

El Mezquite Garden Report Spring-Summer 2025

From scarcity to abundance with a biointensive garden.

Aguascalientes Mexico, is the geographic center of the country, it is located between two great mountain ranges, in our garden spring is not the typical colorful season, full of butterflies and hummingbirds, it is dry, so dry that in April we only have 10% humidity, but even so there is abundance, it is a time of harvest, and change of crops, those of winter are ready to be harvested, the 60-30-10, which in our garden is 70-20-10, is our reward, it is our food and that of the garden.

For 70% of crops, we prioritize winter grains, such as barley, kamut wheat, legumes, and winter beans. For 20%, potatoes and garlic are the main crops. While we do experience frosts, they are light, allowing the potatoes to thrive. And finally, for 10%, kale and tree collards are part of the design.



This year we had a very good harvest of kamut wheat, we transplanted it in centers of 12.5 cm on average and from each 10 m² bed we obtained 4.7 kilos of seed and 14 kilos of dry

biomass, equivalent to intermediate level yields. Since we cultivated 3 beds, we obtained 15 kilos of seed, we saved one for the following year, and used 14 to make bread and sprouts. The barley harvest was smaller due to a mouse infestation, we obtained 1.3 kilos of seed per bed and 8.2 of biomass, in total from the two beds we obtained only 3.2 kilos of seed, with which we made 52 liters of beer. 355 ml (12 ounces) of beer give us 350 calories, and a biointensive beer is very, very nutritious and tasty, our secret ingredient: a little mesquite pod flour.

The garlic harvest, on the other hand, was very abundant: 57 kilos in a single 10m² bed, 5 ristras (braids of 2 meters each).

March, April and May were extremely dry months, the last rain was in October 2024, but thanks to our great, powerful and kind Tlaloc (Aztec-Nahua rain god), the rains began at the end of May this year, which forced Marisol and me to

change the crops faster than lightning, and as blessings multiply in good times, we had unexpected visits and volunteers who helped us do it faster.



Marisol showing the garlic strings to agronomy students at the university

In the summer, we transplant 70% of the crop into popcorn at 30 cm centers, blue tortilla corn at 40 cm, titan sunflower at 50 cm, and broadcast amaranth. For the remaining 20%, we only plant potatoes, and for the remaining 10%, summer allows for more variety, and we transplant tomatoes,

bell peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, and chili peppers. Popcorn is early, 100 days apart, while purple tortilla corn takes almost 180 days.

- During this season it is important to dig all the beds deeply because it helps us capture and store a greater amount of water, which is integrated into the soil. In our case it also helps us wash the excess carbonates, sodium and boron, which concentrate year after year because we use well water that contains them for irrigation, and although we harvest rainwater, it is still not enough for the quantity and diversity of crops. To optimize water use, we make and use the largest amount of compost available per bed. This year we managed to have 6 compost bins of 19 liters per bed, and that, and deep digging, increases water and nutrient retention during this time. We must make the most of it. That is being EFFICIENT in the use of resources.



Amaranth growing by broadcast and purple corn transplanted at 40 centimeters.

These first six months of the year have been special and distinctive. The garden suffered some crop losses, and Marisol and I reflected on the meaning of three words: EFFICIENCY, RESILIENCE, and EMPATHY. Why? Because an extreme plague of rodents, mice, and squirrels reached our garden. Our dogs, who usually control them, were almost unable to do so. Our winter planting was almost lost; they almost completely ate the fava beans and barley, the fava beans already in the pod, the barley that hadn't

even sprouted, and the newly sprouted alfalfa. We only managed to protect the kamut wheat with netting, which is taller and managed to survive. That's clearly RESILIENCE.

All living beings eat, and they have that inherent right to life, but with the change in land use, the prioritization of industry and consumption and the unconscious waste of energy further exacerbate the problem facing both animals and humans. By cultivating a garden, forming and strengthening a community of biointensivists, teachers, and gardeners, we promote peace and empathy with people and living beings.

EFFICIENCY, RESILIENCE, AND EMPATHY in the garden teach us patience and understanding of our human and natural environment. The right to life is a divine right, and what keeps us alive is food. This experience led us to a conclusion: as the wise Alan Chadwick said, the garden is the teacher, and this winter taught us the meaning of those three words.



The RESILIENT and abundant summer garden