

The Free Mulch Story

By Candace Jones-Herreros

I grew up in a middle class African American home with college degreed parents that were busy navigating corporate ladders. We lived in suburbia with manicured lawns, a pool, fences and stranger neighbors. We bought groceries from the local supermarkets and ate balanced meals...for our parents we had finally arrived.

They had succeeded in transcending the dreams of their great grand parents, free from grueling, mandatory farm labor they could choose their own paths (and chose the rat race, a different kind of slavery).

It was not until many years later that I started to question my pre-shaped ideas of success. Nudged by a year studying abroad, I began to question everything: my relationship with the creator, the environment, community, food, ego identity. While abroad I met people from all over the world and learned something from each one. It was interesting to meet people who liked food gardening, who went to the market for one day's meal so as to have the freshest produce instead of bulk buying for weeks at a time, who knew their butchers, fishermen and farmers so well it felt like family transactions instead of business.

All of these experiences were marinating when I returned to the states, and started to look at the surroundings with new eyes...naive eyes. I had been home just a few days when we drove by a graffiti sign with the words Free Mulch affixed to a post, stuck in a pile of mulch. Never having gardened before, the first reference my mind could conceive was that of a rallying/protest sign. With utmost sincerity, I asked the people in the car,

"Who is Mulch, and why won't they just free him?"

This was the beginning of my introduction to Farming 101. Curiosity and an earnest desire for oneness with the Creator and Creation led me to study Permaculture and to pursue a sustainable life of simplicity and purpose. Amy and I met through Frog Song's CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) partnership. Our passion for sharing, learning and growing is morphing into a beautiful "For Purpose" (non profit) relationship.