

# PARENTING DECOLONIZED PODCAST



## **Parenting Decolonized Podcast EP 59: Decolonizing Food & Reclaiming Gardening with Princess Cole**

Yolanda Williams: (0:00:00) Welcome to the Parenting Decolonized Podcast. I'm your host Yolanda Williams, entrepreneur, conscious parenting coach and single mom to one amazing toddler. I'm on a mission to help shine the light on how colonization has impacted the Black family structure. If you're a parent that wants to learn how to decolonize your parenting, you're in the right place. Let's do this. Welcome back to the Parenting Decolonized Podcast. I'm your host Yolanda Williams, and today I have with me Princess Cole. Thank you so much for joining me.

Princess Cole: Thank you for having me. So of course like she said, my name is Princess Cole and I am a mom of three. My homeschool, I do yoga, garden. I'm a herbalist and everything in between. I don't really like to use the phrase, but I guess you would say a Jill of all trades. So I definitely do a lot of different things.

Yolanda Williams: So I met Princess or not met because we actually haven't met in person. I was in a few gardening groups and her name was just all over the place and I was just like, oh, I want to be your friend. And then I noticed that she was on the parent decolonized page. And then one day I asked about herbalism and like three, four people were like Princess Cole. And I was like, we need to be friends.

Princess Cole: Right, right.

Yolanda Williams: And then from there we just connected and started talking and I'm so happy that we did because I just love everything about what you do, what you represent, and especially as I am learning to be a gardener myself and creating this collective, a lot of what you do is what we're trying to do, which is reclaiming ancestral practices and coming back home to ourselves. And so how I feel like gardening is an active assistance, how you use the garden for self-care and all that stuff. You have a home garden, backyard garden. Is it a larger one?

Princess Cole: It's a pretty big backyard. Ours is probably one of the bigger backyards in the neighborhood and that's probably because we're kind of on, because you know, usually the first house like on the very corner usually has the biggest yard because they're on the edge. Well we're right next to them. Ours is about the same size too. So it's a fairly large backyard.

Yolanda Williams: How much food do you think you grow? Do you shop at the grocery store a lot still or do you, are you able to grow a lot of your food?

Princess Cole: Yes, I do still shop at the grocery store. One of the main reasons is because I am still in the process of trying to grow as much as I can to be able to cut down on the grocery bill. But the thing that makes it hard is that Mother Nature is unpredictable. It's really hard to try to work with Mother Nature when sometimes she's like, you know what? We're just going to have bad weather because I still like it and then everything just dies.

Yolanda Williams: She's sick of us. She's sick of us.

Princess Cole: Yeah, she's sick of us and what we're doing to the earth and she's had enough. So that's where the greenhouse comes in. It makes it a little easier to control the environment.

Yolanda Williams: So for people who are listening to this and are like, oh I want to grow food, I want to garden, but I don't have space, what advice would you give them?

Princess Cole: Everybody has space, whether they think they do or not because there are multiple ways that you can grow and you don't have to always grow outside in order to grow your own food. You can definitely grow indoors even if it's something small on your countertop, like those aero gardens or even something that you make yourself. You can definitely grow some of the things that you use on a daily basis, whether it be like lettuce, something else small like radishes. And there are a lot of compact variety foods that will grow just fine indoors without taking up a lot of space. So even if you have just a window sill, that will work perfectly fine if you do it.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah, there's always, that's what I learned at my old place. It had a pretty nice size patio. Wasn't very large though and I was able to fit, I want to say 50 plants back there and I mixed mine with flowers. I need things to be beautiful but it was like flowers but a lot of food. I grew so much food but I wasn't prepared for the amount of food that would come out of that small garden. So it's like a mental thing too, like what I'm learning now is you have to be like, this is a lifestyle. Like if you grow on food you got to be more on instead food or give it away. I gave away a lot of bell peppers because I just wasn't cooking enough. I gave away a lot of food. And while that's great, the whole point of me doing this is so I could eat healthier, have Gia try new foods, and have my son try new foods. Things that aren't available in the grocery store and things that are available but are filled with pesticides or really expensive to buy organically.

Princess Cole: Or don't taste good.

Yolanda Williams: Or don't, listen a tomato, a homegrown tomato will change your life. I never knew. And I got into this (0:05:00) whole gardening thing myself. I started having a vision of

buying land and having a garden. And this is before the collective and I was just like, how can I start like sort of embodying this dream And gardening was a big part of that. And then once I got out there it was so therapeutic and I can't explain to you if you're not a gardener and soil and bugs and all that stuff bothers you. I'm going to tell you right now, once you start it feels so good to be outside and like when you grow something and you eat it, you're like I grew this from a seed.

Princess Cole: Right. The satisfaction in knowing that you did that, you are able to feed your family because you planted this little seed that turned into food that you did not have to purchase. It's one of the best feelings in the world. If you have never experienced that, you will never understand.

Yolanda Williams: It's so funny because we're so far, I'm from California originally so far removed from the actual growing process. I had no idea that a pepper came from a flower bloom. And I think understanding the process of how food gets to you is really important if you're trying to be a more sustainable person, even if you never grow a garden, just understanding the life cycle of plants and how they grow is important because then you have more respect for nature, you have more respect for the process.

Princess Cole: Yeah, I was going to say that. It makes you appreciate life even more when you can see how these things are grown and it's just like wow. Like this is what happens and it's exciting. It really is exciting and it makes you want to learn more. It makes you want to continue doing it so that you can see how everything work. You've realized how connected to nature you are the more you garden. We are nature.

Yolanda Williams: We are nature. It's so funny because I was watching yesterday about like the mycelium network. Basically the mushroom networks create forests and without it we won't have forest, right.

Princess Cole: I watched that. I watched that. Oh my God, I love those types of shows. Don't get me started because I'll go off ever...

Yolanda Williams: Don't get me started.

Princess Cole: I was like oh my goodness. Like why is nobody talking about this?

Yolanda Williams: How important fungi is to our existence. How important bees are to our existence. So there's this thing called spatial supremacy. It's us really not considering the fact that our behavior affects everything else because we are human. But that spider that's out in your garden, that's actually probably a friendly spider that's going to help you. Has every bee right to

be here as we do and really starting to, I'm trying not to kill bugs unless they're like mosquitoes because I'm not going to get bit. I'm trying not to...

Princess Cole: And they carry diseases.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah, exactly. I'm trying to think about nature as indigenous peoples think about nature and I only got that to that place by gardening. When I think about the resistance of gardening, I think about how all these food are apartheid. They're coming from Los Angeles and seeing how in certain places it takes you a 10, 15 minute drive to get to a grocery store. But all the way to that drive there are liquor stores at every block, some pond shops, all these and fast food on every corner. But hard pressed to find any kind of fresh vegetable. So us growing our own food, it's fighting back. These systems are literally put in place to destroy people. Poor people.

Princess Cole: Very true.

Yolanda Williams: It's not like that.

Princess Cole: Very true. It's being done on purpose. Right. Absolutely. I definitely notice a difference. I've had a background of living in the hood and a background of not living in the hood and you can see how everything is set up. It's crazy to me. So yes, it's definitely meant to keep us unhealthy and that's mentally and physically. I think it's really important. If you absolutely cannot grow your own food for whatever reason, maybe you may be staying with somebody and can't just use their space how you please get to know somebody who is, because that's very important. It's very important to have access to healthy food. It really is. Like we mentioned before, you can absolutely tell the difference between store bought and homegrown. I tell you, I hated peas, I hated I guess the proper name is English peas, the green peas, I hated them. They were so gross. I don't care if it was frozen canned, it all tasted the same. It tasted like this nasty green pasty stuff. And then for whatever reason, despite me not liking peas, I decided to grow them. And once I bit into a pod myself, it was like sugary goodness like I've never tasted a peas so sweet. They don't make it in the house. They do not make it back in the house. I will stand in the garden and eat them right there because they taste so good and sweet and crispy. And I'm like, you mean to tell me that this is how peas are supposed to taste? So it's like what happened to those foods that made them taste so bad? It's like you never want to go back to that.

Yolanda Williams: You don't.

Princess Cole: You never want to go back to that. I will never purchase a store bought peas ever again.

Yolanda Williams: That's also seasonally. So we are just, you got to understand the system that the way its set up is not sustainable but it also isn't natural. There are seasons for a reason. And so eating seasonally is actually a more sustainable way to live because then you're only eating the things that are (0:10:00) able to thrive in a healthful environment in that time. If we were eating seasonally in the state of Arkansas, if I go to the store, I'm able to get citrus in the winter and tomatoes and that and tomatoes are a spring, summer, maybe fall food, early fall day they die off. So it's just like the whole point is that it's healthier for you to eat seasonally and it's more sustainable. But also when you start looking into some of the things that these places that grow these food have to go through in order to get food to us year round. Apparently there's a whole avocado wars happening in Mexico.

Princess Cole: Oh yes. Did you watch that documentary too?

Yolanda Williams: I did. And there's all kinds of stuff happening with honey.

Princess Cole: Oh my goodness, or I never knew.

Yolanda Williams: Yes there's all kinds of stuff happening with the grapes in France. Like all these things to get food to us year round, causing certain collapses in like infrastructure is causing being war, kidnapped over avocados now. And so we're thinking like I'm eating vegan or I'm eating only fruits and only vegetables. But no, we have to look at...

Princess Cole: People are dying for...

Yolanda Williams: People are literally dying.

Princess Cole: ... the avocados that you're eating.

Yolanda Williams: We're not saying don't eat avocados. What we're saying is understand what's happening in the food industry, the system of oppression, all of them. They bank on us being ignorant of what's happening. They don't want us to research, they don't want us to know information. They want us to be ignorant because then we can just consume. But if we're honestly decolonizing our minds, that includes getting information and information really does make you change the way you look at everything. You have to just be willing to do this research. And sometimes the research would be like, I wish I didn't know this. You have to make a choice. Am I going to continue to invest in this system or am I going to figure out a different way? And there are different ways. And the fucked up part though is that the different ways are yet to be affordable for everybody.

Princess Cole: And that's so true. One of those ways is gardening. Because if you see these things happening, it's like well how do I not contribute to this but still be able to have access to these things? I have fruit trees. I did have two avocado trees at one point and I left them outside and frost got them and they died, so I had to purchase more avocado trees. But because I have the greenhouse in an environment to grow those avocado trees. To me I feel like that helps because I am not contributing to what's happening with these avocado wars. How many more people are doing that and how many more people can do that? I really making a big difference and that is where the education comes in and that is where we have to educate people to see the bigger picture and why it is so important to be self-sustainable. And it's almost scary because sometimes I feel like people need to do it quietly because the more self-sustain we are, I can see it now, they're eventually going to make it illegal to grow your own food. I can just see it. Hopefully that never happens. But they don't want us to grow our own food. They don't want us to do that.

Yolanda Williams: And the impressive system here is capitalism. But we are talking about, you start looking into like food brands. I think there's like five, five or six top food brands. And they control a lot. They're just different. Their brands is a top food brand and then they have all these branches of food brands underneath them. But then they also start to control things like seeds, water, all these things start to happen underneath these larger, those like the big food. And then some of those people who own those large food brands also broadcast companies. They also are people who are sitting on boards in the government. So it's like we have to understand like that when we say they we're talking about the system of capitalism and we're talking about the fact that capitalists would do anything to continue to hoard power and money. So what do we as the people who are trying to resist against that force what can we do? And one of those things is grow food. If you can't grow food seeking out a community garden, farmers markets, some farmers, a lot of farmers markets now accept EBT. You can get a lot more fresh fruits and vegetables with farmers market if you have an EBT through a farmers market than you can in the grocery store.

Princess Cole: If you have EBT you can buy fruit trees and plants and seeds.

Yolanda Williams: It's just about like looking and this is something that you really want to do. It may be hard for certain people but you can figure it out whether you are like for instance said, going to someone that's like, I want to grow my own food. I don't have space. I see that you have space like some kind of bartering system, anything.

Princess Cole: Right, right, bartering.

Yolanda Williams: Okay. So there's this whole cycle here when we discuss like, so it's like farm to table if that's like the most sustainable way to live. But then there's also like these box foods

and they're just like, oh we help you not have to worry about eating. Well there's plastics or distribution centers, there's the trucks to get to you. There's these different steps for the food to get to you is what we need to consider as well. All these different steps contribute to waste really. So as we think about resistance, we got to start thinking about how many steps does it take for this thing to get to me? Now some of us really don't have the capacity to even think about this shit. We are bogged (0:15:00) down with life.

Princess Cole: Right.

Yolanda Williams: So the best thing you can do if you're in that place, you're just like I don't give a fuck about how this got to me. What I do care about is what's in it and if there's chemicals, if there's dyes, all these things, I care about that. So the one thing that I could do is to grow these herbs, figure out how I can start or join a community garden or a CSA program. Like do what you need to do for your family with the capacity that you have to figure out how to ease into a more sustainable life. Because you can't do all of it at the same time. And we're not asking you to, what we're just asking you to do is to be more cognizant of all these things.

Princess Cole: Right. I think the fact that food is so easily accessible as far as, oh, I can just go to the store and grab this. I always kept in the back of my mind what if that wasn't possible? What if they decided, you know what, this neighborhood right here we are just not going to supply their stores with food anymore. What would you do?

Yolanda Williams: It's happening though.

Princess Cole: It's happening now and it's...

Yolanda Williams: Well not that, that thing, but during the pandemic it's happening right now. A lot of shelves are empty, a lot of refrigerators are empty.

Princess Cole: It's happening.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Princess Cole: Right. It's happening. And I'm saying that because when I first started gardening, I'm originally from New York so everybody that I knew was like, you growing food? Oh you country now and blah, blah, blah. Because I moved to this house and I'm like, it has nothing to do with being country. And I'm like, people are so far removed from knowing anything about growing your own food and not necessarily Kiki laughing at me but kind of just like, oh she ain't, you know, that ain't going to, you know, that kind of stuff. Even back then I was like well what would you do if you couldn't go to the store and grab food off the shelf? What would you do?

And I'm not waiting for that moment. And here we are because this is back in 2014 when I first started and I was saying this stuff, here we are. And now every those same people are like, well I know where I'm going if my stores run out of food, the hell you not. No you're not. You're not going to come here and eat my fucking food. The food that she was laughing at me growing and I told you all, what would you do? Oh now you're telling me what you would do. You're not coming to my house.

Yolanda Williams: But what you can do is join some of these gardening groups at Princess is like admin of and learn how to do it because we should not be, now don't get me wrong, when you start to grow food and you're doing it, your plants are healthy. You had you get an abundance, don't plant a zucchini plant. Don't do that. Because you will have zucchinis. Okay. And you'd be like zucchini.

Princess Cole: And all you need is that one plant because they produce a lot and I tend to plant about three or four of those.

Yolanda Williams: So you just eat zucchini brands.

Princess Cole: Yeah, so I like to freeze and do different things. I usually grow more than I probably should, but it's so worth it. It's so worth it. A packet of seeds is between a dollar or two or three. And you get so many seeds and that one seed will produce one plant that's going to give you multiple fruit and more seeds. Exactly.

Yolanda Williams: If you're diligent about collecting seed. My main goal in all of this, my end goal is to teach Gia how to garden and feed herself. So no matter what we don't know what the future holds for this country. And no matter what she will have that knowledge. She will always be able to feed herself. She will, I feel like a lot of us Black people are reclaiming gardening, reclaiming stuff that was deemed below us, like from enslavement like okay I'm not enslave anymore, I don't want to grow my own food, I want to go to the grocery store and get my food, right. There's so much freedom.

Princess Cole: And I did that but come on now.

Yolanda Williams: There's freedom in this though because back in the day they didn't do all that to food. It was more organic. They were just literally farming and then putting it in grocery stores. But it is completely different story nowadays. All this, it's so funny because I mean these gardens and they want so badly to not have one pest. They're like all these pests, pests, pests. How do we kill everything? And my thing is, if your garden does not have pests, something is wrong. Something should be trying to eat your food all the time because that means that it is, you're growing it in a way that is like in line with nature. I'm not saying let the pest get to your

shit. There is a reason why there's some blemishes on your food in the grocery store. That's not natural folks. We got to like start thinking about things in a more natural way. I want her to experience plant a seed, watching that seedling sprout, watching that plant grow, harvesting from that plant and having that pride, like I grew this from this one seed. I grew all these different pieces of food and then I can collect seeds from that piece of food and do it all over again. Like it's such a beautiful cycle. It's so empowering and I'm so excited to see so many people trying to do this right now or and are doing it right now. Black people who are just are like no this is how we get free. Like free from having to be at the mercy of a system that's actively always trying to kill us.

Princess Cole: What Black people have to understand also is that we didn't start growing food during slavery. We've been doing this. The things that we grow right now, I kid you not, almost everything that we eat originally came from the motherland and that's just what it is, okay. It is what it is (0:20:00). So we have to remember that those things came with us, you know what I mean? It came with us.

Yolanda Williams: And the practices came with us. We taught.

Princess Cole: Exactly.

Yolanda Williams: And we taught and so it's funny because I was going through a gardening book and they wanted to talk about like to the Thomas Jefferson's garden. Who do you think was attending that garden? Who do think was attending that garden? What are you talking about? That was the enslaved people's garden that he stole their labor from. So we was out here doing this and the beautiful part and what I'm trying to get into this year and one thing that I'm going to be getting this from Princess is her herbalism course because food is healing in so many different ways. I want to learn herbalism, so I'm not dependent on a pharmacy. I want my pharmacy to look as natural as possible to be able to heal us from the food that we are growing organically. When it comes to like herbalism. That's to me is a whole other level to like liberation.

Princess Cole: Absolutely. And that's another thing that we did and brought here with us is herbalism. I'm constantly seeking knowledge. So I literally like research things like almost daily. So, and I learn new things every day. But I recently found out a lot of different things that we as enslaved people are not in books that were not passed down directly from generation to generation. But these are things that we did. I think it's hard for people to understand that a lot of the things that you deem is white people stuff was ours first.

Yolanda Williams: Ours and indigenous people of Native Americans like...

Princess Cole: Absolutely.

Yolanda Williams: ... yeah, indigenous people.

Princess Cole: Right. And indigenous people in general, right. Yeah, that's what I mean though. But just you know ours in general everything, everything. Even the simplest things as babywearing and breastfeeding and.

Yolanda Williams: Parenting?

Princess Cole: Exactly. All that stuff that you see people saying, oh well that's white people stuff. I'm like what are you talking about? No it's not. We did this, this is ours. And because you see so many white people gate keeping this shit, you think it belongs to them. It does not. And we have to take it back.

Yolanda Williams: We are reclaiming, we are taking up space in these industries and I'm so excited for it. Like it really is on top of this idea of living collectively, living in a village. Like really putting that out there that we can do that. That's my goal for the next two years. But also in the meantime, learning how to be more connected to nature. How to grow my own food. How to use the food that I grow to treat myself when I'm not feeling well or my daughter isn't feeling well. And it just makes me feel so much more connected. Because one of the big things that I've been feeling since having Gia is just this call to know more about the African side of myself. And you and I discussed this before a little bit, like finding out that I was like 54% Nigerian was so amazing. I'm so proud of that. But now I'm just like, okay well Nigeria is a colonized term. I want to know that tribe so I can understand like what language they spoke and I want to know like those cultural traditions and even open to learning about the other sides of me. Because those sides of me, the 26% European that pisses me off. I mean it's me. Well I can't learn about it just because I don't. So I'm going to learn about them. I'm going to learn about the Mesoamerican. I have all these, I'm like a freaking rainbow coalition all up inside.

Princess Cole: Right. Girl, me too. It's so crazy. Obviously, you know, you're Black. You know, you're Black. But then it's like to what extent, like what Black am I, where did my people come from? The average Black person does not know that. It literally had to take me to take the ancestry DNA test to find out that I was Nigerian and everything else. There were no African traditions in my family. We were just Black. And to be honest, I know more about being Japanese than being Black because my grandmother is Japanese. That's what I grew up knowing. I didn't grow up knowing anything about being Nigerian and or anything like that. So it kind of hurt a little bit because it was like then I had to do this to find out. It made me realize how lost we are and it made me realize why Africans call us the lost sons and daughters. We are truly lost. And I was like, it hurt.

Yolanda Williams: It definitely hurts. But also knowing that it helped bridge that gap because when you feel as African-American as a Black person, a Black African-American in this country, we are sort of like we don't know anything about our African side. So how do we connect except for being the Black, except for the melanin and knowing that we are descendants of Africans? And then America don't want us. So we just are in this rainbow, right? So when I did that test and I got that results back, I was just like wow. Like I know and now I can look and I can figure out how do I cook certain things? Like I want to grow the foods from that bridge if I can.

Princess Cole: Now you want to know everything.

Yolanda Williams: Now I want to know everything and I want to go and visit one day. I'm going to do 23andMe and ancestry because I want to see if I can connect with people in Africa possibly. But all this to say I'm just filling this pool (0:25:00) back home and connecting with ancestral practices, connecting with ancestors, wanting to just feel like I belong somewhere. I don't want you to feel lost either. But I don't, I'm going to swap her cheek without her permission. Wait until she's older to ask if she wants to know because it's so, it's so important for us to like, and I know I get why folks are just like, I'm not doing that. And that's more power to you. I felt like this was more important than the other stuff around like DNA, like what they're doing. I did some research.

Princess Cole: Listen they have our DNA from the time, from the day we were born.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah.

Princess Cole: It doesn't even matter at this point. They already have it.

Yolanda Williams: And it's actually, I spoke to a Black geologist. She was like, all the stuff is in the media is so wrong. They're not able to do certain things with your DNA without your consent. This pool though was so strong in me, I was like I have to do this. And so again finding out that information and now I'm just like, okay, what was able to be grown in that region and can I grow it in my region? Or I'm in the south I can grow things like okra and cowpeas and sweet potatoes. We can't grow yams out here I don't think. But we can grow sweet potatoes.

Princess Cole: Yeah sweet potatoes definitely. It's crazy because that's how sweet potatoes were called yams because they looked like yams. So when people say, oh I'm making candy yams. No you're not. You're making candy sweet potatoes. Those are not yams.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah. Because yams are grown in Africa, you know.

Princess Cole: Exactly.

Yolanda Williams: And prolifically that in roman, we can't grow yams out here.

Princess Cole: Well, certain climates people can grow.

Yolanda Williams: That's people like errand, I think desert climate. But either way I'm growing the sweet potatoes as an ancestral thing. I want like my garden to represent these things from my home.

Princess Cole: And I didn't know at the time, it was a few years ago, I saw this eggplant, I saw seeds for this eggplant. I was like, oh that looked kind of cool. Let me go ahead and buy some. And for some reason like the seeds wouldn't germinate, they're probably just bad seeds. And I kept trying again thinking it was me and I was like, no, probably this company just is selling bad seeds for this variety. And it wasn't until maybe about a year or so ago that I learned that particular eggplant came from Africa. And I was like, I scratched my head. Because every time I see this variety on a website it says Turkish eggplant and it's a small round orange eggplant and it says Turkish eggplant. I said, oh hell no. They're trying to change the name on something again. I said, so if I ever get the opportunity to grow this eggplant and save the seeds to sell on my seed site, I am going to name it what it is.

Yolanda Williams: Yes.

Princess Cole: Because I can't stand it. And it's the same thing with the fish pepper. White people are trying to call it the candy cane pepper. And I'm like no, stop. It is called fish pepper for a reason. Stop trying to change our stuff. I will make sure I do everything I can to make sure that that candy cane bullshit don't stick.

Yolanda Williams: Well, being from the south, I feel like there's a lot of disconnect. Southern food people really be like, oh its southern food when actually it's like food. It's African food.

Princess Cole: It's African food.

Yolanda Williams: And I follow a few people on YouTube and it's one of the girls is a white girl and she's like, oh I love okra and okra is so southern. I'm just like okra is African. So of course I went to her YouTube and yes, now that it's here, it's a southern food but no vibe roots man. Like know where this came from. So you can pay homage to that. That Paul Robison tomato. Do you even know what he stood for?

Princess Cole: Right. Do you even know who he is?

Yolanda Williams: Do you know who he is?

Princess Cole: Right.

Yolanda Williams: And if you did, would you still grow it? You know what I'm saying? Like you love the taste, but do you love the man that is named after? I may even go into all that. So all I'm saying is like it's sold the, when you start doing your research around like seeds and I refuse to buy from certain seed companies, Bakers Creek, I refuse to buy from them.

Princess Cole: Oh girl. I learned about some stuff that they did a couple years ago. I was like, oh no, it's always felt a little funny buying things from them anyway because I'm like where they're getting stuff.

Yolanda Williams: It's colonizer energy. That's why. It feels very colonize.

Princess Cole: Yeah. So when they did, they did. I was like, oh yeah.

Yolanda Williams: I think it's a Clive Bundy thing. I just really want to support native seed keepers, Black seed companies, seed companies like Seed Savers who are very diligent about giving back to the native communities and about saving seeds in a way that's not colonizing after they get them. I'm very diligent now about where I get seeds from and I really hope you all are too. Bakers Creek comes out with a beautiful seed catalog every single year. Everybody wants it.

Princess Cole: Right. It looks really nice. It looks really nice.

Yolanda Williams: Oh it's so inspirational and you want to grow all everything in it. But no, I'm going to go ahead and get seed catalogs from other places. And as a matter of fact I'll make sure Princess has, she sells seeds and she has an herbalism course and other courses that you can take. Her and I, are actually partnering up this year to offer some gardening courses over the course of the growing season around like seeds starting around like when to harvest and all that stuff. But she also has a blog to help point you in a direction (0:30:00) of Black-owned seed companies. Because there's not a lot of us. There's just not a lot of us and...

Princess Cole: There's not a lot of us, but there are more of us than we think.

Yolanda Williams: Than we think. That's what I was surprised about when I read your blog. So I'll make sure link that in the show notes so you all can support these places because we need to start reclaiming that energy too. And native, I think I also have purchased recently from native alliance of Seed Keepers. But anyway, try to find some seed companies that are Black and indigenous to support and be diligent about who you're giving your money to throughout starting

season. Actually all the time be diligent about like who you spend money with and look to their politics. It matters. You're funding someone who does not care about your life. You're funding, I refuse to fund those types of people. I really want to make sure that my business, my money is going to, especially Black women, but Black and indigenous people. Hopefully as this catches on, there's more of us that can do things like seed trays and farming equipment. We're closing that loop again and circulating the dollar again and not having to go outside all the time. So with that said, I wanted to ask you as far as like gardening as active resistance, what do you feel around that?

Princess Cole: It's a lot. And I can see how people can be intimidated by it because it's not something you don't just, I'm just going to plant the seed leave and it grows and this, it's not as simple as that. And I can definitely understand how somebody can see people gardening and then be like, I don't know if I could do that. But you would do it if your life depended on it. And I do it as if my life depends on it because at this point we are already in the middle of our lives depending on it. Are we really going to wait until we reach the moment where we literally are like, oh shit, what the fuck do I do now? I'm not waiting on that moment. We are already in the middle of it. So it's happening. I think it's really important to just dive in and learn everything you can because your survival it depends on it. It really does. And I don't think people are really getting that. Seeing pictures of these empty shelves on social media should really make you sit back and say what the fuck? Because why is it happening? It doesn't have to happen, but it's happening. So you people really need to take it seriously because it's life or death out here.

Yolanda Williams: I think about the supply chain and how it is dependent on slave labor, basically slave wages, slave capitalism, but people...

Princess Cole: Even still.

Yolanda Williams: Even no today because we are talking about people in factories who get paid very, very little. Very little. I think it was Kellogg's, those people just won a major victory by boycotting. They were like, we need better pay, we need better benefits, like Kellogg's pay us. And they were like, they didn't want to because of our protests. People were like, I'm not buying Kellogg's anymore. And their protests, right? They won their new contract. But there's so many of these industries that depend on low wage labor and its dangerous work like working in these chicken factories and these pig factories. It is very dangerous work. And sometimes they will send that overseas because it is dangerous and people work for even less and they don't have any benefits. I don't want to be a part of that anymore, of the exploitation of people. I'm still going to need things like flour, still going to have to depend on a store in some capacity. But I'm going to figure out who can I barter with? Who can I right partner with to be able to get this organically, sustainably where people aren't being harmed because the food industry is so harmful to us and to the people who are tasked with working within it. As we think about looking at these empty

shelves and you got to think about the pandemic has impacted their ability to go to work. These people are dying, some of them, you know. And they were forced to actually go and stay and work in the very beginning of the pandemic. So what we're seeing is the effect of capitalism, not caring about people.

Princess Cole: If nothing wakes you up more than seeing how many foods and ingredients that are banned in other countries, but legal here...

Yolanda Williams: I don't think people know that. I remember going to Germany and eating some of the best yogurt I've ever had in my life, right? Because the UK does not allow GMO food.

Princess Cole: Which is crazy to me because they are the ones who got this shit like this in the first place, taking us from our homeland and bringing us here and feeding us poison. But then over there they cooled and they're fine. They got all the natural ingredients and no process, nothing. And they're legal over there, but it's not over here. And these are the same companies.

Yolanda Williams: You know what I learned recently is the food that the spray, the pesticides that they spray on fruits and vegetables that came from World War II done the same people who made the gas chambers, it's the same gas and they just tweaked it for pests for food. So the US after World War II, they recruited (0:35:00) the German people who created the gas chambers and said, hey, we need this recipe. We need to figure out like how to get this food together like so it could stop rotting and be shelf stable. So they brought them over here and using that same recipe from the gas chambers, they made a new recipe to spray on food and heavily in the 40s, 50s advertised it to food companies. And that's what people are eating. We are eating the same like the pesticides and it's not just like on fruits, you got to understand the stuff that's in the box stuff.

Princess Cole: Everything.

Yolanda Williams: The stuff that's in the box stuff, it comes from fruits and vegetables that's been sprayed and wheat and, you know, grains that's been sprayed with this stuff right? Doesn't give us, nobody, nothing escapes that. It's the same formula, just twists a little bit that killed 6 million people. It's like you got to understand the history. And once you know that history, like once I realized I was like sickened, I was like this is terrible. It broke my heart.

Princess Cole: And then you wonder why people are just getting cancer out of nowhere and all these other kind of diseases and you can't even really pinpoint where it came from because this poison is in everything you eat and everything you touch.

Yolanda Williams: So what that said, the whole point of this episode was to hopefully empower you to grow your own food in some capacity. To really think about gardening, about herbalism, about reclaiming ancestral practices as an act of resistance against capitalism. A system that's designed to dehumanize and kill people. We really hope that you're able to understand like the importance of this. What advice can you give like the beginning gardener, like where can I go to figure out how do I get started with this?

Princess Cole: The very first thing you want to do is make sure you learn what your grow zone is and what your frost dates are and what you can grow in what season. Because once you understand that, it'll really help you to be successful gardening. Because you can't just grow anything at any time. So it's really important to learn what you can grow and when you can grow it. And Black girls with gardenings, come on over. Black girls with gardens on Facebook group. So get in there and everybody will help.

Yolanda Williams: And all you got to do is Google. Yeah, you can say if you're trying to figure out your grow zone, all you have to do is Google your zip code grow zone and you'll get that.

Princess Cole: Zip code and then you'll see, it'll tell you what zone you're in. Some websites will actually give you a list with dates to tell you when you can start these things. It'll give you your frost date as well as how many frost free dates you have in between the first and last frost dates. All these websites will give you all that stuff. Actually have a blog post called Novice Gardening or something like that. I can't think of off the top of my head with all of the things that you can do to get started to garden.

Yolanda Williams: Okay, so speaking of where can people find you?

Princess Cole: Start out finding me on [www.princesscole.com](http://www.princesscole.com) and all of my information is on there as far as even my other websites and social media and anywhere else that you can find.

Yolanda Williams: And again, she is one of the moderators in the Facebook group, Black Girls with Edible Gardens. And I'm in a few, a few gardening groups. One of them is Black Girls with Container Gardens. One of them is Black Urban Gardens and Black Farmers. And if you're not Black and you're listening to this, there are a plethora of groups for you all. So just, you know, on Facebook, go on Facebook because you will get so much information in those groups. They really helped me get started. Like I was very thankful for the online communities that help me to learn how to start growing food. But don't skip on, listen, don't sleep on YouTube because you will literally get your life, your whole gardening life on a YouTube.

Princess Cole: Go down the YouTube gardening rabbit hole and it is just like, wow. All this...

Yolanda Williams: Listen, I know how to, I know how to build a greenhouse now. Okay. From cattle panel.

Princess Cole: Right. You don't even have to ever have done it to know that you know how to do it because you know watch so many videos. It makes you feel like you build a house. If you could build a greenhouse.

Yolanda Williams: I can't do it. And it does empower you. So like go down that YouTube rabbit hole and don't be afraid to like reach out for help. So again, we're going to be having some workshops going to be very low cost workshop to help gardeners who want to get started grow food. So we'll include that schedule into the show notes and we're going to be doing like a couple free ones too just to get you all started because this is so important. We want as many people as possible to start growing their food. That's like part of my mission outside of like, to me this is part of conscious parenting because we got to teach our children, this information was not passed down by our parents. And for some people, their parents' parents who had a garden, but they so wanted to focus on college degrees and big houses and capitalism and (0:40:00) that's no shade to education. But this is education that will save our lives. And so my goal is to not have any more generations of lost information of stuff like breastfeeding, babywearing, gardening. This is part of us and we need to remember. What does decolonizing parenting mean to you?

Princess Cole: For me it is just making sure that my kids have the tools and the education to be able to navigate life as Black people. The things that I didn't grow up learning that I wish I knew when I was younger because it would've helped me make better decisions. And my daughter is almost 17, so I do not want her to go through the things that I went through. Because like I said, had I known a lot of the things that I learned on my own as an adult, I truly wish that that knowledge was passed down to me. Because my life would be so much different. If you'd have told me at 17 that I was going to be gardening and in herbalist and I looked at you like you had two heads because I didn't care about that stuff. Showing her, and of course the babies as well, like, you know, this is a part of life. I feel like this is a part of life that everybody needs to learn.

Yolanda Williams: Well thank you so much, Princess. Thank you so much for joining me and thank you for...

Princess Cole: Thank you for having me.

Yolanda Williams: ... providing an inspiration. Like I said, I've been like Facebook stalking you for a minute now. And I was just like, how can we be friends? I look at Black women, I'm just like, I want to be their friends so bad. But I don't want to be like the person in their comments or their DMs like, can we please? Can I have friends with you?

Princess Cole: Listen, I don't see anything wrong with that. I say, shoot your friend shot, shoot your friend shot.

Yolanda Williams: Yeah. I've already shoot my friend shot.

Princess Cole: You never know. Somebody did that to me a couple of years ago. We had been talking on Instagram back and forth for a while and then one day she was like, you want to be my best friend. I was like, girl, yes.

Yolanda Williams: I love it.

Princess Cole: Yeah. Fuck it. Like we just connected. Sometimes you just got to go for it. Just like how you do with people you think you want to be in a romantic relationship with. There's nothing wrong with seeing somebody you want to be friends with and being like, you want to be my friend.

Yolanda Williams: Well thank you and thank you for accepting my friend request.

Princess Cole: Absolutely.

Yolanda Williams: Again, look out for workshops that we're going to be posting about. I hope you all can join us. And again, they will be equitably priced. But also keeping in mind that as much as we want to be able to give away stuff, we have families to feed so...

Princess Cole: Got bills to pay.

Yolanda Williams: We got bills to pay and unfortunately we just don't have the financial capacity to give all of our stuff away for free. But there will be a couple free workshops for those who need them. All right, you all. Well, thank you for joining me for this amazing podcast. Please make sure to leave a ready review and let me know what you think in the comment section on social media. And until then, till next time, keep it conscious.