Orin Martin manages the Alan Chadwick Garden at UC Santa Cruz, where he is widely admired for his skills as a master orchardist, horticulturalist, and teacher.

Martin grew up an athletic and outdoors-oriented child in Massachusetts, Florida, New York State, and Ohio—without any interest in gardening, which struck him as “an onerous chore, and kind of sissy stuff, actually.” While he was in Washington, D.C. in the late 1960s, as a student at American University, he “got politicized” by current events: some 100,000 citizens marched on the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam war; Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. In 1969, exhausted and alienated after a lonely struggle to avoid the military draft, Martin followed some friends to Santa Cruz, where he heard about “this place called “The
Garden”—the one being cultivated by Alan Chadwick and his protégés on the UCSC campus. “I wandered up there one morning,” said Martin in this interview, “and I was just bowled over, and fell in love with it, and felt, I have to do this.”

Martin had no training as a gardener. His unfinished undergraduate studies were in English; his interests leaned toward writing and literature. Suddenly infatuated with the Chadwick garden nonetheless, he attended public lectures given by Alan Chadwick on the campus and in town. In 1972, shortly after Chadwick had left Santa Cruz and the UCSC Farm had been launched, Martin began volunteering several days a week at the Farm and Garden. When the apprenticeship program there became formalized under Chadwick successor Stephen Kaffka, Martin applied; after completing the apprenticeship in 1975, he received a grant to start a community gardening program in various locations around Santa Cruz County. In 1977, UCSC hired Martin and a colleague named “Big” Jim Nelson (not to be confused with the Jim Nelson interviewed in this series) to oversee the Farm and Garden.

More than thirty years later, countless productive garden beds, fruit trees, and former apprentices bear vital testimony to the effectiveness of Martin’s ministrations. In 1999 Martin received the prestigious “Sustie” award from the Ecological Farming Association. In this interview—conducted on July 11th and August 29th, 2008, at UCSC’s Science and Engineering Library—Orin Martin spoke with Sarah Rabkin about his work with the Farm and Garden and the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, his cultivation of an organic rose collection and orchards of citrus and deciduous fruit tree varieties especially suited to the local climate, and his mentorship of Farm and Garden apprentices.
Beginnings

Rabkin: Today is Friday, July 11, 2008. This is Sarah Rabkin, and I’m at the UCSC Science and Engineering Library with Orin Martin. Orin, I’m going to start with some basic, personal information, such as, where and when were you born?

Martin: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, October 6, 1948.

Rabkin: And where did you grow up?
Martin: Many places. I lived in Boston, and in two towns south of Boston, Cohasset and Scituate, halfway between Boston and the Cape [Cod], until I was about six or seven. Then we moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a year or so, and then I lived outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, for a couple of years, in Hyde Park. And then I lived on two sides of Long Island: Long Beach on the South Shore and Huntington on the North Shore, for six or seven years. And then I ended up back where I started, in the small town of Cohasset for my last two years of high school. So that’s my meandering trip through adolescence.

Rabkin: What moved your family around so much?

Martin: Several things. My father was a nuclear engineer. He was actually a ceramics engineer. He had gone to New York State University upstate, Alfred, and then did his master’s work at Northeastern [University] in Boston. Then he was involved with the Second World War, in the Navy. He was on the prototype atomic subs and they sent him back to school. And then when he got out, he got involved with an industry which was about—basically anything that was quality control: paper, rubber, things like that. His job was designing and selling systems to big corporations: Firestone, paper-product companies, and on and on, nationally and internationally. At that time it was a massive industry, different companies starting up around the country and hiring people away. So he followed the money, as it were. (laughs)

And also, we moved to Florida because my mom got thyroid cancer in the mid-fifties and there were, at that time, just two really nascent chemotherapy, radiation-type experiments, one at the University of Miami and one at UCLA,
and my dad was able to get her into the one in Florida. So we just picked up in the middle of the night and drove down there. That caused that relocation there.

**Rabkin:** How did you become interested in gardening and horticulture?

**Martin:** (laughs) It wasn’t likely if you knew me growing up. I thought gardening was an onerous chore, and kind of sissy stuff, actually. I had absolutely no interest. I mean, I loved the outdoors. I was very physical and involved with athletics growing up, and really loved the ocean and the woods of New England. But not gardening. (laughs) It came out. I was in college in the late 1960s.

**Rabkin:** Where did you go to school?

**Martin:** I attended American University in Washington, D.C., but I didn’t really go to school. I wasn’t very successful at it. But I got politicized in 1967 living in D.C. That fall was the first big March on the Pentagon. At Easter, Martin Luther King was assassinated; during finals week, Bobby Kennedy. So it was a very politicizing year. I ended up basically doing (to cut the story short) an Arlo Guthrie, Alice’s Restaurant kind of thing with the Selective Service. If I had tried that out here they would have just said, that’s fine, but it was very unusual in Boston.

**Rabkin:** You mean like jumping up and down on the Group W bench and all that kind of thing?

**Martin:** (pauses) Shenanigans like that, yes. A lot of shenanigans. (laughs) I had actually tried to be a conscientious objector, but because I was raised a Roman Catholic I was kind of ruled out of it at the time. And then I also, in the course of
deliberations, realized I wasn’t actually a conscientious objector, I just objected to this war, and mine and other people’s participation in it. It was somewhat selfish. My participation in it was paramount.

**Coming to Santa Cruz and Falling in Love with the Student Garden**

When I was done with that, I was very exhausted, and very alienated. Like I said, there weren’t the support services there were out here. So I just wanted to get away, and I had some friends who were going to school at UC Santa Cruz. They said, “It’s really nice here. Why don’t you come out?” This was in 1969. I got a VW bus and drove out here. And there were two people that were living in their house that worked at this place called “The Garden” on campus, and they were never there, I mean, rarely there. (laughs) They came in late and left before light. So after a while, I thought I would investigate where this garden place was.

So it was the garden, Chadwick’s garden, that we now call the Chadwick Garden. I wandered up there one morning and I was just bowled over, and fell in love with it, and felt, I have to do this.

**Rabkin:** So you had no significant gardening experience before your arrival?

**Martin:** (laughs) There were no precursors. I had no training. I was trying to be an English major. I fancied myself a writer, but I didn’t have very good study skills. The set of circumstances made it that college wasn’t right for me at the time. So I went home and thought about it. I was trying to decide, because Chadwick was a very mercurial personality, whether I wanted to apprentice with him. And would attend lectures, and was kind of around the fringes of the Garden, which was possible then. Then there were also public lectures Chadwick
would give in town, and in the Upper Quarry and in Thimann lab area, a series, which just continued my infatuation with it.

By the time I decided I didn’t want to apprentice with Chadwick because he was just too mercurial, he had moved on to Covelo. Then I started volunteering at the Farm and Garden. ’72 is when, for all intents and purposes, the Farm started up. And I did that in 1972, ’73, in a sporadic fashion, one to three days a week.

And then Stephen Kaffka, whom I guess you’ve talked to, he was kind of the heir apparent to Chadwick, and he was formalizing the apprenticeship through UC Extension. It was a year-long program then, and I applied to be in it. I was in it ’74-’75.

**Community Gardens in Santa Cruz County**

And then I left, and with a fellow named Rock Pfotenhauer, we started— At that time there were Housing and Community Development grants, both from the city and the county, and revenue-sharing funds. In Butte County, they probably would have put new band outfits for the marching band in the high school, or an elevator in the sheriff’s office, or something like that. But [in Santa Cruz County it] was very much oriented towards social services programming. In fact, John Laird, who just finished as our representative in Sacramento, that was one of his first jobs when he graduated from school here: coordinating those social-service groups as per applying for the various monies on the annual cycle that they have.

Anyhow, we received a grant from both the city and the county to start an ambitious community gardening program. And we had within a year, year and a
half, somewhere in the vicinity of five hundred participants, and a total of maybe seven or eight acres city and county. Some were just small empty lots. The biggest one was probably up at Highlands Park in Ben Lomond, which at that time was two acres, and also out at Jade [Street] Park [in Capitola], which was two acres. They’ve been reduced because of other—ball yards and things like that, since then.

Rabkin: Are most of these gardens still in existence?

Martin: Most aren’t, because there were a lot of small—Like, we had three or four lots in Live Oak and such, and they were subsequently developed. There was one on Beach Hill; there was one right on the cliffs off of Murray Street there. The ones that still remain are Highlands Park (actually I haven’t been up there in a couple of years, but I assume it’s still there), and the Jade Street Community Garden in Capitola. We ran it through Capitola Parks and Recreation. They were the registering agency. And then Trescony Garden down off of Mission, between Mission and King. Although in truth we can’t take—That was there and the city—It had a kind of murky past. I basically think a bunch of old Italian guys on the West Side just started it, from what I could learn or what I remember. And the city [Santa Cruz] Parks and Recreation took it over to give it some kind of structure. Then we took it over from them and ran it.

So I did that after I finished the apprentice program in ’75, ’76. And in ’77—Is today the 11th?

Rabkin: Yes.
Becoming the Garden Manager

Martin: Oh, goodness. Well, thirty-one years ago today (laughs), Steve Kaffka left, and environmental studies (it was Stanley Cain, Ken Norris, Ray Dasmann, Jim Pepper was the young whippersnapper then (laughs) et. al), they hired myself and Jim Nelson, not the Camp Joy Jim Nelson, but the Jim Nelson who we call “Big Jim Nelson,” who is six foot five, to run the Farm and Garden. They said they would pay us $600 a month and that we couldn’t have an apprentice program. And there was, at that time, no machinery on the Farm. Did we want the job? We said, “Oh, yes. We’ll take it.”

Rabkin: They said you could not have an apprentice program?

Martin: Yes, they discontinued the apprentice program. Well, it’s always been both an academic and administrative problem, I would say, for the university. That’s no longer true administratively, and despite its clout and curriculum and all that, academically, it still is a problem for the university. I think a lot of the present-tense looking askance at the academic credibility of the curriculum of the apprentice program is based on ignorance, not a familiarity with the actual theory and methodologies of education, and of the content of the curriculum. So we are always wrestling with that, even as recently as yesterday. (laughs)

So we took the job, and we kind of went on from there until now.

Rabkin: So the apprentice program had gone away when Steve Kaffka left?

Martin: When Chadwick was here, there was an apprentice program, but there was nothing formal. He just started going at it and students flocked there. That was the style he was familiar with, and that was how he was educated as per
horticulture, and also as per acting. In that apprentice model of learning, you work with those who have greater competency side-by-side, and then you are put through your paces. It really is about redundancy, and working in place, and rote repetition, memory, redundancy, to achieve excellence within a narrow frame of things. It’s not as comprehensive as, say, the apprentice program curriculum is now. That was the model he imposed. Those type of apprenticeships of the past tend to be pretty administratively and socially harsh. We’ve kind of made it softer and kinder in our tenure here. But that was the model.

When he left, a real principal in the apprentice program being housed within UC Extension and given that kind of administrative home, was Louise Cain. Stanley [Cain] and other environmental studies professors helped her where they needed to, but it was about her drive. Basically she told [Dean] McHenry [founding chancellor of UC Santa Cruz]: here’s my position paper, this is what we’re going to do, and here is how we’re going to do it. It took a couple of years to get it online, but in ’74 it was legitimized as it were, or administratively so, through UNEX [UCSC Extension]. Karl Tjerandsen was the academic dean of University Extension. It was another instance of where, after hearing much testimony over a period of almost two years, he said, “This has validity and I’ll sanction it.”

So the apprentice program went from ’74 to ’76, and then it was discontinued. It was under Steve Kaffka and another fellow, a Frenchman [Pierre Ott] who came here and who had a Ph.D. in soils. He had grown up in a biodynamic community, or an anthroposophic community, which is the umbrella for biodynamic agriculture, in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France, and had a Ph.D.
in soils from the Sorbonne. He came here as a lecturer and he was the assistant manager at the Farm. So he did lecturing duties at College Eight, and as an assistant manager at the Farm, taught the apprentices.

In ’76, there was a huge falling out between Kaffka and the Environmental Studies Board. That’s when they hired Jim Nelson and I, and said, “There are terms.” Because it was then and is now perceived as a problem child, the apprentice program was in abeyance. Right away we got with Louise Cain and Stanley Cain, and other board members of environmental studies, and started to try to build a case for re-instituting it. We were able to do that in ’77. And so the apprentice program in the basic format with the association with UNEX that it has, has gone on continuously since then.

**Impressions of Alan Chadwick**

*Rabkin*: Great. Before we move forward from there, I’d like to jump back just briefly to Alan Chadwick. You say you decided, because you ended up finding him mercurial, that you didn’t want to apprentice yourself to him.

*Martin*: I’m being kind. (laughs)

*Rabkin*: Did you have some interactions with him that you could talk about?

*Martin*: Oh, yes. After he left and then ended up in Covelo, California, with the Round Valley Project, a fellow named Dennis Tamura worked with him. I always joke that Dennis owns the world record for longest time working with Chadwick without going off the deep end psychologically. Other people worked longer, but they went off the deep end. He’s a man of even temperament.

*Rabkin*: Dennis is?
Martin: Dennis, yes. Chadwick really respected him. I don’t know anybody who’s had any interaction with Dennis in over thirty years that doesn’t have ultimate respect for him. How one conducts oneself in the world is what Dennis is about, and then how to grow quality crops in agriculture. He’s an amazing guy. At any rate, Dennis worked up there [in Covelo] for four or five years, and then he had an aunt who had a place in the Branciforte Creek area, a summer cottage, and he came down and stayed there. He just showed up at the Garden one day when I was weeding. This was sometime in ’77, before we re-instituted the apprentice program. He said, “My name is Dennis. I used to work with Alan in Covelo. Could I volunteer here?” I said, sure. Then he came back the next day. He just kept coming back. Finally, through the Friends of the Farm and Garden, our affiliate group (this is embarrassing), they put up a couple of hundred bucks a month to hire him in a part-time position. He eventually became both the Apprentice Program Coordinator and the Farm and Garden Manager. Big Jim Nelson always had to quip when we were going around meeting with academic and administrative type here or at [UC] Davis, wherever, introducing the three of us saying, “I’m Jim Nelson. I run the Farm. This is Orin Martin. He runs the Garden. This is Dennis Tamura. He runs us, or tries to.”

Rabkin: (laughter)

Martin: So when Dennis was here with us he was still very friendly with Alan, and communicating with him. Over a period of, I don’t know, eighteen months or so, he got the staff at the Farm and Garden, and apprentices at the Farm and Garden together with Chadwick for what Chadwick called “salons,” where he
would come down and give a talk and then we’d picnic and talk and this and that.

**Rabkin:** Chadwick was up at Covelo.

**Martin:** He had just left Covelo, or was in the process of leaving it. He was in the process and then at the end of that time period he had left Covelo. He had subsequently went to this utopian community in the Shenandoah Valley, which was aborted, lasted about nine months. And then he found out he had prostate cancer, came back here and ended up at Green Gulch [Farm Zen Center] for a year or so, and ended up dying.

But at any rate, the relevant thing was that during part of that period he had definitely left Covelo and he was doing a land search for the new piece of land, and he had backers and donors. So we looked at a few pieces of land with him in Sonoma and Napa, these really just incredible multi-thousand-acre things from the valley floor to mountaintop. We’d walk around with him and he had every nook and cranny planned out the first time he saw it. So these were really great experiences, because I got a lot of the benefit of his philosophy and style. He taught a lot with metaphor and story and was enamored with the Greek mythology, and, as he called it, classical horticulture, Northern European market gardening/estate gardening type stuff, as far as plant material and methods. So I got a lot of that without having the day-to-day temper tantrum— I mean, to be quite frank, he was just a tortured individual and a terrible person in terms of the audience he was dealing with, which were extremely impressionable, eighteen to twenty-one year olds. He was often psychologically cruel. I could see that.

**Rabkin:** Can you remember any examples of that kind of cruelty?
**Martin:** (clears throat) Yes— He was seriously misogynist. He would use terrible language and rail on women and felt they had no place in the Garden and doing this type of work and things like that. With the rare exception of Beth Benjamin, who, along with Jim Nelson, who started Camp Joy and is still around in the Boulder Creek area, he liked her, but it was very rare that he would— He didn’t really even want women in the Garden. So things like that— (laughs)

He was a very magnetic personality. When you were in the room with him, there was energy. It was a little scary, quite frankly. He would draw these kind of impressionable students in, kind of like they were going to be in the inner circle or something, and then he would just absolutely: “You’re forbidden to come back to the Garden ever again.” It was just like that. I’m sure he had blood chemistry problems. He was up and down on an hourly, daily basis. I mean, all the great things you hear about him are true, also. It’s one of those things where two things can be simultaneously true. I just never could cotton to the way he treated people. In one sense, you walked into the Garden and the moment he met you he either thought you were great or you were terrible, and there was nothing you could do either way. You could be one of the chosen ones and mess up, as it were, and you couldn’t alter his opinion. And the same thing on the other side of the— It just was absolutely arbitrary, capricious, and like I said, I thought it to be psychologically cruel in some cases.

**Rabkin:** Did you find yourself on one side or the other of that?

**Martin:** He actually was always very polite to me and liked me. So I didn’t have that specific issue with him myself. Yet, I didn’t know why that was, that he was
always very polite, and even deferential, because I was running this place he started, or something like that. So I didn’t have that personal experience.

**The Early Years at the Garden**

Rabkin: So, okay, we can jump back now to that point at which you became the manager of the Chadwick Garden.

Martin: Well, in the early days Jim and I both—I was nominally up there and he was nominally at the Farm, but we worked interchangeably. It wasn’t: I’m the manager of this and you’re the manager of that. Some of that was just because of the lack of labor. And even when we started—In truth, we had an apprentice program in the year and a half, or fifteen months before, when the program was in abeyance. Basically, we started doing it, and the word got out and people started coming to the Farm saying, “Well, can we work here, and would you teach us stuff?” We said, yes. Then they’d go home at night. And after a while they said, “We come at 6 [a.m.] and we leave at 7 [p.m.]. What if we just kind of put our sleeping bags over there?” And we said, hmm. Again, the university was such that—I guess in a sense you could say it might be looked at as irresponsible, but in those early years there were a number of instances where we adopted the thing of, what do they say? “It’s easier to say I’m sorry than may I?” Or something like that. And there wasn’t as much scrutiny as there is now.

Rabkin: So you were saying that you and Jim moved back and forth between the Garden and the Farm.

Martin: I was nominally up here and he was nominally down there. But the point is that for two or three years there weren’t real distinctions in that regard. I
still work a great deal at the Farm, orcharding, teaching, etc., although the parameters are more clearly defined about who is charge of which site now: the Farm, the Field, and the Upper or the Chadwick Garden. All the staff works collaboratively, variously.

Rabkin: What were some hallmarks of the Chadwick Garden when you arrived that made it unusual as a garden?

Martin: Oh! (laughs) Well, actually when I arrived as manager it was in a very let go— Let’s see, Chadwick left in approximately ’72. And ’72-’74 it was on a real, minimal subsistence— Maybe a couple times a week people would go up there and water some of the perennials, and maybe there’d be a cover crop here or there. But it was really let go. And that was even true when I was an apprentice in ’74-’75. It was a little bit more structured. We’d work up there. But my apprenticeship was essentially at the Farm, not the Garden. I actually didn’t like going up to the Garden. I liked working at the Farm, so I hardly ever went up there. (laughs) But it was just really on a low ebb from when Chadwick left in ’72, to ’77, when I started as a manager. So, for instance, the main garden, which is about a half-acre of raised beds, the one that people see from the road, was gone. It was all just weeds. All the flower borders, the base borders, things like that, were gone. There were some fruit trees, not very many, that Chadwick had put in, that were tended and cared for in the kind of derelict years there. So there weren’t a lot of hallmarks (laughs) on the land anymore, and it was just that kind of determination to start over again—

Within a year we had reclaimed what we call the main garden. And at that time, ’76-’77, all the rage then was what they called senior-directed seminars. With a
faculty sponsorship, you could organize and have a class. For instance, the Farm Center was built under that heading as a class. Ken Norris was the faculty. A fellow named Ross Newport, who runs Community Printers, and is actually my neighbor down the street—He’s a great guy. He was just over last night—that was his brainchild, his senior thesis. He connected with Alf[red] Heller, who is now [the donor for] the Heller chair [in Agroecology] that Steve Gliessman has, right? Well, the original connection with Alf Heller was this young upstart student, Ross Newport, finding out about him and saying, “We have this Farm here and we want to do this thing. Would you fund this farm center we’re building as a class?” And he said, yes. Subsequently he bailed us out several times, Heller, in the late 1970s, when we had come down to the last week of the fiscal year and we had no idea of where we were going to get the next fiscal year’s worth of money. And right around that time he had just been—China was opening up quite a bit, post-Nixon. He had just been to China on an agricultural tour with Robert Rodale, and they were more still in the old, traditional style of agriculture than the modern one. So seeing us and coming and visiting here really resonated with him, and he funded us. [Environmental studies professor] Bob Curry was an intermediary between us and him when he was provost of College Eight.

In ’77, we connected with a group of students who wanted to build a greenhouse at the Garden. And one woman, Mary Cohen, she had ambitions to go on post-undergraduate years and become an architect, so that was kind of the driving force. She secured services of various architects, and indeed, it was a senior-directed seminar, and Jim and myself and the volunteer apprentices we had, and
this class of students, designed and built the greenhouse at the Garden. That was a hallmark. It was a passive solar greenhouse, and while those are la-de-da now, it was quite a new thing, cutting-edge as it were, to the point where it took us until about ’79 to actually finish it. It was a total salvage job, that is, literally everything except for the cinder blocks in it was recycled, to the point of, we would recycle nails. We’d take them out of boards and straighten them and use them. It was amazing. That was the ethic then, was recycling, to the max. And also, we had virtually no budget. So when it was completed, again through the guidance and forcefulness of Louise Cain, we had a very big ceremony to dedicate it. Chancellor [Robert] Sinsheimer was there, and the press, and all that kind of stuff. That was definitely a hallmark in those years.

And then we, like I said, just started the process of reconstructing the Garden over a period of years. Probably by ’80-’81 it was flourishing again in terms of its full dimension. Subsequently, in the eighties through the present time we’ve chosen to emphasize deciduous dwarf fruit trees there. That’s been the last fifteen years or so, a driving thing that figures large in the landscape and in the curriculum of the apprentice program, and some of our public service outreach, and writings and literature. To the point where we have quite a collection of apples. I actually don’t know how many varieties we have because, we haven’t done an updated inventory in the last two years. But I’m going to wager somewhere in excess of 120, maybe close to 150 varieties of apples.

**Rabkin:** I’ve heard the joke that you haven’t gotten beyond “A” in the varieties.

**Martin:** Yes. (laughs) I should have brought you one of these beautiful ‘Saturn’ or ‘doughnut’ peaches. We’re having an incredible year. We’ve branched out
beyond “A” and we have a sizeable collection of stone fruits: peaches, nectarines, plums, pluots and the like, and a pretty sizeable collection of citrus.

At any rate, there were no hallmarks, is what I’m saying, other than the spirit of Chadwick’s ghost and stories and all that kind of stuff. And, I guess, the Garden Chalet. That structure dated from when McHenry donated it. It was used when they were still building the initial buildings on campus. They had a whole bunch of these prefab cabins that were mostly, as I understand it, down on the Field House lawn. They were offices, dorms, buildings—whatever you would need before any buildings were built. So McHenry gave one to the Farm and one to the Garden. And we still use them. It serves as the apprentice library at the Farm, and the equivalent one at the Garden that Chadwick called “The Chalet” (and it stuck) is, as I joke, if you want to do something inside at the Garden that’s where you do it. It’s a kitchen, a little bit of a meeting room, library, study room. Seed storage.

Rabkin: It’s the inside.

Martin: It’s the only inside building we have.

Rabkin: So clearly the Chadwick Garden of 2008 looks and functions dramatically differently from the one that you inherited.

Martin: Well, in that it functions, it’s dramatically different— (laughs)

Rabkin: (laughter)

Martin: It was really derelict. That’s true.

Rabkin: So tell me about some of the changes that you started to make, and improvements.
Martin: Okay. Well, I think they would fall into two categories. One is the Garden itself and the horticulture involved with it. And the other would be in terms of instruction, education, modes of. And that usually falls under the heading of the apprentice program.

Horticulturally, it was about trying to bring the area back into cultivation that had been let go, as much as possible, and as much as we could decipher. Chadwick never wrote anything down and he talked very extemporaneously and extensively. But to try to be consistent with what we understood to be his design scheme for the Garden, which was pretty basic. It was just a central axis or path that wanders from end to end across the property. But there were areas that had a theme: this area had citrus; this area had vegetables. They were kind of walled off, or visually isolated from one another, either with plantings or with natural existing vegetation. Even to this day, there are still madrones and firs and some of the indigenous vegetation here, within the Garden, not just around the Garden. So the idea was that you would wander from one end to the other on the central path or axis, and there would be different areas. The main garden was an area of raised beds and mostly annual cultivated flowers and vegetables. And then the citrus terraces, the rose collection, fruit trees, Greenhouse propagation, a perennial area. So it was trying to use that as a kind of vehicle to re-establish the Garden.

**Organic Rose Collection**

The way it’s evolved is: a half an acre plus of intensive raised beds with annual vegetable, flower, herb culture. A burgeoning rose collection. A number of years ago we got a grant from the Stanley Smith Foundation, which funds only
ornamental horticulture projects, to do a lot of “stuff,” I’m going to say, around organic growing of roses. They didn’t care about the organics. All they cared about was the ornamentals. But what we signed on for, and I think achieved quite well, was to install a collection of roses. And one of the overriding things was to only use roses that backyard gardeners could readily get in retail operations, not all the great exotic old heirlooms and this and that, but just, what can somebody get who grows those types of roses? So that involved three classes of modern bush roses: floribundas, hybrid teas and grandifloras. So we have a collection of that. And then to do public education about an organic approach to rose growing. They are probably the most disease-prone crop you can imagine in the world, on the planet. And Santa Cruz’s climate really kicks that up a notch because of the cool coastal conditions. Fungal problems abound. So it was about everything in terms of methods and substances about organic rose growing. I wrote a curriculum packet for the apprentice program that I also use with interns and student groups, around organic rose growing. And then we were supposed to write a pamphlet for the public. It kind of turned into, I joke, a pamphlet on steroids, a kind of a book.

Rabkin: Is this what turned into your 2005 book about growing organic roses?

Martin: Yes. That’s it. That was the pamphlet, as it were. (laughs)

Rabkin: I see.

Martin: Like I said, a pamphlet on steroids, or a “bookette.” And I gave, and still give, a number of public education classes. Typically one or two in the winter on pruning and planting. I try to reach off campus to do them. Because for a lot of people there is a physical and a psychological barrier to coming up to the Farm
and Garden. So I do one at San Lorenzo Garden Center, or Lumberman’s, as it’s now called. And one at the Garden. And then a spring class when all the roses are in bloom, because you can talk more specifically about that. So there’s a rose collection that’s still growing, in association with that.

The Citrus Tree Collection

Chadwick put in a few citrus trees when he first came, because having come from England, he was so excited about being able to grow citrus. And over the years, we’ve increased it too. We have, I don’t know, twenty or thirty varieties of different types of citrus. This is not the best climate for citrus. So the aim is basically extended varietal trials in terms of sweet oranges, mandarins—all different citrus classes—what will ripen in Santa Cruz? So we plant trees, and sometimes we keep them and sometimes we rip them out, based on the results. But we have a collection now and a database of recommendations.

We got some money from Chadwick’s nephew last year and I used it to buy citrus that we’re going to use for sales in our market garden. And we have maybe a project with a garden company. A nursery down on Mission Street, the owner, Charlie, is trying to connect us with some nurseries. It will probably be more fitting for the Farm because of space, but we’re trying to take it to the next level—a varietal-trials plot of citrus that would do well on the Central Coast, the result of which could be various field days, literature, etc. Anyhow, we have a citrus collection.
The Fruit Tree Collection

And then we have quite an extensive deciduous fruit tree collection, which occupies a lot of the landscape now, maybe about a third of the instructional stuff in the curriculum for the apprentices when they’re up there. I use it as a vehicle to write about in “News and Notes” for The Cultivar.

We’re thinking of maybe going back to that foundation or another set of foundations to do a series of primers. So you have the primer on the roses. You have one on vegetables, one on fruit trees, one on cut flowers, one on culinary herbs. I kind of got interested in writing, and it’s linked up with the Garden if it’s in the plantings.

Rabkin: So you got to pick up your ambitions as a writer.

Martin: Yes, I guess I did. That’s true. I didn’t think of that. (laughs)

Rabkin: How did you develop the expertise needed to grow this garden?

Martin: I’m not sure. I don’t have any formal training in anything, actually, let alone horticulture. Seat of the pants, I guess. A lot of passion and trial and error. Self-taught, pretty much.

Rabkin: Wow. Did you learn a lot in the Chadwick days?

Martin: Oh, yes. Although subsequently I’ve gone back and learned some of the science. I mean, it’s kind of a blend. And that’s what the apprentice program is, not just the how, but the why behind the how, you know? In order to, say, render up a raised bed French-intensively, you need to know some basic principles about the physical properties, chemical properties of soil, and that’s science. To inform your digging. But yes, I’m pretty much self-taught.
The Apprentice Program

Rabkin: Well, let’s talk about the apprentice program. Every year you welcome in a new crop of apprentices and teach them about ecological horticulture, organic gardening. I’m wondering what you most want the apprentices to come away with from that program?

Martin: That’s a complex question. We have a very eclectic group of apprentices come. We have no educational or experiential prerequisites to get into the program. We’re just looking for a good match: do they want what we have; do we have what they want? And more so over the last twenty years: how are they going to use this when they go out from here to, let’s say, change the world, improve various sectors in what we’re now calling “the agro-food system.” We didn’t design it and say, well, we’ll take these types of people. It’s, who is attracted to us, and then kind of a symbiosis back and forth of how we sculpted the program, curriculum-wise and instruction-wise. We find we get people who want to be small-scale producers, farmers and market gardeners. We have people who (and this is huge in the last fifteen years, and actually there’s a job sector in it, actually some decent paying jobs with benefits) [are in] the whole urban garden movement, not just community gardens, but community empowerment groups that want to have a gardening component. Mostly urban, but also rural groups. And actually, that’s one area where we’d like to reach out in the near future, is at a Native American reservation where conditions are poor, and in every respect intensive gardening makes sense, because the land resources are so poor and nutrition is a huge—Diabetes is an epidemic, etc., etc. And you have a lot of people on unemployment, so you have labor.
At any rate, we draw, and now have a curriculum to reflect it: people who will be, let’s call them, producers; people who will work in community gardens, community organizations, mostly urban, but some rural; and then people who are, in one fashion or another, going to become educators. We have had people over the years who use it as part of their teaching (not from here, but from other universities), and are able to parlay it into class credit associated with their teaching credential, people who are involved with environmental science camps, Life Lab projects—all that sector. Environmental educators, I guess you would call them. People who do development work overseas. And usually the way that happens is they’ll go to the Peace Corps, go somewhere and be put in charge of agriculture and they know nothing about it. They get through and they learn from the people who live there. And then they realize they would like to get trained and go back overseas with an NGO. So they come into the apprentice program and then go with an NGO to do development work around food security and food production. And sometimes people who are on their way to the Peace Corps, go first to us and then to the Peace Corps.

And then we have a fluctuating international pool of apprentices. For about ten or twelve years we had an association with the Margolis Foundation. Their goal was to fund study by students from Africa in agriculture. And they paid for the total package, which was close to ten thousand dollars, with airfare and living expenses and books and all that, for two scholarships for the apprenticeship each year.

Rabkin: This is from the entire continent of Africa?
Martin: Yes, it was from the entire continent of Africa. Although in the early years it was largely Kenya, partly because there are two graduates from Kenya (one who married an American) who were graduates of the apprentice program in the early 1980s, who are now at a place called Manor House [Agricultural Centre] in Kenya, which is kind of like a Farm and Garden of Kenya, I guess I would call it. Paulie Noyce (Noyce is the guy who invented the computer chip, I believe), has funded it. It’s this great program. It has horticulture business planning too, to empower Kenyans to be farmers.

But what tended to happen was they would come and they would benefit greatly from the program, and we from their presence and what they shared with us culturally and horticulturally. Then they’d start looking around and say, hmm, it’s kind of nice here. And they’d end up usually finding some way to get some professor here to sponsor them. They’d go to Cabrillo [College] and they’d end up going to [UC] Berkeley or— One fellow just finished his Ph.D. ten years later at Cornell. He always used to joke when he was an apprentice that he was going to be minister of agriculture in Kenya. It kind of looks like he’s going down that road.

Anyway, the point is that we have had, over the years, through scholarships and other means, a small international contingent of apprentices that would then go back— Some of our criteria were, not so much looking for people who were looking to climb up the ladder in an organization, but real grassroots organization in rural situations where they could go back, that on-the-ground type of demonstration, and teaching. So, while we don’t have any expertise, and the climate doesn’t really allow it, in tropical agriculture, we have students from
tropical Africa and also Mediterranean South Africa, who have come over the years.

One of our bywords for the apprentice program is “we teach the teachers and we train the trainers.” That’s the multiplier effect from out here. And these students from Africa, wherever in Africa they came from, it’s really graphic. They go and they start small training centers that are magnets for people to come to. You can see it. It’s quantifiable how they increase food production and food security in the areas that they’re in.

So all those sectors just happened to find us, and we’ve developed a relationship with them and sculpted the curriculum.

So my joke is, you could say our mission statement is: we teach people to grow plants; the applications are many and varied. I’ve just sketched some of why that might be. But we certainly want them to have what we call higher-order, both practical and thinking skills, regarding—in the old days we used to say organic farming and gardening; now we’re calling it sustainable production. (Same thing, really.) That’s to be able to grow sustainably, whatever the scale (garden, farm), and whatever the crops are. But more than that, to have been exposed to a mindset that allows them to analyze and think critically.

A lot of times I think of what we’re doing and what we’re trying to impart, there’s all the nuts and bolts of it, but to me it’s a lot like the natural historian. There’s a certain mindset there. And I don’t know how you actually quantify and articulate that. It’s big on observation and then conclusions from observations, and analogous stuff to natural systems, and adaptations. We want them to have
the nuts and bolts of how-to; practical and high-order thinking skills regarding organic gardening and farming. And yet, it’s more than that.

Then to work in different venues that are going to raise people’s awareness in that regard, in a whole variety of different ways. Sometimes just by being a small producer in a certain area and embodying the ethics we impart, and the techniques and the methods and substances used, that in itself is a model and a soft form of education. It creates greater awareness about sustainable methods. Then there’s stuff that’s less quantifiable. They have an appreciation, respect, a sense of wonderment about the matrix of air, soil and plants. We’ve always prided ourselves on being plant people, [with] a love of plants, wild and cultivated. Now, that’s not something that will get you a job or anything, but that’s part of the ethic. But the real key is that it’s not just enough to do it. It’s, how are you going to use it in a social context that, pretentious as it might sound, that changes the world, makes it better in terms of food systems.

Rabkin: In your years of mentoring apprentices, what have you learned about how to be a good teacher?

Martin: (laughs) Some days I think, not much. Again, that’s another thing. It’s funny, I mean, not just my lack of education and training in anything, but all of us who have worked at the Farm and Garden in an instructional capacity since Chadwick left, basically—none of us have ever had any education in teaching. And yet, that’s really primarily what we are, is educators. It’s not that the horticulture and the science isn’t important, but we’re educators. So it’s just seat of the pants. (laughs) And, as I said, some vague passing familiarity with this apprentice model of education.
But I’m also a really lucky guy because I’m married to my wife, Stephanie Martin, and she’s a teacher. She’s now an elementary school teacher. She has been a special-ed teacher, a resource specialist, and for a couple of years was the math tutor for Santa Cruz High School, which meant that anybody could drop in at anytime and ask her about any subject that was being taught in math in the high school, and she’s so facile at it, it was not a problem. It just blows my mind. Anyhow, this is a smart woman who is a good teacher, really respected in her profession. The last ten or twelve years she’s been a second and third grade teacher at Green Acres [Elementary School]. So they have a lot of professional training and I’ve had access to that through her, and opened up a little bit of literature about effective styles of instruction, and what’s in vogue now in terms of that which is researched and quantifiable. So I’ve kind of brought that into the program.

Rabkin: Have you found that theoretical stuff to be a useful complement to what you’ve learned by the seat of your pants?

Martin: Absolutely. Although sometimes it’s like, oh yes, we do that. Okay, this is just the jargon and the construct. Which is nice. Look, they say that’s effective. We find that to be true, too.

Rabkin: So it affirms what you’ve already been doing?

Martin: Yes, sometimes. But also—I’ll use an example of the last few years. She was at various conferences or workshops about “the mini-lesson,” as they call it. It’s like, “I’m not going to teach you everything about the physiology of fruit trees today and how to manage them.” I mean, you do that, too. But then it’s just scoped down. There’s a whole protocol. You say, “This is what we’re going to do
today.’ And there are some really strict and difficult-to-enforce time limits. You talk for no more than ten or fifteen minutes. You then make the students regurgitate, break up into small groups and spit back what you said, what are the salient points. And then you say, “I’m going to show you how to do this technique that’s related to that theory,” and you show it. And then they engage. I don’t think it’s unique to us, but we have these phrases in our apprentice style of teaching where we say: “I do; we do; you do.” We get their attention and we show them a technique, and it’s embellished by some concepts. Then we do it with them, and then we kind of push them out and see if they have the competency to do it on their own.

That’s just an example. That’s what I meant by (laughs) seat of the pants here. It’s like, none of us have any training, but I’ve investigated stuff like this through my wife and through literature. There’s a fellow at Harvard. His name is Howard Gardner. He’s the guy who wrote *Intelligence in Seven Steps* and many books like that. He has written knowledgeably about the apprentice model of education. He writes knowledgeably about the scholastic model and the apprentice model, and how they’ve mostly been on parallel paths but occasionally very innovative schools over time have merged them. And that’s what we’ve been trying to do at the Farm and Garden. We still put primacy on the practical. That’s our focus. But like I said, in order to know how to dig a bed without wrecking the soil you have to know some fundamentals of soil science.

We have a somewhat different percentage of how we allocate that, I’ll say, than environmental studies. And that has always been a bone of contention. We use theory to drive the practical, but we’re practitioners, whereas the university is
about scholarly research. I’ve always thought that the apprentice program and the Farm and Garden is misplaced in the rubric of the UC system. It would fit much better in the junior college or the California State University, CSU system. The difference between Davis and Cal Poly, in terms of agriculture, is radical. It’s about management stuff up at Davis, or straight research. Cal Poly is about that, but also applied in working situations. We would have fit better into that rubric, or the junior colleges, which are about job training in the various industries. I think a lot of our struggles, the Farm and Garden’s over the years, is just that we’re misplaced. We can do what we do to the nth degree of excellence. I’m not saying we do, but we do a pretty good job. But it still isn’t going to pass muster in the UC system. It’s the wrong rubric. And that’s insoluble, although we have a better relationship now.

I find it ironic, too, that, for instance in the last five or six years the Farm and Garden permanent staff has co-taught a class with Carol Shennan, E[NV]S 133B, A Practicum in Agriculture. We essentially teach sixty percent of the lectures and all of the labs, and do most of the testing and grading, but whenever there are discussions about that, the Farm and Garden staff are “not qualified,” but we’re capable.

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Martin:** (laughs) We’re not qualified to teach this class, and we’re told that all the time. But apparently we’re capable, because we’re allowed to by the professor and we get rave reviews from the students. It seems to be a good match.

It’s kind of like an African American church call-and-response with the students. Every once in a while I’ll come home and I’ll say to Steph, “I did this thing and it
worked!” She goes, “Yes, that’s called a teachable moment.” I say, “Oh, it’s quantified.” (laughs) But I can’t make it work when I want it to. It just happens sometimes like that. But you get wise and you see what works.

I think one of the things that has made us effective educators is that we are passionate about what we do—I mean, down to the plants. We love plants, and this plant more than that one. And methods, and this commitment to an organic way of doing things. Apparently, that is visible and palpable to students. They seem to respond to that. The curriculum is the Farm and Garden. It’s the most environmentally rich curriculum you could imagine. It’s all there. I feel most comfortable when I’m teaching in situ in the Garden. I have a tree. I can talk about it. I know about it. I have a broccoli plant, whatever it is. That’s your lesson plan, as it were. I’m somewhat uncomfortable even with notes and other instructional aides in the classroom, but we do a blend of both.

**Rabkin:** I’m wondering if the relationships among the apprentices, as well as the relationships between them and their teachers and mentors, play some part in the educational experience of the apprenticeship? It sounds as if you bring in people with a variety of backgrounds and interests, and strengths and weaknesses.

**Martin:** Yes.

**Rabkin:** I guess this question is bouncing of something that Jim Leap said to me, about that there are other programs comparable in some ways to this apprenticeship, but he thought that the community among the apprentices was a big part of how and what they learn here.
Martin: Yes. It’s an unintentional temporary community for six months. That is to say, this person didn’t come to live with that person—they came to study agriculture and horticulture. But they are thrust together in this unintentional community, and they live on site and they share all domestic duties: shopping and cooking and cleaning. There always have been and are marvelous opportunities for learning and growth in terms of the social dynamics of living together. Sometimes we learn good things; sometimes we learn things—well. And it’s requisite that there needs to be a certain amount of buy-in to make it work. We have trainings now, over the last ten years. People come in and train them in various aspects. Not just, this is how you cook, although we have that too. But, this is group dynamics, some stuff about group dynamics. Here are some typical cycles that you’ll go through. The ethic at the apprentice program is, try to work through consensus. So there’s trainings around that. But the eclectic nature of the apprentice group and the richness of the various experiences, life and professional experiences, is a huge dynamic, value-added curriculum, as it were, just informally, obviously.

I was doing a thing for a number of years where I had a good almanac and I brought it in at the beginning of the program and said, “Okay, just on a volunteer basis on any given day, someone find where you live. Show us where it is, tell us about it.” Oral, cultural history. It just gets people going. It’s a group that’s very open to everything around however you’d like to define diversity. So it’s real rich. People feel free about sharing their background professionally and culturally.
But beyond that, there’s actually a structure that we’ve sort of helped them organize, where they have evening classes. Like if someone has had experience with agriculture in the tropics because they were in the Peace Corps, they have a venue to speak, slide shows, things like that. So it actually has some focus and direction.

It is a bear [the residential aspects of the apprentice program] to manage. It’s a bear for them to self-manage and us to manage forty people. Everybody wants their individually tailored program and curriculum, which of course is impossible. But the richness, especially when it goes well, is just amazing. It’s an education in itself. People always say, “How come you never go anywhere?” I say, “Well, I don’t have to go anywhere. The whole world comes to me through the apprentices."

**Rabkin:** Do they tend to stay connected to each other after they leave the program?

**Martin:** Very much so. The apprenticeship itself is a very life-defining experience. In a lot of ways I think it’s analogous to some of the bonding and learning and passion associated with [Natural History] Field Quarter. You find it with some groups more than others. But one group that comes to mind is the group of 1989. That group is in contact with each other, with two-thirds of the members that there were then. There are ongoing social friendships, very, very deep bonding, even though people are far flung around the world, and in varying professions and lifestyles. That’s very dominant. We had our fortieth year celebration last year, and I joked we should have one session or one table at the various dinners of people who got together romantically when they were at
the Farm. And then we could have another one with those who stayed together and those who didn’t. (laughs)

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Martin:** There’re a lot of relationships that spring up that are lifelong or not. But beyond that, there are professional business relationships that are spawned at the Farm. People that didn’t know each other; but they come, they do the apprenticeship and then they go out to do something—farming or teaching or some entrepreneurial thing—together in pairs or groups. That’s really dominant over the years, lasting business and friendship relationships that were formed here.

**Rabkin:** Can you give me some examples?

**Martin:** Yes. There were two fellows the year before last: one, Mike Nolan, who stayed on as a second-year last year. Another fellow named Gabe Eggers. Mike had been an aggie up at UC Davis, and had had a lot of actual farming experience, tractor work and stuff like that, in his undergraduate years, though coursework and outside jobs. And this fellow Gabe was from Durango, Colorado. They became fast friends. (Mike stayed an extra year as a second-year apprentice.) But this year they had secured a piece of land outside of Durango and they have a small, about five-to-seven-acre production farm [Turtle Lake Refuge] and are doing a lot of public education about sustainable food.

There were some women in the late 1980s who went on to form what’s now called Sauvie Island Organics outside of Portland, on some little island in the river there, that is a leading light of organic, CSA education up there.
We have a pretty extensive, over time—and then we really worked on it this last year—an alumni roster of what people are doing now. There are quite a lot of business partnerships that were forged at the apprenticeship.

**Rabkin:** Can you tell me about some other individual apprentice alumni who stick out in your memory?

**Martin:** For good? (laughs)

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Martin:** (laughs) We always joke that former apprentices have gone on to do all these great things, and then sometimes it’s one to three in Soledad [Prison]. Like any population, there are the less than shining lights. We’re no different than any other segment of the culture.

Yes, sure I can. Probably one of the leading ones would be Cathrine Sneed.¹³ You’ve probably heard of her. She was essentially a counselor at the South San Francisco County Jail, back when she was in social work. She came and did the apprentice program and then turned it into a gardening program there, to use it as kind of a vehicle and metaphor for trying to teach the prisoners that if they could take care of these plants, they could take care of themselves. But also had moved towards job placements, some in the production sector. And probably the most practical thing that came out of that—for a number of years they had a tree corps, arborist tree care of street trees, city trees, park trees, and they had contracts with the city of San Francisco. The idea was to take these folks when they got out of jail and place them in a job, so there would be lower recidivism. And they had remarkable, and still do, have a remarkable success rate compared
to the general rate of recidivism. And then she started what she called the Outside Project, which was a garden or series of gardens on the outside. I would say, hands down, to me, she’s the most spectacular apprentice. She’s a dynamic woman. She was recently on the Oprah show and I guess Oprah gave her a ten-thousand-dollar tractor for their project, or something like that. She’s a mover and shaker.

A woman who was an apprentice in either ’77 or ’78, Margaret [Meg] Cadoux, went on to—Not atypical of that time, she had a degree in French literature from Brown and was traveling through the area, found the Farm and Garden, fell in love with it, and did the apprenticeship. After she was an apprentice, she went to school for here for a year in the natural sciences, just took courses. And then she got accepted to an IPM [Integrated Pest Management] master’s program at Cornell. And then she met this fellow, Gary Hirshberg, and basically they founded Stonyfield Farms Yogurt. That’s them. They’ve now sold out to Dannon.

Rabkin: I didn’t know that.

Martin: Nobody does. I mean, it’s not a secret but it’s not on the label. But they worked out a deal (I can’t believe they did) where they have total control. They just make money. They don’t run the business anymore and all the pain-in-the-neck stuff. Obviously Dannon has more resources. And so, you look at that business. They’re one of our main donors. And then they do similar things in terms of the green economy to support the environment.

I have to say, though, that some of the people that I have the fondest memory of are not so much the eco-stars, of which there are quite a number, but just people who are doing something somewhere in a real basic, almost monastic, Zen-like
way, just doing it without the glory and all that. They could be a backyard gardener, a schoolteacher, or a small farmer.

We’ve had a long association with the local Homeless Garden Project. Right now, two of our apprentices over the last few years are running it. Patrick Williams is retired, so they are running the whole garden operation. An apprentice who was a second-year apprentice of mine at the Garden, probably eight or ten years ago, Kim Eabry, ended up being the director of the Homeless Garden Project for a number of years.

Another woman who was an apprentice is the head of BUG, the Boston Urban Garden group, which is a similar type of empowerment, community garden organization.

He wasn’t an apprentice, but Dennis Tamura now runs Blue Heron Farms, which is a really stellar organic farm in the area. You can see the quality of the produce reflected at the farmers’ market. There are people like Chez Panisse [restaurant] that line up to buy his produce from him. He’s in demand like that.

Maybe I have more unsung, as I was saying, heroes. A guy named Joe Schirmer, who was an apprentice about ten years ago, he was just a high-school surf punk, and actually could have been a professional surfer, but he didn’t go that way. He came and did the apprentice program, never went to college after he was in high school. He’s now the proprietor of what’s called Dirty Girl Farms. He was just this eighteen-year-old punk when he came, (laughs) and now he’s one of the lionized organic producers, and rightfully so, in the Central Coast of California.
I guess another one of my favs would be, I don’t know if you know Damian Parr who is about to become Dr. Parr at Davis. He was an eighteen-year-old high-school weirdo (laughs) when he was an apprentice, and he’s just methodically gone, worked his way through undergraduate work here and now Ph.D. work at Davis. The thrust of his graduate work is about experiential-type learning in agriculture, which is not dissimilar from what we do.

Rabkin: Are there other apprentices besides Cathrine Sneed who you can think of who are doing urban kinds of stuff?

Martin: Yes, in fact we get some criticism (and maybe it’s justified), that we draw disproportionately, in the last ten or twelve years, from the San Francisco Bay, East Bay Area urban garden types and groups. There are quite a number of them. There used to be SLUG, the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, this huge nonprofit. They employed hundreds of people. They had some scandal and they went out of business. Anyhow, it broke up into a lot of little groups and this one that now exists is called the Garden for the Environment in San Francisco. It’s kind of a mini-apprenticeship program. And there are many of those that are both structured and a little less structured throughout the whole San Francisco/Oakland area.

It doesn’t really fit with your question, but I just thought of a couple that met at the Farm, Josh Slotnick and his wife, Kim [Murchison], who were apprentices in the mid-1980s. He went to Cornell to an international ag management program and then they moved to Missoula, Montana. He got a job as a lecturer at the university in Missoula. I have these great pictures I always show to the apprentices. They have about a three-to-five-acre hand-worked raised garden, a
huge garden that’s a farm. It’s called Clark Fork Organics. It’s on the Clark River, I guess. I think it’s changed, but for the first half-dozen or so years that they were there, in the mid-eighties to the mid-nineties, they were the other organic farm in Montana. (laughs) I think there’s four or five now. I mean, you look at it and it looks like a dead-ringer for the Farm and Garden in terms of how they go at it and the structures and whatnot. And then, somewhat analogously, they have an association with the university where they have interns and apprentices come and work with them. And not atypically, I would say that four or five people over the last ten years will have that experience there and then they want more, and then they’ll come and do the apprenticeship here.

We’re very strong nationally in the urban garden sector. And again, there are effective placements of people in reasonably paying jobs in those areas.

**Rabkin:** Do your apprentices usually manage to find some form of reasonably gainful employment once they leave here?

**Martin:** Yes. I would qualify that by saying that there’s some kind of quotient between reasonable recompense and they’re satisfied with the work. I mean, there’s a joke. I know three agricultural jokes. And one of them is: how do you make a small fortune in agriculture? And the answer is you start with a large one. (laughs)

**Rabkin:** (laughs)

**Martin:** I mean, people don’t go into this because they want to make a lot of money. It is an issue, especially as people get older and want to have families and have health insurance. We have informal information. We’ve talked about
trying to do something more quantifiable. But basically, I would say, yes, they do. And some of that is about the training they get here. I think that’s something to be noted about the success of the apprentice program over the four decades that it’s been around. It’s certainly about the quality of the instruction and the opportunity of the landscape here, literally the landscape of the Farm and Garden. But it also is maybe equally as much about the caliber of the individuals that come here. This has been a refrain of mine lately with administrators on campus. If you look at (and actually we’re starting to do that) the academic clout of the institutions that apprentices have gone to with graduate and undergraduate degrees, related and unrelated, it includes, but is not limited to, Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, Berkeley, Ohio State, Michigan, Princeton, Cornell—major institutions that are of much higher academic caliber than UCSC. And then they’re at a place in their lives, often the mid-twenties to mid-thirties, where they have much more direction and focus than undergraduate students at UCSC, or any undergraduate. Although I love dealing with students (and of course we’re here when we need to and we need to do it more and all that), I do have some questions from what I’ve seen over twenty years about, well, what is the effectiveness of their involvement in terms of any ongoing nature when they [undergraduates] go out from here, other than maybe they eat organic food. But with apprentices it’s different. It’s a very high percentage in which it takes. They go and do stuff in this sector that we’re involved with. A lot of that is about them—their intelligence, their adaptation to wanting to learn the skills here, and then their ability to apply, to find jobs. There are no job placements that we have here. They have to find these jobs themselves. But they have that intelligence, drive, and capability to do that. The success of the program is as largely about
the caliber of the students that come. It’s impressive. They’re quick studies. They’re very brave.

Rabkin: I’m wondering if there are any major ways that that program, the way it’s set up, the way it works, has changed in the time that you’ve been working with it?

Martin: Oh, radically. I would characterize it in the early years as more like the traditional old-style apprenticeship, where, in fact, we didn’t have classes. Lyn Garling was one of the precipitators of classes, and I remember the incident. It was in ’83, 84. We were out teaching in the field about growing winter squashes and pumpkins, and she’s talking about the flower and the parts of the flower and pollination, and one of the apprentices looked at her and said, “Huh? What’s an anther?” She looked at me and said, “Orin, we’ve got to back some of this stuff up with some classroom stuff.” And she pretty much—We had had some classes before that, but she was the precipitant in really—She had a master’s in entomology, and was, I would argue, the most intelligent person, not just woman, that I ever met. She pretty much started to put it together herself. She just holed up and said, “Okay, we’re going to have something on pathology next week so I’m going to go away for a week and [prepare].” She was bright enough to be able to absorb and spit it out. In fact, then she would connect with various academics and professionals in more technical, science-based stuff and bring them in. It was a huge watershed in the nature and the scope of the classes that we’d give to the apprentices.

But in the beginning, it was a work-in-place thing. There were no classes. You just worked. Instruction was on an as-needed basis, on and on, working and
talking side-by-side. When I was an apprentice, that’s the way it was, somewhat. When I started teaching, it was largely that.

Rabkin: Who were your mentors when you were an apprentice?

Martin: Well, I studied, as it were, under Steve Kaffka and Pierre Ott, as I mentioned. That’s who taught me what I started out knowing.

There’s so much jargon in horticulture and agriculture and the apprentices wouldn’t know what we were talking about. It was like we were talking a foreign language, so we’d do a little—let’s sit down and talk about the principles of soil science: structure, texture, soil profile, things like that. And then that led to, we should actually have some classes on soil science. So from the late seventies to the late-eighties, Big Jim Nelson (he was a man of prodigious skills, I might add, a great jazz piano player), he actually had a photographic memory and was quite a bright guy. He had a background in biology. He would teach any kind of technical class. We started to institute more science-based, technical type classes. We’d just do them as we thought it was appropriate, seasonally. And then we started to get more conscious in developing a more broad curriculum. So we started having what we have now, the schedule that we have now, which is that the apprentice program is in session from eight to six Monday through Friday. But on Wednesdays in the morning and in the afternoon we have two- or three-hour lecture-style classes, that are sometimes, depending on what the topic is, given by staff. But more it is academics and professionals, and breaking down the components of agriculture: entomology, pathology, soil science, etc. Then we have another series of classes that happen Thursday
afternoon. We call them crop talks. They are largely taught by the staff, and will be on garlic, on the tomato family, on crops.

About ten years ago we received a grant. It turned out to be a ridiculously small amount of money for what we actually committed to doing and did, which is we developed what we call a curriculum manual, which is not the entire apprentice program, but the outlines. There’s an outline for the instructor, an outline for the students, testing, all that kind of stuff. It’s gotten really good reviews across the whole spectrum. It’s being used in institutions of higher learning. The presumption is that you already know how to garden or farm, but you want to teach it. It teaches you how to teach it: not it, in and of itself.

At any rate, the curriculum has become much broader and much deeper, and well articulated, over the last twenty years, with associated readings as well. It’s gone more in the direction of the scholastic model, the apprentice program. But again, we still put primacy on the practical. They spend hundreds of hours in the classroom but thousands of hours in the garden. So that’s the balance. The curriculum is natural science and social science—Actually, that’s something in the curriculum in the last five or eight years. We are offering more things around social justice and social justice within the agri-food system, is the way I would qualify it. There are classes and readings in the curriculum now in tandem with the horticultural science and the agricultural science. So it’s changed quite a bit, although, like I said, still the roots are in a practical training program—people who want to do. They may want all this other stuff too, but they ultimately want to farm and garden, whatever the venue.

Rabkin: Let me throw you one more question for this round.
Martin: (laughs)

Rabkin: What do you enjoy most about working with the apprentices and doing your job?

Martin: Well, I’m going to put those two questions in two different categories, although they overlap, obviously. What I enjoy most about the apprentices was seriously brought home [to me] to the point of tears coming down the aisles last summer at our fortieth-year celebration (even now I’m getting a little choked up), is to see what they go out and do. It’s spine-tingling. It’s demonstrable. It’s palpable. In a small, underground way this project has changed the face of horticulture and agriculture in this country, particularly organic agriculture, in an on-the-ground kind of way. That’s a good reason to come to work in the morning, to be able to contribute to that.

What I really enjoy is, I’m just in love with plants. Probably right now I think my friends at the Farm might do an intervention if I plant any more fruit trees. (laughs) Big Jim Nelson was here for the celebration we had in the Garden last year and afterwards he came up and said, “Orin, you missed a few places.” I said, “What?” I found a few places you haven’t planted a tree.”

Rabkin: (laughs)

Martin: I’ve fallen in love with the fruit trees in the last decade and a half. It is, perhaps, becoming an unbalanced obsession. First of all, in my estimation, what you do to manage them is probably the most difficult and complex thing in agriculture and horticulture. You are always changing the morphology of the tree and that affects the physiology. You don’t really change the morphology of a
lettuce or a carrot. You grow it and you have to bring all the forces into bear. But it’s this amazing dynamic, back and forth, almost a dialogue or a dialectic, if you will, with a tree—morphology and physiology and management of the practices that affect it, and the whole spectrum of what’s out there in terms of being able to produce or teach people how to produce high-quality, really good tasting fruit, whatever the limitations in your area. I’m joking that this is my new apprenticeship, learning this, after all the other stuff. So presently that’s what drives me.

It’s really about the privilege of being in the environment, farm or garden, on literally a daily basis over what’s now decades. Obviously you affect the landscape and the environment because you kind of create it and maintain it, but its dynamic effect on you—Quantifiably and beyond the quantifiable, it can be very moving at times. So that’s it. I love plants, and I seem to have some proficiency in effectively teaching people. But again, beyond that, whatever we do here, what people do when they go out from here, is very inspiring.

**Rabkin:** Well, Orin, thank you very much.

**Jeff Arnett**

**Rabkin:** It is August 29, 2008, and Orin Martin and I are in the Science and Engineering Library at UCSC. And Orin, just before we turned on the recorder, you mentioned that Jeff Arnett, who is currently a teacher in the writing program at UC Santa Cruz, was instrumental in getting you into the Garden.

**Martin:** Introducing me to gardening, period. And introducing me to “The Garden,” as it were. Now we call it the Chadwick Garden. Yes, he was
instrumental in that regard. As I think I mentioned in the last [interview], I was an unlikely candidate to have anything to do with gardening. Growing up, I hated it. I thought it was an onerous task as a kid, sissy stuff and all that, as a high school athlete. (laughs) I’m not proud of that either, I might add, in retrospect. So he introduced me to this spot down on Walti Street off of Laurel, by the Santa Cruz High School pool. It was adjacent to Neary’s Lagoon and much less developed than it is now. It was this rambling set of out-buildings that probably should have been condemned, but we were renting them for twenty-five dollars a month or something like that. (laughs) He said, “We should make a garden.” His girlfriend was Dina Haskowitz. She was a student here who was from the South. She and I got the chore of making a garden, so I got into gardening. They said, “You should come up and see this garden [at UCSC].” Anyway, one thing rolled from another, but Jeffrey essentially introduced me to gardening. I’m eternally grateful, of course.

Rabkin: So that garden in town actually pre-dated your relationship with what became the Chadwick Garden?

Martin: Yes. Actually, a funny story from that garden is that we did the classic thing and bought the seeds at the hardware store, and had the little stake at the end of the row that we put the empty seed packet on after we seeded them. Dina was from the South, I think Alabama, but I don’t remember where. And she was dead set on growing okra. I was like, “Sure, let’s go.” So we seeded our okra, and our okra came up, and we tended our okra. And the okra got bigger. And, you know, we were raising a good crop of okra. And then one day I was off walking
in the woods and everywhere I looked I saw our okra. (laughs) We were tending some—I don’t even know what weed—

Rabkin: (laughter)

Martin: —but we had a really beautiful row of weeds. I went home and I was so ticked off and disillusioned that I just went down our row and pulled them all out. Later Dina came home, and she came running into the house saying, “Somebody’s vandalized our garden!” She was really attached to the okra crop. I said, “It was me. It wasn’t okra. It was some common roadside weed and that’s that.” (laughs) Subsequently, okra has always had a funny place in my heart in terms of gardening. We get people from the South and they want to grow okra. In the seventies and eighties I would let them do it. Now I give them a cautionary tale and say, “We’re not going to do that.” It gets about six inches tall, and it puts out an “okra-ette” about two inches long. (laughs)

Rabkin: (laughter)

Martin: It needs not just heat, but humidity. There is a Southerner at the Farm in the apprenticeship this year, and they are raising okra under row tunnels, and they actually got one that was three inches long this year. (laughs)

So anyhow, Jeffrey and I have remained friends. In fact, he almost married my sister once. We see each other. He was a Friends board president for a number of years and really a valuable supporter. I really respect The Unnatural History of UCSC book that he just did.¹⁶ He’s a poet at heart, but he’s a good technical writer. That’s not an easy or fun job that he does, and he just stays at it. And then
his whole dedication to cross-county and track here is really admirable. So he gets points from me. I like Jeffrey.

More on Former Apprentices

Rabkin: Well, thanks for that story. I see that you have brought some stories about some of the former apprentices. And I’d love to hear about them.

Martin: Well, yes, we talked last time about people that met at the Farm and Garden and went on to form partnerships of one type or another. In many cases they were life partners, and also they were farming and gardening together. I have a couple of articles here. One is an excerpt I found kicking around in the wind at the Farm. It’s from this month’s [August 2008] Sunset Magazine on two individuals: Nancy Vail, who was an apprentice in 1997-98, and then ran the field operation and started the CSA at the Farm and just left a year or so ago, and her husband Jered Lawson, who was an apprentice at the Farm.¹⁷

Jered grew up in Los Angeles, and Nancy in Riverside. They come from suburban middle-class backgrounds, no connection with growing, farming and gardening. Then they come and do the apprenticeship and they go on to do things. Them—it’s like top-notch agriculture and horticulture with a social conscience—more than a social conscience, a social zeal to make things better. There are specific instances of working with inner city kids, and the hard work of education and all that, and connecting it with food growing. I think, ironic as it is, that we don’t get enough credit in the apprentice program for being agents of social change. We don’t just use the gardening or farming as vehicles. That, in and of itself, the science, the rigor, is important. But often you see people that go
out from the apprentice program and they do that; they do that really well, and they have some kind of social agenda to make things get better. I think Nancy and Jered represent that.

A whole bunch of folks from the Farm are flying out this weekend to attend the wedding of a woman named Jen Smith and a fellow named Nate Frigard. They were apprentices in ‘02ish, or ‘03ish, and met at the Farm, and are going to get married tomorrow. They are working with this entity called The Farm School in Western Massachusetts. It’s kind of a similar type of thing. There’s farming and production and food security issues, and training of kids at risk, and high-school kids, and all of that.

Another set of folks in that regard would be a fellow named Shawn Harrison and Marco Franciosa. They were apprentices together and they have this farm outside of Sacramento. It’s called Soil Born Farms [Urban Agriculture Project]. Same kind of thing, where they work with youth and they’re doing production.

And then two guys I have a fondness for, one named Ned Conwell and the other one named Ryan Casey. The name of their farm is Blue House Farm and they have land they’re renting from Butano State Park. It’s right adjacent to it. They have a really happening thing. They do some stuff in alliance with Pie Ranch in terms of selling stuff at their roadside stand. They have a CSA as well. They didn’t meet at the Farm. They actually grew up together and went to junior high school together, went to UCSC together. I just met someone who knew them and said that they are “heterosexual partners for life.” (laughs) They’re fast friends, just complete opposites in their temperaments. But as friends and as business partners they’re just stellar guys. And Ned especially, he’s involved with a
wilderness psychology, permaculture type thing up there. The Farm and Garden fits with that. They’re two outstanding guys.

Anyhow, those are some folks that I thought of who connected at the Farm and went on to do good stuff together.

**The Collaborative Organizational Structure of the Farm and Garden**

**Rabkin:** Great. That’s helpful. So let’s jump back to the Farm and Garden itself. One of the questions I wanted to ask you is about the fact that you are one of several mentors who guide the apprentices in their work with the Farm and Garden, and in the classroom, and with the farm cart and CSA. What can you tell me about the communication and collaboration that’s required to run that complex, multi-person operation? I’m curious about how you coordinate with the other people who are also working with the apprentices to make everything work. I know it’s a wide-open question, so you can take it whatever direction you want.

**Martin:** Well, the answer would be: over the years differently, (laughs) because there have been different sets of people over the years. I’m probably the one who is more or less the constant. It’s had different kinds of incarnations, as it were. It’s an interesting place to work in the sense of: what is your job description and who’s your boss, and stuff like that. Ann Lindsey used to be my supervisor. Now Diane Nichols is my supervisor. They used to be my students. It’s kind of a curious relationship. (laughs) Anyhow. People are hired. We go through regular hiring processes. There’s a job description and qualifications and winnowing out
of the various candidates. I wouldn’t say that’s ever been—this could be good or bad, I view it as largely good as the way it’s turned out—there isn’t really a narrowly defined mandate: this is what you do; this is your job; this is your responsibility. I mean, obviously we can’t be blithe about that. The way it works is, it devolves somewhat to sites. I’m more managing the Chadwick Garden. Right now Christof Bernau is managing what we call the Down, or the Farm Garden. And in tandem, Jim Leap and Liz Milazzo are managing the field operation. But, for instance, I work down there when it’s appropriate in terms of instruction with trees.

And as per our interests that we’ve developed (and this what I’ve meant about no strict mandates), it’s curious to see over the years—someone comes into the job, and here’s the job and they’re doing it. And then, what’s their interpretation of developing the job? A lot of it devolves to: what’s their passion; what’s their interest? And then, just how things kind of work out or evolve, literally, on the landscape, in terms of plants and methodology and all that. So we have some overlapping, complementary skills. In one sense, you could say we are interchangeable parts—I could do this; somebody else could do what I’m doing. And yet, there are some areas where each of have, really, fallen in love with some aspect of growing and teaching, and we’re considered to be “more knowledgeable experts” at it.

**Developing the Apprenticeship Curriculum**

We have had a long journey, as it were, in developing the curriculum. We haven’t reached stasis yet. It’s evolving and tweaking. It’s a great program, but we just went through a set of things this last week or so and said, “This has got to
change. We’ve got to make some changes. This is not getting through; this is not effective.” I think all of us have that kind of a drive. It’s like, okay, sometimes pretty good isn’t enough, so let’s see how make it a little better. Or, you can just see where you hit and miss, with effective teaching. I think we are good teachers, but we’re not always effective teachers, and you have to kind of stay on top of, okay, we just did a great thing in terms of whatever the presentation was, but how effective was it in terms of the sticking power with the students? We are always looking at that.

There are two components of the curriculum. The classroom-type stuff features outside speakers and us on diverse topics, [and] has evolved over time in terms of, well, what are the basics of the craft of the profession in terms of the science of it, models that are out there that are good to look at, and more focused areas of scientific expertise, coupled with the garden curriculum. Everything that we do there is superimposed on the running of the place. It’s not abstract and removed. It’s real and vital and close at hand. We don’t start over every year at this point in time. It’s a dialog over time over what are the things that needed to be included in the curriculum, both in the practical sense and in the classroom sense. Okay, who’s going to teach it? What is our capability in terms of teaching it, and where do we have to get somebody else.

We often get in trouble within the university structure. In fact, quite frankly, right now our present new administration is having trouble with this. We work totally laterally, in a circle. We don’t really work in a hierarchical sense. We have a very loose consensual way of coming to agreement about things, which can be extremely time-consumptive. But usually when we get something accomplished,
we’ve discussed every possible aspect and nuance of it and covered it thoroughly.

So I’m not sure I’m answering your question, but it’s about over time, I guess (and it’s not just our ideas): what is consensus on what should be in a program that teaches the growing of plants—fundamentals of soils, things about diverse species of plants—annuals, woody shrubs and trees, ornamentals—the whole gamut of things. In the old days it used to be about animal husbandry. We’re not doing that any more. And then, who’s going to take the ball and run with that topic? A lot of times it really has meant, who is going to learn that adequately enough to be able to demonstrate it and teach it. We’re all fairly knowledgeable. I’ll concede that. But there have been times over the history of [CASFS] it where it’s like (laughs) okay, I want to do this, we’re going to do this. I’m going to— It’s kind of like we kick it out there a little bit ahead of where our capability is, and then we’re fairly intelligent and fairly motivated, and we kind of scramble to get schooled up, as it were, by self-study, and by consulting with other experts in whatever the topic is.

**Rabkin**: So it’s not a static situation. You’re constantly pushing.

**Martin**: Yes. Although I have to say it is a little static right now. Or we’re at a plateau, let’s say. And that’s not unreasonable. You know, populations and dynamics have their ups and down and plateaus and all that.

And then also, we’ve kind of now become, lamentably, prisoners of our curriculum. (laughs) These are the things that we’ve deemed compelling and need to be in the curriculum. Well, how can we add anything? It’s just chock full
without dropping something. But, oh, my God, what are you going to drop? You can’t drop this; you can’t drop that.

This sounds really vague and meandering. But it’s largely based on, like I said, two components: what should be in a program like this in terms of the practical fundamentals of growing plants? And then, who has got an interest in what, and has influenced their site in terms of planting schemes and methodology in that regard. So therefore that site becomes a good teaching example of those things.

For instance, the Upper Garden, the Chadwick Garden, there’s a lot of fruit trees. Well, I have had an interest in that. And maybe it’s not the most responsible thing, but I regard that as like my dividend or compensation—there’s an opportunity to do my apprenticeship, in the case of fruit trees, over the last ten or fifteen years. It’s juicy. It’s fun. It’s exciting. It keeps you going and motivated. And then the net result is you have a pretty large information base. You have it in three dimensions there for teaching and such. But all these things often funnel into sales and income, too. And not even just our sales and income, but say—here’s an example of a niche crop; if you wanted to develop this type of an operation you could go in that direction. That’s a good kind of general framework to present to the students and apprentices.

We do a lot of polling of the apprentice group, feedback-type stuff—what would you like to see included in the program? What’s missing? Critique. And through that kind of input, we sometimes try to adjust our program overall. Certainly in the last ten or fifteen years, things around urban gardening have been in huge demand, so we’ve gone more in that direction. As I was mentioning before,
things that have an abiding social agenda, using farming and gardening in that regard.

Even now, it’s better, but there’re lamentably very few women in positions in agriculture. There’s fewer than there should be, by far. If you looked at our student body, I bet they would be nip and tuck—maybe even the majority over the last twenty years would be female over male. Or it’s pretty close. Some of that is by design. We try to have about equal gender representation in the program. But we actually have a lot more women applicants than men applicants.

So we’ve made moves in the last few years to try to go out and find both women speakers on topics that are relevant, that we’re now having in our curriculum that are relevant, and people of color. Neither is real easy, let me tell you, especially people of color. Women are a little easier in this section of California at this time.

**Rabkin:** Yes. What you’ve described sounds like, as you say, a lateral or horizontal, consensus-based kind of working relationship among the various people who are involved in this teaching project.

**Changes in the Culture of UC Santa Cruz**

**Martin:** With feedback from students. We don’t have the connection now that we had in the seventies and eighties with the environmental studies staff. During that time, the Ken Norris’s and the Jim Peppers et. al. would say, “Oh, you guys should have something about this, or have something about that.” We don’t have the same kind of informal relationship across the board with the E.S. staff at all.
In fact, I hardly know any of them at all. But that was a valuable perspective to have inputted into our setup.

**Rabkin:** And why has that relationship with environmental studies people gone by the wayside?

**Martin:** Changed? Because some of the folks who are the principals have gone by the wayside, literally and figuratively. I think it has to do with the evolution of the size of the campus. And then environmental studies, back in the day, as it were, the Ken Norris’s et. al.—it was more of an emphasis on natural history. It’s really an allied type of intelligence, I think, with what we do. In fact, I just read this beautiful quote that I want to get put on a bronze plaque somewhere, from Ken Norris in the new *Natural History of the UCSC Campus* book that came out with Tonya Haff, [W.] Breck [Tyler], and Martha [Brown].

It was Ken saying how he felt about the efforts of the staff and the students at the Farm and Garden, and how allied it was to that natural history perspective. So that emphasis in the board was more allied with our activity. I guess Ken probably started Field Quarter. I imagine he did, right? And aren’t we just really another type of field quarter? Or aren’t they another type of us, when you look at it like that? And that style. The Ray Dasmanns, the Jim Peppers, the Ken Norris’s, the Stanley Cains, et. al. could relate more, even in the context of UC, to experiential education, [to the] value of breadth, continuity, and depth of practical experience tied with theoretical stuff. Of course, it’s not hard if you’re in the natural history realm to see the value of that. And then, it’s just serendipity, circumstances. We all became friends with those guys, or they took the effort to embrace us. But we
were social friends, as well, with a lot of them. They would have their board meetings on the Chalet porch or the Farm Center porch, and things like that.

I mean, let’s face it. The university in its tone and tenor and size and its structure was radically different [then] than it is now. I’d be curious, if those same folks were here now, could that set of relationships be established with such an entrenched bureaucracy in a more rigid university institution? I don’t know. Their mentorship, in an informal way was invaluable. But their topical input was, I think, really valuable.

And now, geez, I don’t know. Maybe it’s like (laughs) oh, the old days were good or something, but it just seems like everybody is so busy and stressed and with blinders on and focused on what they have to do right in front of them. There can’t be any kind of lateral vision like that. And we’re probably guilty of the same thing too, in terms of not reaching out and maintaining relationships as the board has turned over.

**Rabkin:** So the culture of the university has really changed with the times.

**Martin:** Oh, yes. I would wager to say that you could not start the Farm and Garden right now, and you could pick a lot of programs on campus that you could say similar things about. It would just be an impossibility. I mean, I think when I came [for the interview] the last time a month ago, I told you that we had had our housing for the second-year apprentices shut down by the fire martial, and they were kicked out (of living, not working there). And then there’s been all this hubbub with our present administration of CASFS about, “Well, we never had the responsibility— No one said that people could live there.” Well, no, that’s not true. We went to Chancellor McHenry and we said, “Can people live
here too?” And he said, “Yeah, sure.” (laughs) That wouldn’t happen now, I would wager to say. And a lot of things like that. It’s good that we were able to get in when we were able to get in. And like I said last time, Dean McHenry had an abiding interest in agriculture because he had been a Lompoc [California] farm boy, and he had an interest in agrarian as well as intellectual stuff. And he wasn’t afraid. What I like about an administrator like that, or a person like that, is they are fully vested in everything that academia is, but not afraid of this other stuff over here. He was a linchpin individual in terms of the yeses that needed to happen initially for the Farm and Garden to come into being. More than that, just taking money out of his discretionary funds for the first four or five years to establish it.

**The Myth that the Farm and Garden is Anti-Science**

**Rabkin:** A different sort of historical shift that I’ve been hearing from you and others around the Garden and the Farm has to do with the initial anti-science attitude that I guess came largely, if not completely, from Alan Chadwick. When I hear from you and others, I don’t hear that sentiment at all.

**Martin:** That we are anti-scientific? (laughs) I hope not. And if you do, let me clear the record right now.

**Rabkin:** It seems as if somewhere along the line, and perhaps with the departure of Chadwick, there was a sort of integration of and affirmation of the useful principles of scientific practice with the practice of agroecology and horticulture. Is that accurate?
Martín: That’s somewhat accurate. Like I said, I think it’s difficult within the context (maybe I’m being kind of haughty here), but I think it’s difficult within the rubric of the University of California (more for administrators, I think, than academics, but perhaps both) to see that you can have fundamentals of science—concepts, theory—be there, drive the thing, and still: it’s farming and gardening. It’s a craft. It’s a skill-based thing. It’s about a life lived in place. There’s a great line from a Wendell Berry poem about standing in a field longer than a man’s life. I mean, we’re talking about soil—geological time to form it—and stuff like that. And the Gary Snyders and the Wendell Berrys and many others who can articulate things around that—To me, Gary Snyder is a good example. He’s got a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology and he’s a poet. So the idea of not being a— My kids have this great handbag that they had when they were kids, from the Whitney Museum in New York. Their godmother, my wife Stephanie’s best friend from Stanford, was the education curator of it for number of years. Now she’s the head of the newly just opened Jewish Museum in San Francisco, Connie Wolf. But she gave them this bag and it has all this wild drawing, and it says, “Art can’t hurt you.”

Rabkin: (laughter)

Martín: And to me that really sums it up. You can talk cation exchange, base saturation, texture, structure of soil. (And you need to.) And you can also talk about soil in a poetic fashion. I mean, Chadwick was—Let’s face it, he was kind of a raver. He set people off. I think I mentioned this last time. He and Kenneth Thimann would have these debates. Thimann would be saying, “xylem flow,” and Chadwick would be talking about “an exuberance of plant juices.” If you
took a step back and you listened to Chadwick talking about the hydraulics within the plant in terms of the water and nutrient movement from the soil matrix into the plant, out of the plant, and you listened to Thimann—they can’t hear each other, but they’re saying the exact same thing. And they’re both right. But they’re just so hung up on their different cosmologies, paradigms, whatever you want to call it. It was too bad. Of course, personality always factors into that, and they were two strong personalities. The camps in the early years—they kind of came from that, became entrenched. It was classic miscommunication.

**Other Myths**

Even to this day, there’s a misperception about the Farm and Garden. You know, I’m sorry, but (laughs) it was never run by a bunch of hippies engaged in [drug use].

**Rabkin:** Do you think that was a widely held misconception?

**Martin:** I guess. I don’t know. I think it speaks to a lack of face-to-face dialogue. I know that that was not the case at the Farm and Garden because I was there for a bunch of this time. I’m not saying that nobody ever took any illegal substances there. Just like in any institution, people do. But that extreme perception is so pejorative, really, and damning. Yes, I guess you could say that the national perception of Santa Cruz over the decades has been something about hippies and dope smoking and all that. But we’ve obviously come beyond that.

I’ve been around for thirty-one years or so, and, really, amongst the staff, not only has there not been an antagonism towards science, per se, it so needs to be so logically included in the rubric that—I mean, I’ve read soil science textbooks
at night for thirty years. So I’m not anti-scientific! I’m trying to learn as much as I can in that regard over time, and always you’re trying to tweak it. Once you think you’ve mastered a topic, how can you teach it? How can you teach it better, is what we’re involved with. I’m not saying that I wasn’t aware that there’ve been those kinds of perceptions. The specific wording here is a little extreme in my mind.

I grew up in the sixties on the East Coast, and I studied a lot of Greek and Roman culture. [In the] Greek model of a citizen farmer [both] brains and brawn were of value. You could do some things that were physical and you could have a rich intellectual life. Quite frankly, that’s one of the things that’s appealed to me about the context of growing things here in the university, rather than just being a farmer somewhere. I think a lot of people are drawn to the Farm and Garden. Have there been students that are anti-scientific? Oh, yes. Absolutely. Sure. I mean, you look at any population and you have an extreme of different behaviors, attitudes, etc. But it really doesn’t emanate from the staff. Is that to say that there’s never any criticism of, say, an academic or scientific approach to a topic? No. (laughs) I think it’s a whole lot of wasted energy. You do see that a lot in different communities. In our arena, academic researchers and farmers, there is this uneasy alliance and this antagonism [that] can sometimes be quite mean-spirited back and forth between the two groups. But they really need each other, and thrive off each other.

**Rabkin:** That’s what the whole [Agricultural] Extension Service is about, isn’t it? Sharing information between—
Martin: Yes. Very much so: what are the needs of agriculture? Okay, what can we do to research that?

I’ve known a lot of the staff of the Farm and Garden over thirty-plus years, and I’m hard-pressed to think of one, quite frankly, that could be categorized, even remotely, as anti-scientific. Again, the ability of somebody to intellectually criticize any rubric—well, that’s legit.

**Differences between the Farm and the Chadwick Garden: Geography and Politics**

Rabkin: Let me ask you a very specific and maybe a literally pedestrian question. The Chadwick Garden, or the Up Garden, as it’s called, is in the midst of the UCSC campus, while the Farm is removed by some distance from both the Up Garden and the rest of the campus. And I don’t know if that makes any difference at all. I’m just curious whether you’ve experienced any significant consequences of that geographic relationship.

Martin: Hmm. There are differences across the whole spectrum, I’m going to say. I mean, just: site, soil. The Farm is a sandy soil because it’s overriding quartz, and that’s kind of what you get out of quartz—sandy soils. The Garden’s underpinnings are mica schist and a little bit of granite. And you tend to get a clay soil, a more rich soil out of it. So that affects the whole affair. The Farm is wide-open, tabletop, panoramic view in the altered California grasslands, home of the gophers, we find, that we’ve invaded. The Garden is ecotonal—on the edge of the meadow, chaparral, and a mixed evergreen coniferous forest. Those things, literally and figuratively, affect everything. But maybe you’re talking about where they’re situated and how people traffic?
Orin Martin

Rabkin: Yes, I’m thinking organizationally, as well as in terms of the soils.

Martin: Yes, organizationally, let me get back to that in a minute. But in terms of just visitations, people coming and going, I would say the Garden is more casually populated than the Farm, because a lot of students just go through. Over the years, one of my fondest memories forever was Noel King. Every year he had some class in spring quarter that had him go at a certain time of day from Cowell/Stevenson [Colleges] to Merrill/Crown [Colleges]. And he would make a point of coming through the Garden, and in this warm and daring and yet, little bit formal way, would just check in with me about, “How’s this going?” But students come and go like that, too. There are a lot of students at the Up Garden that develop a casual and informal relationship with the landscape by virtue of the fact that it’s open all the time. They come and sit on a bench and they study. Or they just walk around, or they befriend the cat. It’s just absolutely casual. I would say that happens more up there because of its proximity to the surrounding colleges than at the Farm.

At the Farm, it’s a social hub more than the Garden because of the Farm Center and the people living there in community. Whereas people just work at the Garden and then go to the Farm in the evening. So there’s more of that kind of casual student infiltration, if you will, more of the after-hours social. There’s more of that down there. The hub of it, in terms of structures and offices and all that, has been more at the Farm than the Garden. So I think the Garden has more often been perceived by in-house administration as more like big, remote, maybe ancillary, a little bit.
It is lamentable. I think I mentioned this last time, that our administrative staff has moved up the hill to Oakes [College]. That’s created *quite* a cultural divide. Just having everybody be together at the Farm—you walk by someone, or you’re in the Xerox room and you just chit-chat about this and that. Or you know, pop out to pick some strawberries, get a break. It was just rich and good in terms of relations and all that. So that’s something we’re wrestling with. Well, here’s the deal: I don’t think we’re collectively aware that we’re wrestling with it, but in my opinion we’re wrestling with it in the last nine months or a year since that happened.

But at any rate, all that administrative stuff for decades was at the Farm. So that was more the hub. And then there was almost a little bit of an attitude, about second-class status for the Garden, I would say. Yes, a little bit.

**Community Outreach**

**Rabkin:** In our earlier interview, you mentioned the organic rose-growing workshops that you teach, and that you try to teach in town at Lumberman’s and places like that. Tell me more about outreach and interactions between the Farm and Garden and local communities beyond the university.

**Martin:** I think that started with Chadwick. He would give public lectures on site in the Thimann labs lecture hall, in the Upper Quarry when that was still functional, and various venues in town and around. I think it was an ethic that was instilled from the beginning. It was maybe broached by Chadwick. Certainly by the time I was an apprentice in ’74-’75, I think largely Steve Kaffka stepped in after Chadwick left and developed this ethic, which is that we come here, we
learn, and we do all this good stuff and it’s great, but there’s this ethic to reach out and teach in the community and beyond. So for instance, when I was an apprentice (it was a yearlong program from ’74-’75), it was required that in the spring after you’d been here for about nine months, each apprentice (or actually we paired up), each tandem pair of apprentices had to teach a series of four classes on the basics of gardening—soil type, bed prep, compost. And you had to do them in two venues. One was in town somewhere—you had to arrange and create a venue—and most of us would do it (because it was the only community garden at the time), at the Trescony Street Community Garden. But there were a few other sites like that. And then you had to do a similar series on campus at the Farm or the Garden and advertise to the undergraduate student body. So that’s been part of the fabric from the get-go.

And then of course, both formally and informally, people have come up: “I have this leaf. There’s something wrong with it.” That kind of inquiry. People come up, or people see you in town, or people phone you up. And I think out of that, probably what was a really good response to that (and I think you’d have to credit, as so many things you’d have to credit Louise Cain with) is what we now call The Gatehouse Lectures. That is, mostly through the auspices of the Farm and Garden, we have these public classes, workshops. We call them Gatehouse lectures or classes because they largely happen at the Gatehouse, but not exclusively. As I said, we are trying to expand the venues.

**Rabkin:** The Gatehouse is the building [at the Farm] that’s named after Louise Cain.
Orin Martin

**Martin:** After Louise, yes. She was so embarrassed that we named it after her before she died. (laughs) But it’s the least we could do. I always tell the current crop of apprentices: “You know the story of Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother? Louise Cain was akin to that for the Farm and Garden here.” (laughs) It’s the truth. Only she was more intellectually and academically and politically powerful than that fairy godmother in Cinderella.

But at any rate, so to this day, actually I’m getting together with an ex-apprentice, Matthew Sutton, from ’03. He was a second-year apprentice with me in ’04, and he now has his own orcharding business. We do a lot of stuff collaboratively, outside jobs and such. But we’re putting together the specific menu, as it were, for this next year’s worth of Gatehouse talks, and we want to get with Martha [Brown] to discuss that. But just that idea of reaching out with what we have. Presently, I’m the main staff person involved with that. We have such a huge cadre of former apprentices in the general area that we now can pull on them to help teach that too. And we’re actually talking about a more formalized training, to pick topics that we would train a set of former apprentices in, so again, we could be interchangeable. Anybody could give the fruit tree talk. Or we could give it in tandem. More and more, as time goes on, I’m interested in more collaborative, team-teaching. We’ve taught a class with Carol Shennan since 2002. And I’ve been very disappointed with it in this respect, in that I thought it would be team teaching but it seems like team teaching devolves to: “Okay, I’ll teach this. You teach that.” (laughs) That’s more like relay teaching. I mean really truly collaborative, multi-presenters, and an orchestrated set of presentations and demonstrations.
Over the years, the staff has been involved with that, and ex-apprentices, and then we also pull in experts, or knowledgeable people in appropriate topics. We are educators, and we do that formally and informally. It seems that that message has gotten through to the apprentices, because you see that wherever they go they’re involved in projects like that. Or even if they just have a farm, like the Clark Fork people, then they develop an educational outreach aspect to it, to whatever community they live in.

Friends of the UCSC Farm and Garden

Rabkin: Louise Cain and the Friends of the Farm and Garden have come up in numerous contexts in our interviews.

Martin: As well they should, yes.

Rabkin: But I haven’t really asked you to tell me just a little bit of the history of that organization.

Martin: Well, I don’t know, because I wasn’t there at the inception. Well, the affiliates groups are—the Long Marine Lab has it; the library has one. It’s a designation within the university for these support groups.

This is absolutely my take on it, but in coming here in the late sixties and early seventies, I really think it was about, at that time, the way that the culture was set up, you had these guys who were professors, and you had their wives, and they didn’t have professions per se. But they were often, in the case of Stanley and Louise Cain, Phyllis Norris and Ken Norris and others, really on a par with their mates, but the culture wasn’t such that—Louise Cain and Phyllis Norris, in another time and another place, would have been chairs of departments, CEOs,
heads of top political caucus groups. These were considerable individuals. So when I first arrived on the scene of the Farm and Garden, Louise Cain, Phyllis Norris and people like that were the bulk of the Friends of the Farm and Garden, and a number of other faculty wives, and occasionally the male faculty members as well. Stanley and Louise would be a good example. They came here from Michigan and they were put up in what’s now the Women’s Center. Cardiff House, that was a visiting guest house for a while. They just wandered across the street and found the Farm. This so often happens, this casual, serendipitous thing: well, let’s go investigate, talk, this, that—and fall in love with it. Two people who kind of fall into that same category would be just recently retired professors of physics, George Brown, and his wife Julie Brown. They are Farm groupies, in a good way, I think. And also supporters in terms of collaborative stuff. They’re involved with the CSA and all that. So the Friends had this—it was a women’s club, basically. But these people were women of clout. They were of caliber.

Rabkin: The Farm’s women’s auxiliary.

Martin: Yes. They were extremely demanding, and they were also very nurturing and mentoring. Louise Cain was really principal in both myself and Big Jim Nelson developing a sense of (as loaded as it is) professionalism in terms of our craft, trade, whatever it is, really setting the bar high in terms of expectations, and articulations and presentations and all that. And then nurturing, in the sense that literally, they would be so concerned about those poor apprentices on a vegetarian diet there at the Farm, and what could they do to augment their protein input? So they’d show up with a huge wheel of
Jarlsberg cheese and stuff like that. (laughter) We were always well-fed when they were around. They were kind of like Mother Hens in that sense. It was very cute, both intellectually, politically, and in the kitchen.

So the Friends board was originally of that nature, and very plugged into the structure of the university, because, like I said, a lot of the members were spouses of university faculty here. It’s had its evolution over the years. Now it’s really interesting. It’s really the thirty-and-under crowd, and it’s a lot of ex-apprentices over the last ten years. And they’re poised at a really great cusp now in terms of taking a mega-leap forward in terms of pulling other professionals in, [like] nursery owners. This one woman who is on the board now, marketing and public relations is her expertise. They are looking in a broader way at attracting individuals to the board who have professional skills that we can call upon in terms of guidance. Initially, university professors were on it and a mix of community members. It’s slanted a little bit now toward a younger, ex-apprentice demographic, but not exclusively. I think they have some good perspective in trying to widen the representation.

But they’re stalwarts, both in terms of over the years raising funds for us—just casual things, like, hey, we need a new Cuisinart for the Farm Center or something like that, to—for instance they give a certain amount of money to the Up Garden for the purchase of fruit trees each year; I turn around and I give a bunch of fruit tree workshops. It’s a nice relationship. I’d do it even without their contribution, but it is nice. So we have a relationship with them that we can keep them abreast of what our needs are. The last five or six years, they’ve been funding one complete scholarship for an apprentice each year, which is in excess
of five thousand dollars. For a couple of years, they had the money for two scholarships a year. They’re really pivotally involved right now in helping us solve our various housing issues. And then I think I mentioned in the last session when were talking, Sarah, that I’m involved with a bunch of them now, and Martha Brown, too, at looking at the next five years and kind of trying to telescope out the presentations—the number, the nature, the different venues around the county. So they have, over the years, been an invaluable set of allies.

**Other Collaborations**

**Rabkin:** While we’re talking about alliances and connections, I’m wondering what kinds of collaborations you’ve undertaken with other food-related individuals or institutions—chefs, restaurants, grocery stores, farm-to-institution programs?

**Martin:** Well, many and varied over the years. Right now we have this relationship more with the field operation and the Farm, and the Dining Services on campus, [including] the new restaurant, Terra Fresca. We custom-grow stuff for them. We’re one of a number of growers that are labeled sustainable in the Monterey Bay area. They [Dining Services] are trying to buy the majority of their produce from them and they have some pretty strict mandates on that.

Informally, over the years, we’ve had relationships with different operations. Back in the seventies, what was Community Foods out in Live Oak there, we would—this was before there was really much happening in terms of the evolution of the farming, organic industry, as it were. We would grow for them, or just be involved with them and other growers about who can grow what to be
sold in the store. And then we’ve had informal relationships with various high-end retail outlets up in the City [San Francisco]. For about a decade we had a relationship with an entity called Real Foods, which had a half-dozen stores, and we’d custom-grow for them.

**Working with Former Apprentices**

These days, I think my personal involvement [extends] to (and it really kind of warms the cockles of your heart, as it were) mentoring ex-apprentices. I’ll use three examples here. There are two ex-apprentices that are now running an operation a couple of miles up the coast called Freewheelin’ Farms, that Amy Courtney, who is an ex-apprentice, started about ten years ago. She’s taking a year off. She’s coming back next year. I’ve worked with them a lot in terms of advise and consent, this and that. And also actually even excess plants, and things like that, and work days.

And then there’s this really great couple, Heather April, who was an apprentice two or three years ago, and her partner, James Cook—they are operating now Meder Street Farms and they are growing some exquisite specialty crops. They just got into the Downtown Wednesday Farmer’s Market with selling Padrone Peppers. I don’t know if you’re aware of them, but it’s this little green (they sell them like in a strawberry basket) pepper that’s—what you do is you throw them in a skillet with a really coarse sea salt and olive oil until you kind of make them get soft. They are out of this world. They are a real chi-chi upscale item, and they are really out of this world.

**Rabkin:** Are they sweet or hot?
**Martin:** They’re mild. Well, you see, there is a little marketing handle problem here. About one in five will be hot, occasionally. (laughs) And there’s absolutely no way of discerning which one it’s going to be! But they’re mostly mild. But every once in a while, especially people that are sensitive to heat—yes, they get one that’s not so good. But they’re mostly sweet. So anyhow, I’ve been involved with them in the same kind of thing, advice and consent. In fact, they’re growing out about five hundred chili peppers for me that I didn’t have room for at the Garden, that I want to use in teaching. I want to have a big class the last week of the apprentice program where we have—a pepper fest is what it amounts to, things about peppers, cooking and such. We do a lot in the last decade or so with smoking and drying these chili peppers. And it’s really something that could be parlayed. I’m trying to get them to push it up into a business.

**Rabkin:** At Meder Street Farms?

**Martin:** Yes. So we’re kind of going down the road. So I would use those two things as examples of that kind of loose affiliation.

We’re in the middle of a strategic plan with the Center. And in thinking about it, and reading the rhetoric that comes forth and such—a lot of it seems to be institution-to-institution in a very formalized way. That’s good. [But] our kind of collaboration and connections at the Farm and Garden through the apprentice program is more from the ground up. It’s not to say we don’t have institution-to-institution relationships. We have that. But in addition, personal relationships develop largely because of the students that come here and what they go out and do, and influence back and forth on those pathways.

**Rabkin:** What you might call organic relationships.
**Martin:** Yes, yes. It’s very organic in that sense. (laughs)

**Art and Music in the Farm and Garden**

**Rabkin:** This may sound like it’s coming out of left field, but I’m curious whether music or poetry or other forms of art and culture have an important role in the thriving of the Farm and Garden.

**Martin:** Oh, absolutely. You know, for twenty years, whenever there was a Grateful Dead show you’d have low attendance in the Garden. (laughs) I’m only half-kidding.

**Rabkin:** (laughter) In that case it was a negative relationship—

**Martin:** Some of us were grateful when they died. (laughs) No, just kidding. Yes, absolutely. We did, as I mentioned, come out of the humanities. Like I said, I like to think of us as, by and large, being well-rounded in science and art. From time immemorial there’ve been relations in that regard—agricultural writings, poems, songs, rituals, etc. Yes, there is a strong— You see that in the makeup of the people that work there on the staff and the apprentices that come through, all aspects of art.

We used to have a seasonal event at the Farm and Garden through the Friends. It would be with the two solstices and the two equinoxes. Typically, in the early years, in the spring we’d have everybody up at the Garden, because it’s more of a spring spot. The Farm takes until later to dry out and come on. It would be a tour of the Garden and what’s happening, and then we’d go over to the propagation area and we’d say, “You want some plants? Here. Take one of these, two of these—“ And out of that, actually that is what our plant sale evolved out
of. Someone said (I think it was Phyllis Norris), “You know, you should sell these plants.” We’re like, “Hmm. What do you know?” So now we do $25,000 a year in two plant sales at the base of campus.

**Rabkin**: Twenty-five thousand dollars a year from those plant sales?

**Martin**: Well, up to. Twenty to twenty-five.

**Rabkin**: Wow.

**Martin**: It’s a considerable source of income. It fits beautifully with training [and curriculum]. It’s something that people can look at. Whatever type of operation you have, whether it’s just starting starts off at your farm in the spring or having an organic nursery, it fits. Anyhow, they had their different aspects to them and they were rotated between the Farm and Garden.

And then, largely through a guy who was an apprentice in 1977-78, Kurt Christiansen, who is now on our Friends board and runs a really amazing, high-end landscaping service in town and over the hill [the Santa Clara Valley], he and a few others got the idea of starting a poetry and music festival. And so for the last twelve years we’ve had it. It’s usually the first weekend in June, but it’s in June—sometimes it moves around depending on artists and when we can get them—and it’s poetry and music. We have a roster on an annual basis of six to eight poets. Some of them are nationally known, renowned. And in music, as well. Usually more local musicians, but not exclusively so. So that’s part of the draw. It’s been part of the fabric, informally. I’m good friends with Hardy Hanson, who is a retired art professor, [and] he just rolls his eyes when I mention this: I would like to see us move toward a juried art show about renderings of the
Farm and Garden. Whatever the media is, it doesn’t matter. But as soon as you say, “juried art show” to an artist they go: “Do you know how much work that is to put on, and the politics of that?” “No, I have absolutely no idea. But okay, we’ll just table that for now.” (laughs) But the people who have associated with the Farm and Garden seem to value art as well as science.

**The Evolution of the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS)**

**Rabkin:** So you have made some references to the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS). But we also haven’t talked about that really head-on. The Farm and Garden are now both part of a larger set of enterprises, I guess you could say, collectively called CASFS. What can you tell me about how and why CASFS itself was formed, or how it evolved from what used to be just the Farm and Garden or the Agroecology Program?

**Martin:** Yes, well, first of all there was Chadwick and the Farm and Garden and all that, and the loose alliances I’ve mentioned with the Environmental Studies Board. In the seventies and eighties we had a set of classes that the Ken Norris’s and Jim Peppers would sponsor. We would teach about the lifestyles and techniques of farming.

**Steve Gliessman and the Agroecology Program**

But I think it really came into focus when Steve Gliessman came here. In his interview process, the weeks or so he was around, he was introduced to the Farm and Garden, and there was an obvious linkage there. In the early years, it was really great. It was such an on-the-ground, start-up type of thing when he came.
It was like, “Okay, we’re going to do this intercropping experiment. Where can we do it, guys?” “Let’s do it here in the field.” “Okay, let’s plant the seeds together. Let’s monitor the stuff together. Let’s take the data. Okay.” It was really very on-the-ground. And it just evolved. Steve has, among his other skills, a magic touch with money. He can attract money. He’s always been just really good. And he’s a visionary. So he can paint a picture for donors and get money. It’s just remarkable how he’s adept at that.

So then I think we called it the Agroecology Program. (laughs) It’s so funny. We actually have gotten a mandate now from the external review to change our name once again. (laughs) Because CASFS is a mouthful as an acronym, which it is.

But at any rate, the genesis of the Agroecology Program, really more than anything previously, cemented a home for us, the Farm and Garden and the apprenticeship, in a logical alliance. And then even beyond that, Steve, and Kay Thornley, who was really a principal in those early years of agroecology developing (because she was the fundraiser), they were able to get—essentially all of our funding came from what was the Environmental License Plate Fund, which was just starting at that time. They got like a quarter million dollars a year allocation or something, working with State Senator [John] Vasconcellos, I think it was. I mean, just a huge coup to get in there like that and get that appropriation.

**Rabkin:** This was a voluntary thing where people could pay a certain amount for plates.
Martin: Yes, if you wanted one of those vanity plates you paid, and that fund went to fund environmental causes as the legislature dictated. Well, Kay and Steve went to Vasconcellos and were able to broker an annual— We were a line item in the governor’s budget for a couple hundred grand plus a year. In 1982 that was big money. Well, it’s big money now. I’ll take it now! (laughs) And that really funded— And then Steve had all these individual alliances with different foundations and stuff like that. Kay Thornley was a principal in putting that whole thing together in terms of the funding initiatives and pushing that stuff through.

So what was the net result? The net result was that at that time, until [the] 1992-93, approximately, huge catastrophic budget crunch when things were cut across the board in the University [of California] to the tune of fifteen or twenty percent, all of the Farm and Garden staff positions were funded out of that—9900 funds are what it funnels through in the university. We lost that in that 1992-93 crunch. Since then, we’ve been responsible for generating our own staff salary funds. So that was huge!

We got to sit in on Steve’s classes and seminars. We were going to school, as it were, in something we kind of knew, but obviously hadn’t articulated it to the degree of a discipline that Steve had. It was a really huge push forward in terms of seeing farming in a broader light of agroecological systems. It’s not that different than what I was talking about with Ken Norris in natural history, that kind of way of perceiving things or looking at systems.
**Rabkin:** With Steve Gliessman’s arrival, though, it sounds like that was more formalized, and there was a more articulated research component to the work of the Farm and Garden.

**Martin:** Yes, yes. There hadn’t been any research, I would say, in any bona fide way at the Farm. At its heyday in the eighties, there was a full-time research lab manager funded out of those monies, and a full-time (well, it might have only been three-quarter time) field technician to grow the crops for research. Plus our involvement—we would provide labor, land and compost and such. So yes, it really got the whole nature of that type of research up and running. The place of the Farm became important in that discipline because it was a home for real.

**Rabkin:** Did that engender more respect from the university administration, to have this sort of academic research component?

**Martin:** Oh, yes. I don’t think we would have continued to exist if that relationship hadn’t, literally, almost fallen in our laps. We were here. Steve came. Boom, that alliance developed. Oh, yes.

**Rabkin:** So his arrival was pivotal in the continuing survival of the program.

**Martin:** Oh, yes. As far as politics and such on campus? Absolutely. As far as actual dollars in the budgets? Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

**A Tumultuous Interim Period**

And then, sometime in the early 1990s, he [Gliessman] was asked to step aside as director by the external review committee. Then there was a period of vague tumultuousness, is what I would call it, in the administration: “What are we going to do with this Farm and Garden, agroecology—“ And then there was an
interim period where, as someone once derogatorily said, “The three white guys ran it.” Ken Norris, Bill Friedland, and Jim Pepper were kind of this ad hoc, ex officio—I don’t know what they were. But they were analyzing us and trying to find a new home for us. And what came out of their collaborative analysis [of] undergraduate efforts, research efforts, apprenticeship thing was the genesis of and the coining of—turning it into a Center, which is a designation within the university. They felt it fit into that.

Rabkin: That’s an official university designation: Center?

Martin: Yes, there are Centers around the university. It was really a little dicey there in that time period. Would the entity continue to exist or not? And obviously, it did. So then the Center was created and then a directorship was established. Because, Steve was the director, but he wasn’t—I don’t think it was actually a titled position. I’m pretty sure he never got a penny for doing it. He just got his E.S. faculty salary. So a position was created, and it was a blend of fifty percent faculty, fifty percent director/administrator. Carol Shennan was hired to be the director. That was eleven or twelve years ago.

Rabkin: Did Margaret Fitzsimmons have that position?

Martin: Well, that’s true. She was the next phase of interim. There were a number of interim people there. Marc Buchanan, who was an E.S. professor here, was our director for a year, year and a half. Margaret Fitzsimmons came on his heels. They were all great in different respects. But just the reverberations of any time there is a change in regime: What is the culture? How do you navigate the waters here? What’s going on? It was a little bit unsettling.
A Multi-Pronged Approach

I guess with the creation of the Center per se, and the creation of the position that Carol Shennan and now Patricia Allen holds, more traction was gained. Carol’s thing was more soil, agricultural farming systems research and Patricia’s is social science. So that’s a real different kind of shift now.

One of the things that’s been beautiful about whatever you want to call the entity the Agroecology Program, the Center, the Farm and Garden, the apprenticeship—is that it approaches things on a more multi-pronged level than any entity I can think of anywhere, but particularly in the university—from basic scientific research, undergraduate and graduate level research and teaching, and the apprentice program, [to] public, community-type stuff. It’s deep and rich. And yet, a rubric that doesn’t really fit in, in a sense, [to] the specialization within the university. But to me, it’s just really rich. I certainly hope that we continue with that multi-thrusted approach.

We just completed an external review. There is a rather glowing, positive report from the external review committee. I really have to credit Patricia Allen. She’s done things within five minutes of coming in. For fifteen years the staff has been saying things like, “We need a fundraising position, for crying out loud,” or, “We need a maintenance budget,” and she’s come in and really (snaps fingers) gone to the dean and just said, “This is what we need,” and gotten it. Within a few months she got a fundraising position, and has now secured, at least in concept, the idea which I think could be a hallmark thing, which is to have a coordinator of education at the Center. That individual would be a Ph.D.-type individual and be able to coordinate— We do have kind of disparate pathways wandering all
through the entity, but just to have cohesive coordination for anything that falls under the heading of education—Patricia has made some really tangible strides forward. She has no qualms about going to the dean and saying, “This is what we need. If you want me to do this, this is what we need.” And the present dean, Sheldon Kamieniecki, has been very supportive, as was the previous dean, Marty Chemers, who was almost like a Farm groupie! It was great. And just as a man, I just really enjoyed interacting with him, a really well-rounded guy, really a great wit, a great intellect, and carried some political clout, too.

**Challenges of Fundraising**

Rabkin: You said that since the early nineties and that big wave of statewide university budget cuts, the program has been on its own for generating funding, to a large degree. And then you mentioned that until this position that Patricia is in the process of securing there has been no fundraising position within CASFS.

Martin: No. Ironically, there hasn’t been.

Rabkin: So tell me about how you’ve stayed afloat financially.

Martin: (laughs) Well, it’s sort of been everybody for themselves, as far as the Center goes. You know, you have different people with different research agendas and they get funding in the ways that research entities do.

Rabkin: To fund particular research projects.

Martin: Yes, through grants and things like that. Soft money as it comes and goes. And then there is the apprenticeship. We get things from the university. Obviously we get in-kind things: land, utilities, water. And twenty percent of Jim Leap’s [salary], our field farm manager’s position, is still funded through the
9900 university funds, whereas previously, four positions were. So it’s much reduced.

The apprentice program’s income streams have principally been the pathways of apprentice tuitions and produce sales, plant sales, things of that nature. And then—and this sounds really idiotic, maybe, but obviously it works, so (laughs)—sometimes when I look at a critter of a species I say, “Well, how could that have evolved?” People say, “Well, look, it did. Whatever it’s doing makes sense. It’s still around—” But anyway, we decided in the early years not to go out and seek external funding, that we would just self-generate. We would literally stay at home. We just saw so many allied entities around the country that went out—“Okay, we got this grant here”—It changed their whole structure and mission and focus, chasing the almighty dollar to stay alive. So we said, “Well, we’re going to live, as it were, within our means, and it’s just about what is the income that we can generate primarily through sale of produce, plant sales, and tuition.

That worked for twenty or so years. There came a point in the nineties where it was obvious, nah, this is just not do-able anymore. So at that time, Ann Lindsey was our apprentice coordinator, and she was getting married, and a bunch of different things came about. We came up with the idea, “Okay let’s create a fundraising position.” She has been in that position for six or eight years. Like I said, it varies, but she’s raising to the tune of a couple hundred grand a year, and we wouldn’t be in business without that. And she does it largely through individual donors, and granting agencies, nonprofit foundations. For instance, we have a long and storied relationship with both Paul and Nell Newman,
Newman’s Own. They’ve given us between twenty and fifty thousand dollars a year for the better part of a decade.

Rabkin: How did that originate?

Martin: That is (laughs)— Let’s see, how did that originate? There was a guy who was an apprentice, and he became friends with Christof [Bernau], and his old friend was Nell Newman. Also, Nell had been very much involved with Brian Walton and the Predatory Bird Project, so she kind of knew the Farm and had been around. And she lives in the area. Many of our relationships develop that way. She was just starting up Newman’s Own Organics, and she was still trying to convince her dad that organics is where it’s at. And he was still like, “Nah! Farming’s good enough. You don’t need organic. Farming is good enough.” He was just a curmudgeon, she said. So she flew home one time and cooked him an organic Thanksgiving dinner but didn’t tell him until the end, “That was all organic, Dad,” and kind of slowly wooed him in and was able to introduce us to him. He came a number of years ago for a visit: “I’m going to be in the area and I want to come see you guys.” We showed him around the Farm and he was really impetuous and impatient. (grumpy voice) “Yeah, that’s nice. Yeah, that’s nice.” And as he was leaving down in the parking lot, this woman who worked as Ann’s assistant secretary, her husband was an artist, and he had this old muscle car, like a GTO, and it had all these paper-mache heads on it. Newman was a stock car driver, so he loved the old muscle cars. And he stopped. He [had] said, “I gotta go. I gotta go.” [But then] he saw that car and for about forty minutes he was telling us everything about the history of muscle
cars. Finally we were like, “Paul, we gotta go!” He said, “You guys are great. I’ll write you a check again.” And he left.

After a month or so Ann called me up and said, “You know. He never has sent the check. You think it’s like— Can I inquire? What do you think I should do? It’s getting to that time of year.” And then a while later she just got an envelope from him in the mail. She opened up the envelope and there was a check from him for thirty grand. It was like, “Do good stuff, love, Paul.”

Rabkin: (laughs)

Martin: At any rate, but now we know Nell and Paul quite well and whenever she has a magazine shoot she always uses the Farm and Garden as a venue. We have a good relationship with them.

Ann has developed this set of donors that really stand by us, and is always scouting the bushes for more. That’s not easy, especially in the period post 9-11: there was so much diversion of nonprofit monies to other things. It’s a testament, I think, to Ann’s capability. She’s got an entity that she can sell to people, and she knows it well. So that’s where our present state of funding is. It’s self-generated about fifty percent and about fifty percent from outside donors.

Other Challenges

Rabkin: I’ve heard some people in CASFS talk about feeling pretty stretched thin at the Farm and Garden, in terms of the number of people covering the amount of work that needs to get done. Is that your perception?

Martin: (laughs wryly) Yeah, sure. Yeah. It seems to be— Yes, we’re all peddling as fast as you possibly can. I guess I have a personal different relationship to it,
which is: I’m not complaining. I used to joke, “Well, if I’m awake I’m working. So what’s the deal?” I don’t know, I just consider that I’m lucky to be able to do this, so I’m not complaining.

But yes, we are. We’re very stretched. I think where it’s more touchy is with people who work indoors in administrative positions. And more and more as the bureaucracy of the university has grown, it’s just—I don’t think I could handle it if I had to be in those positions. And really, one of the things that’s great about my job, our jobs (the folks who kind of run the Farm outdoors), is just that: we work outdoors. This is rare, that at this time of year I would be inside a room for two hours. And it’s weird, maybe. (laughs) But we work outside. Not much of the culture works outside anymore. That’s a remnant thing. We’re considered somewhat odd in that regard. But also, it has its dividends.

We’re asked to do more and more things by the university. These are what I would call (my wife is an elementary school teacher so she can relate, like special ed and stuff) unfunded mandates: “You must do this.” There’s always this, I think, continuing perception that we don’t want to be involved with students as much as we should be. Which is absolutely not the case with the staff at the Farm and Garden. It’s just, “Okay, where’s the funding?” (laughs) “No, no. You have to do this without funding.” And we are. We’ve been teaching this environmental studies class with Carol Shennan since ’02. About sixty percent of the lectures are by Farm and Garden staff, forty by her. And a hundred percent of the labs are run by the Farm and Garden staff and our second-year apprentices. We do the lion’s share, I would say, of the testing and grading.

**Rabkin:** Is what they call the Agroecology Practicum?
Orin Martin

Martin: Yes. [Environmental Studies] 133B. And then similarly, there’s a new class this summer. Katie Monsen, a Ph.D. student, did Topics in Agroecology. And they ended up working with us three afternoons a week at the two sites: the Farm and the Garden. We offer these experiences and services and such, but we don’t get any recompense for it. (laughs) I’ve always found this odd. I think I said at one point to Marty Chemers, “You know, this is a university. It’s about a fee for service. You have a spectrum of janitorial services to professorial services. We fall somewhere in the middle, I know, but usually it’s a fee for a service. How come we don’t get anything?” I do find that both odd and somewhat exploitive, I might add. But yet, you want to offer stuff for the students because they’re so hungry for it, and it fits with their [studies]—particularly for the agroecology pathway, students like that.

But yes, it’s always been stressful in one way or another, and always been too much. But I think with the growing of the institution and the bureaucracy, like I said, I think more of the administrative folks are really feeling overburdened.

Rabkin: Let me ask you a couple more questions.

Martin: Okay.

Rabkin: Are there aspects of the job that keep you awake at night?

Martin: (laughs explosively) Oh, yes.

Rabkin: Give me your top three.

Martin: The awesomeness of being responsible for such a biologically active entity like the Garden—keeping it alive and thriving, and soil conservation, and all that sort of stuff. People think you’re great and you walk on water and all that
stuff, after a while, but just the responsibility of trying to be a good instructor. I mean, it’s just a never-ending, kind of pushing-a-rock-up-the-hill type of thing. And just really being honest with yourself about (and I’m speaking personally now, because I’ve been doing this for more than thirty years)—are you giving an adequate effort on a daily basis? And the answer is, of course, not. You can’t. (laughs) But wrestling with that sometimes wakes you up at night.

And then also, to put a positive spin on it (sick as it may seem), ideas that spring up: how about if we taught it this way, or did it this way? So there’s that set of worries.

And then, on a personal level, I’ll be real frank, I’ve given my life to this thing and it’s pretty much wrecked my body physically. So there are physical things that wake me up. I have degenerated vertebrae, herniated discs, etc. I’m developing, I think, what are hip and knee problems, maybe towards the realm of replacement down the road, stuff like that. The physicality of the work over thirty years wakes me up at night. It doesn’t keep me up. It wakes me up in a physically uncomfortable way.

And then there’s a set of things I would [call] politics and administration. My God. Are we still in the rubric? We have a new administration since last year with Patricia Allen. We have a whole new structure, etc. And it’s been as we’re fighting to make our place secure—that kind of stuff. These things keep you up at night sometimes. The good thing is that the work is often so intellectually and physically exhausting that you fall asleep pretty easily. (laughs) But that’s kind of the three categories there.
Visions for the Future

Rabkin: Thank you. How would you like to see the Farm and Garden develop in coming years, and even decades?

Martin: I’d like to see the heart of the apprenticeship and the rubric we have stay intact, that is, primacy on the practical teaching of the how-to stuff, in tandem with theories and concepts. I’d like to see a way, and it just bugs the heck out of me— You know, we came really close about ten or fifteen years ago to signing a contract with Environmental Studies to have an ability of E.S. students to take the apprenticeship, and sort of like the [Natural History] Field Quarter, get full credit. We literally were about to sit down and sign off on it and then they reneged at the last minute. It was simply over grading, after we had done eighteen months of: here’s the rigor; here’s the content; here’s the curriculum, here’s what we do—that kind of back and forth discussion. I would like to see that integration happen, where there’s a way (like I said, the example to me is Field Quarter) where there’s a way in an analogous sense for regularly matriculated students, UCSC E.S. students (it could be community studies and some other disciplines too, perhaps) to take the apprenticeship. Now granted, it would kind of be a bifurcated set of pathways. They would have to have a set of responsibilities and duties that maybe the non-matriculated apprentices wouldn’t, in terms of papers and this and that. But I think that could be worked out. A bunch of bright people could work that out: what are the responsibilities or demands? And to have, maybe a good number, maybe up to a third of the apprentice student body be composed of environmental studies students. I think that would be a good thing for everybody.
Rabkin: Why?

Martin: I think because it would be more connective, say, for E.S. students, particularly agroecology students. They read about systems. They study about systems. They do research in systems that are agriculturally related. But they really don’t know the techniques of it. I think it would make them better researchers if they went on to do that. They would know the whole thing top to bottom, left to right, all aspects of it. And, flat out, there’s a huge, has been a huge demand by the students for that, and I don’t think it’s frivolous. I think there’s a legitimacy there. They want that type of connection.

More and more, as we go on in the culture, there are less and less people who have involvement with agriculture. But not even that, just people who know how to grow, on any level—in a window box, in a backyard, in a community garden. Wouldn’t it be a strong statement if the university were aiding that kind of promulgation of growing skills? I think it’s just a natural alliance on a lot of things. I think it would be a much broader, stronger course of study, everything that could be offered by the academics of E.S., plus the apprenticeship program. I guarantee you it would be a drawing card, a recruitment card, to draw students here. And associated funding, both extramural and within the university, would probably flow, I’m willing to bet. So I’d like to see that.

I’d like to see misperceptions (laughs), as I said earlier, about the Farm and Garden put to bed, as it were! I think, really, the way that happens is by having dialogue, face-to-face interactions. I’m not very hopeful, quite frankly, that that will happen right now. Although I think we have a good place in the university
compared with some of the rockier years in the past, I don’t see that dialogue evolving at the present time.

I’d like to see a more secure funding source or sources for the basic maintenance and running of the two places, and perhaps almost like an endowed chair equivalent for a couple of our positions. And I’d like to see us engage in different courses to different audiences: short courses—We’ve had just preliminary discussions about that. A myriad of different types of courses for those who can’t take six months out of their life to do this. I mean, you could have things that were in collaboration with Life Lab, of really training teachers about how to garden. They get good stuff from Life Lab, but it’s not as strong on the techniques of gardening. So bring that up like that. Small-scale growers who want to get into some aspect of niche growing that we can offer: dwarf fruit tree growing, or we have a really nice collaborative project with UC Extension in the last five years at the Farm on blueberries.

**Rabkin:** Yes.

**Martin:** Just a broader audience, different styles of courses, from one day to one month [long]. That’s enough. (laughs)

**Rabkin:** Great! Well, thank you very much, Orin.

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1 Martin and Rabkin are referring to the song Arlo Guthrie’s song “Alice’s Restaurant,” in which Guthrie tells a story of acting out in crazy ways at his Selective Service physical and psychological exam in order to make himself an unappealing candidate for military service—Editors.
2 See the oral history with Stephen Kaffka in this series—Editor.
3 See the oral histories with Jim Pepper, Kenneth Norris, and Ray Dasmann on the Regional History Project’s website: [http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/](http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/) Books based on the oral histories with Norris and Dasmann are available through the University of California Press.
4 At the time, UCSC’s academic program was organized into boards rather than departments.

See the oral history with Beth Benjamin in this series.

Stephen R. Gliessman holds the Alfred E. Heller Chair in Agroecology. This was UCSC’s first endowed chair, and was founded with a $375,000 gift from Alfred E. Heller. See the oral history with Steve Gliessman in this series for more detail on Alfred Heller and his support of agroecology at UCSC.


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See Godfrey Kasozi’s oral history in this series.

See the oral history with Jim Leap in this series.

The Natural History Field Quarter was an integral part of the Natural History Pathway within the environmental studies major at UC Santa Cruz, and was founded by Professor Kenneth Norris in 1975, and continued by Professor Steve Gliessman. According to the UC Natural Reserve System’s website: “Field Quarter takes students on a natural history journey across the state. Though the exact itinerary changes from year to year, the trip always begins in the Mojave Desert at Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center and moves northward with stops that might include the Channel Islands at Santa Cruz Island Reserve, the Big Sur coast at Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve, the Carmel Valley at Hastings Natural History Reservation, and the redwoods of Mendocino County at Angelo Coast Range Reserve, before ending in the Sierra Nevada mountains.”

See the oral history in this series with Lyn Garling for more on Cathrine Sneed.

See the oral histories with Paul Glowaski and Darrie Ganzhorn in this series.

See the oral history with Lyn Garling in this series.

Arnett published this collection in 2007. It was the result of a writing course that he taught, in which students researched and documented the many unnatural or (human-made) creations that exist on the UCSC campus. A second, expanded edition of the book was published later in 2007, and is available through the campus bookstore.

See the oral history with Jerged Lawson and Nancy Vail in this series.

http://www.farmschool.org/index.html

http://www.soilborn.org/index.html

Ned Conwell is a staff instructor with the Regenerative Design Institute, which is part of the Permaculture Institute of Northern California.

See the oral history with Jim Leap in this series.

Tonya H. Haff, Martha T. Brown, and W. Breck Tyler, *The Natural History of the UC Santa Cruz Campus, (Second Edition)* (Bay Tree Bookstore, 2008). On page 138 of that book Norris is quoted as follows: “Natural history is the study of the natural world from a holistic viewpoint, the learning of her rules and processes. At the Farm and Garden, the care of the soil, the concern that natural systems be understood and guarded, and the oneness of people with the earth that supports them form the philosophical basis for their functioning. This is ‘applied natural history,’” in its finest sense.” This quote is from an undated (approximately 1975) letter to the Environmental Studies Board.


Noel King was a professor of religious studies at UCSC. See http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/portal/ci_11622835?_loopback=1

See Randall Jarrell and Maya Hegege, *The Early History of the UCSC Farm and Garden* (Regional History Project, University Library, UCSC, 2003) for an interview with Phyllis Norris about her work with the Friends of the Farm and Garden, http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/farmgarden.html
Terra Fresca is the restaurant at the University Center at UC Santa Cruz. Their menu features many locally grown, organic produce and sustainably produced meats.

See the oral history in this series with Tim Galarneau for more on the efforts to bring organic food to the dining halls at UCSC.

See the oral histories with Ken Kimes and with Heidi Skolnik for more on Community Foods.

See http://www.coastroad.net/FreewheelinFarm/index.html

See the oral history with Amy Courtney in this series.

See the oral history with Stephen R. Gliessman that is part of this series.

See the oral history with Patricia Allen in this series.