saying get your ass up, get out there. And so what if someone watches you while you're picking these rose hips for your vitamin C, or you're picking these Wild Cherries for your other vitamins or you're going in snagging someone's, you know, as they called it garden raiding back in my day.

You know, so what? Yeah, you, you had to do what you had to do, and I did. And in doing that, it's helped me survive, but I also know that if push comes to shove, my grandchildren will be able to make it. They do know some of the plants. Not to say

they're with me every day in the garden, that's for darn sure, because as we know, not everyone is meant to be a bean grower.

Some are meant to be bean counters. Some are meant to be bean loaders. They're not going to be growers. We can't have everybody doing the growing cause otherwise there would be no other ways of knowing so, you know, allow each of them to find their own path in their own way to where there can be a mutual respect amongst all where we can keep that cycle of life going. So we stopped using food as a commodity to hold above another person's head, which is why in the garden that I run there is no private plots, and anybody is allowed to grow or allowed to pick, so we have it on our signage that, "Welcome. Here's food. Help yourself." All right, which kind of for some reason, ticks off some other so-called growers are gardeners.

I call them "so-called," because any real gardener or growers should know that food is not a possession, it is a gift given by creation. It is a gift to be given to others. If you cannot get that as a grower, then you should not be growing because your food will be bitter. And that's why the old saying of the grower of a bitter fruit is a bitter person. And that's the energy we all carry.

That energy goes throughout everything. So if we want to keep things flowing in a good way, that's what we need to do. Do it with a smile and if someone comes to a garden and rips up a plant or two, people will say, "That's terrible." I said no, it's not. It's going to show you how resilient that plant is.

So I'm going to replant it. But I'd rather that person take out their anger and frustration on a plant that I can replant not a human. Who is going to be hurt even more so by that kind of activity, So I've got no problem with someone coming through the garden and getting upset. The earth can absorb that and change that.

**Steph Benoit:**

Being through everything that you've been through, what is, I don't know, what is something that gives you hope or that continues to motivate you to do the work that you do in the community?

**Audrey Logan:**

I think my cupboards. In the sense that my cupboards are full. My freezer is full. I have enough to share with others. It's what I do. Some people, you know in the past were like jeez, why do you have all this stuff? What do you-- you're being greedy. And you know, it reminds me of a story of Grandmother Rabbit. And this young boy, who was back in the time when humans and animals lived together. They would

share feasts. And this little boy noticed, jeez, you know, Grandmother Rabbit, she keeps on taking so much food. Puts it in her sack and takes off with it. The grandfather told him, so, never mind. It's none of your business, what she does. But the little boy I thought hmm, I don't know, it seems suspicious to me. Yeah, she's got a lot of bunnies, but she's taking a lot more than what she should be, thinking that he should know what she should take and what she shouldn't.

Even though his nimosom (grandfather) said, none of your business. So anyway, he's decided one time, I'm going to follow her, see what she does with that food. And so he did. He followed Grandmother Rabbit, Wapus. And as he followed her, he noticed she would stop along the way, on the way home. She'd stop at the woodchuck's house and drop off food for the woodchuck and she would take it over to the skunk house, drop it off at some, some food at skunk house, all along her way she would drop off food for others. By the time she got home, she had just enough for her own little ones. Then he remembered what nimosom said, none of your business.

She knows her business and her business was to care for the others as well. So not to think badly upon one who gathers more than what you think they should do. What matters is what they're doing with it. And that's still none of your business.

Yeah, so mind your own business, hey? And with that the young boy learned that, you know, you can't prejudge someone. And I've had it happen to me where people thought, "Oh, geez. She's taking so much," you know, or, "She's gathering too much." But they don't realize that I give away a lot of it. I process it. I dry it. And when I come across someone in my community who goes geez, I'm so tired. I guess. I got no food. I got no this. I say hey, give me a minute. I go to my place, I get a get together some of my dry goods, and I take it to them. Here. Now you've got something to last you a few days or a week or whatever, right? And so it passes on, that food knowledge and acceptance, that food is not something that should be held upon, high upon another person's head where they have to work for it. Because you don't know if they're able to, right? And who are you to judge? Who's disturbing a food and who is not? So as I say, you gotta walk a mile in our moccasins.

And that's an old Indigenous saying for a very good reason, is that one mile in moccasins, you will learn and see a whole hell of a lot more than you would ever want ro. But should never place judgment until you do.

**Steph Benoit:**

Hmm. Yeah, and I think we have to move away from this... I mean a society that thinks that food is not a fundamental right that everyone should have access to--

adequate access to culturally appropriate food-- to have a choice of what they want to eat, and when they want to eat it, all of these things. I mean the fact that you feel like you need to go and get a wage to *earn* this right to eat and to nourish yourself is a real problem on a lot of levels.

**Audrey Logan:**

Which even the most mad peoples in prehistory did not do that. They still gave what was needed. Alright, so it's this there, again, the colonization ideologies.

**Steph Benoit:**

We've got a lot to learn in in general, but a lot to learn in decolonizing our way of thinking and and of appreciating these teachings. And yeah,

**Audrey Logan:**

And colonization doesn't mean just for Indigenous people, that's what I need to get across too, is that I've had people who were from Sweden and went back to-- their heritage was Swedish, and a young friend of mine, she actually went back to Sweden and went to the Sami people who were the oppressed people of Sweden and lived with them for a while. And they were reindeer herders and a lot of the stuff, she going, when she came back, she was like darn it, that Elder there was telling me the same stuff that you're telling me. Yeah.

Yeah. Oppression happens in every single group. It's not just in North America. North America is the latest group that has been colonized. But all the others were too. So we need to get away from there. Again, this ideology of, this is only mine and this is the only thing I can do. That's not a reality. As a group, we can do a lot a lot more. And it's about working together as groups, small groups, whichever group you choose, you know, get it together, work together, and we can make that change happen. Because change is coming whether we want to deal with it or not, you know, it's coming.

That's why I don't charge a lot for my teaching. So if people want to come out, I will share with them when I can but I am not going to sit there and put it into a book and then sell a book, right? Just so people that can afford my book can afford food. Those are not the ones I need to reach. The ones I need to reach are the ones who can't afford food. The ones who can afford food, if I can reach them in understanding that they're living in a time of privilege, to be able to come to one of my teachings, it's their responsibility now to share that food with others and share the knowledge with others free of charge if they themselves got it so.

**Steph Benoit:**

Thank you so much for sharing your knowledge with me. Ahh. Yeah. It's a gift. Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Thank you for sharing so freely, so many of your gifts and your wisdom. I mean, the world is richer for it and there's no money exchanged. So, thank you so much. I really, really appreciate it, Audrey. I've learned so much from you, just in a few, a few times of chatting and I hope to continue to take what I've learned and share it freely as you have.

**Audrey Logan:**

And that is huge, huge goodness in my heart, that I feel because I know you know that more-- As, you know, I used to think that-- as my Auntie told me I would say, 10 people come to the teachings but not everyone's going to get it. She goes, that doesn't matter. As long as one out of 10 gets it and passes it on, that one person is going to reach their 10 and their 10 and their 10, and the ones that need to know will grow.

**Steph Benoit**

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