



Philosophical Ponderings of a Farmer

My Story (c) 2018

For those of you who are new to Hopscotch, I thought I would take a minute to provide a little background about how I got to where I am today.

Way back in 2008, I was living an urban life in Portland and decided to volunteer at my local community garden. I struck up a conversation with the garden manager, self-importantly describing my job in nonprofit programming. But her response surprised me (I was used to people being really interested in my less-than-normal career path). She said, "That's great work, but those are just programs; this is real life" as she pointed to her hands in the dirt.

That statement had a profound effect on me. After another year in office work, my partner Will and I packed up and headed for a farm caretaking position on the US-Mexican border - pretty much the moon as far as I was concerned. There, I tended my first garden, and from then on I was hooked. 10 years, three states, and several farming jobs later, I decided it was time to start a farm of my own.

The only problem was... I didn't have a farm. So in 2017, I began leveraging my resources and community connections, gardening in my backyard as well as those of neighbors and friends. I decided to name this multi-plot approach Hopscotch, since I am "jumping from plot to plot." This year, I've moved to some slightly larger plots just outside of town. I am farming 5 properties, totaling approximately 1/4 of an acre.

But what about the cannery part, you ask? In the past, I may or may not have had gardens that were, shall we say, a bit too big for personal consumption. Somewhere along the way, I had to learn what to do with the massive quantities of fresh veggies that just kept coming despite the fact that the fridge was already packed to the gills. So, I learned to can; and loved it! The more time I spent in the kitchen, the more I felt drawn to it. It was an experience wholly different from my upbringing.

Now I'm thrilled to be growing heirloom produce and crafting farmstead pickles, relish, preserves, and seasoning salt for my wonderful new farmers market and CSA friends!