

**Robbed by Kern County Sheriff's Deputies  
Testimony by Alexandra Wilson**

**§ 6 – We Cultivated the Land  
throughout Spring,  
and continued to document our progress**

## Rebuilt the brick planter and planted potatoes:

We rebuilt and cleaned the garbage and rocks out of the brick planter on the east side of the property, and disassembled the contraption that was nailed to the tree (*see page 9*).



**Left:** Brick garden bed after rocks were removed (*see page 9*).

**Right:** Kevin prepping the garden on 12-14-2015.



**Left:** Cut potatoes into quarters and buried them in about 2 inches of soil, then covered with a tarp until the frost was over. Planted on 12-17-2015.

## 20 potato plants came up in February:



We added another layer of bricks to the planter, then added several bags of soil purchased from L & M Lumber to give the potatoes more room to grow. The terrible condition we found this planter in is shown on page 9. Photo at right is facing south toward the planter.



**We grew more types of potatoes and yams  
using the double-planter technique:**



*"Double Planer Technique".  
makes harvesting simple.*



*2 planters purchased from L & M Lumber after being  
prepared.*



*Our first transplant.*

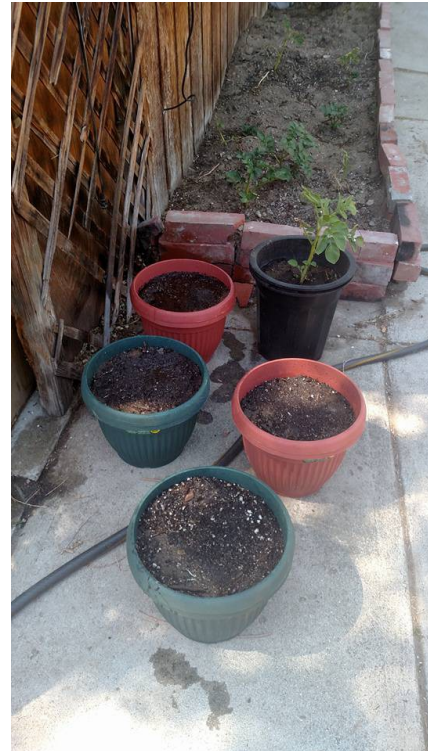


*We planted purple potatoes purchased  
at Vons in Lake Isabella.*

**We were forced to leave behind the planters and our labor when we were forced from our home:**



*Planting Yams...*



**We tilled the soil across the walkway to prepare the space for raised beds:**



## We installed raised beds:

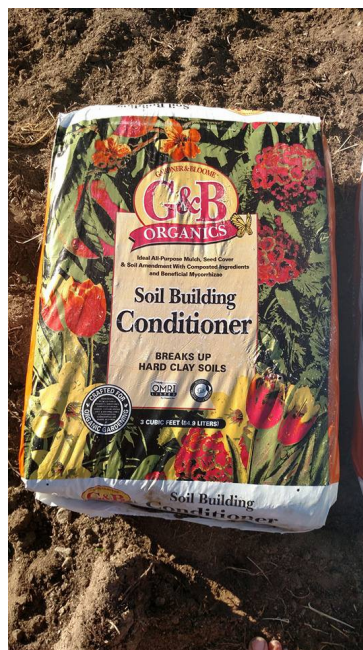


**Left: Friend and local community member Laura Walters** helped assemble our raised beds.



**Left:** First three raised beds after they were sown with asparagus and carrot seeds.

**Right:** Raised beds, brick planters, and pots were filled with soil and/or soil conditioner purchased from local hardware store L & M Lumber.

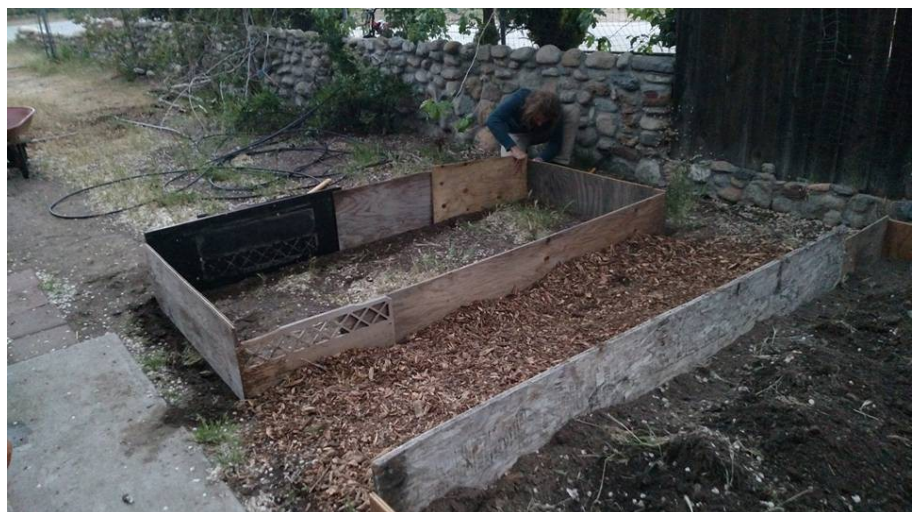


## We added mulch between the raised beds:

First we dug out between the raised beds to add the soil to the beds *shown at left*). **Our friend and neighbor Mark** (*shown at top right*) provided us with several truckloads of mulch after we helped him shovel several loads for another project he was working on. He was excited about helping us with our garden and we looked forward to eating well and having friends over for dinner. Kevin is in the second photo on the right.



**Right: Local permaculture and ethnobotany enthusiast Rick DuVall** helping to install a raised bed.



**The raised beds were looking beautiful:**



**We put chain link onto the fence to give berry vines something to climb:**



**Right:** We planted *Mary Washington Green* asparagus and purple asparagus .<sup>1</sup>

**Far Right:** We planted heirloom rainbow carrots in some of the raised beds.<sup>2</sup>



1 Photo from What Would Betty Do, "[TRY SOMETHING NEW: PURPLE ASPARAGUS](#)" by Alisa is in Season (6-6-2011)

2 Photo from [Smart Seeds Emporium](#). Sale item on [Etsy](#).



## Finishing the west side of the property:

We planted Bibb lettuce and Jericho lettuce in the planters on the front porch, arugula in the brick planter directly in front of the rear building, and a variety of salad greens in the raised beds we didn't plant the carrots and asparagus in. Our **friends and neighbors Adam and Renee Forker** donated the bricks lined along the sidewalk, and the wooden cable spool and ceramic pots shown in the foreground of the bottom photo.



## We pounded holes into the bottom of cans to use them for sprouting:

While documenting our progress, I was preparing to write a book about “how to claim an abandoned property for the purpose of homesteading” in order to show people how *title by prescription* or *adverse possession* could be used in a socially-beneficial way. By re-using soup cans in this way we were able to demonstrate a very economical way to get plants started. One of our 12 okra shrubs that came up is shown on the right, and the different kinds of okra we had growing are shown below.



Photo from “[Clemson Spineless Okra Seeds](#)” from Park Seed.



Photo from “[Emerald Green Okra](#)” by Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds.

## We converted this taxidermy case into a “Sprighthouse”:

Another expensive item that was taken from us is this large display case that was behind the house. Sprouting plants in here prevented birds from snagging seeds out of the soil after we planted, and made them easy to maintain before transplanting them to the garden.

The display case was given to us by our **friends and neighbors Adam and Renee Forker**, who were in the process of moving and gave us many other items shown throughout this book.



## Other plants being grown in the sprighthouse when we were dispossessed:



*Heirloom peppers from [GrowOrganic.com](http://GrowOrganic.com).*



*Photo of “[Black Beauty Eggplants](#)” from American Meadows.*

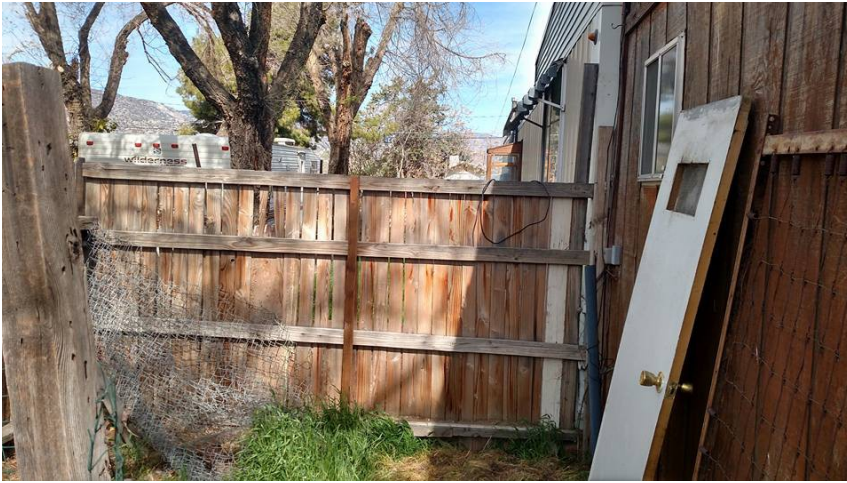


*“Chinese Long” Eggplants:*

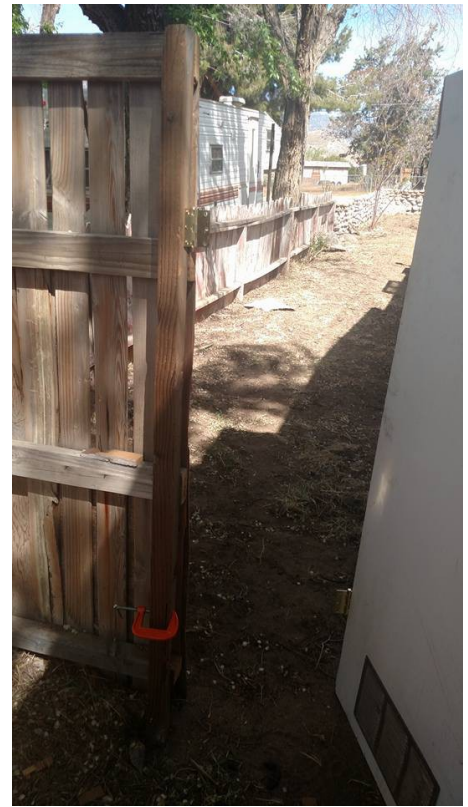
## Created a greenhouse on west side of property:

After the wooden contraption (page 16) was disassembled, and the garbage cleaned up, a **neighborhood friend (Randy White)** was helping to clean and uncovered a beautiful brick walkway. See what this location looked like when we first discovered it on pages 14 through 17.





*Before the door was installed.*



*Clamping a piece of lumber to affix the door to it.*



*Before the door, north side of fence.*



**Right:** Installed a door into the fence that was separating the north and south side of the property. The door also served as the front side of the greenhouse.

**Note:** Final photos of how we had the greenhouse are not available.

## We began building a cold frame:

North of the greenhouse, to the west side of the house, we dug a pit for use in building a cold frame (*shown at left*). Soil was relocated to the east side of the property and used to fill the raised beds.



*Photo taken on 4-24-2016.*

Cold frames are excellent for growing cruciferous greens such as cauliflower, cabbage, bok choy, kale, broccoli, spinach, beets, peas, salad greens, and Brussels sprouts. This photo shows the design structure we were building at the time we were dispossessed:



*Photo of cold frame: Houzz, "[How to Start a Cool-Season Vegetable Garden](#)" by Marianne Lipanovich (9-15-18).*



*Photo source: Lopez Island Kitchen Gardens, "[January King Cabbage](#)" (12-6-15)*



*Several types of Cauliflower: The Masters of Horticulture, "[Fall Veggie Picks \(Cauliflower\)](#) by [Patty Leander](#)" (8-28-13). Photo by Bruce Leander.*

## We planted tomatoes behind the greenhouse:

These tomato cages (from **Mark**) were added, then heirloom tomatoes (*bottom photo*) were planted. This is the same spot as on the right side of the middle photo on page 14, and it is the same spot I was standing when photographing the top photo on page 16. We removed a lot of trash and rocks, and added several bags of potting soil here.



## Useful, drought-tolerant native plants in the front yard:

We transplanted amaranth (*top left*), sagebrush (*middle left*), yucca (*right*), and red amaranth (*bottom*). Governor Brown was encouraging California Citizens to use less water – these plants require little water and have edible parts and other practical uses.





**In spring the red and green amaranth came up:**



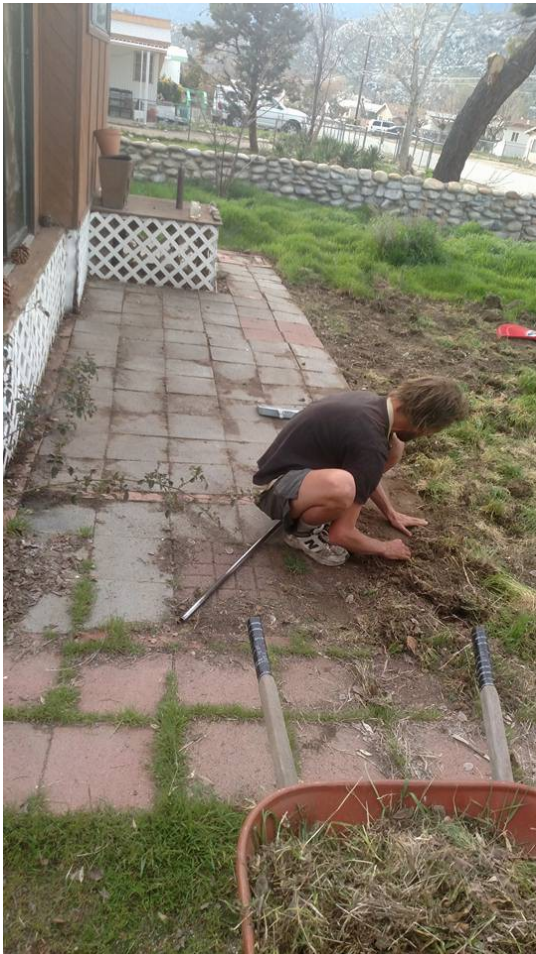
All plants in the foreground (except the squash plant on the left) are amaranth later in the season.



**Springtime – gardening the front yard:**



*View from front yard facing Lake Isabella Blvd. On 12-14-2016.*



*Kevin tearing up the grass.*



*3-2-2016.*

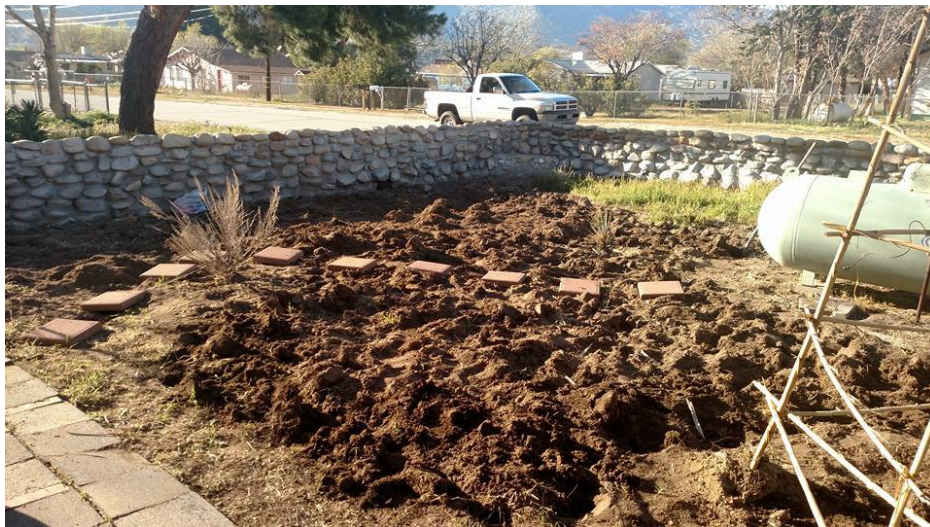


*On 3-2-2016 these were uploaded to Facebook.*

**We tilled the soil and added soil conditioner throughout the yard:**



**We used square bricks to protect the natural gas pipeline from shovel damage:**



## We built a bamboo “cucumber tipi”:

Cucumbers tend to get larger when they *hang*, and they like a lot of water; the cucumber tipi is a beautiful piece of art that adds to the aesthetic value of the property and neighborhood, and the structure helps to shade and conserve water.



*3–8–2016: First day with our Cucumber Teepee. Photo by Laura Walters.*



*Photo from [Bohemian Pages](#) on Pinterest.*



*4–25–2016 soon after the cucumbers first came up.*

## Types of heirloom cucumbers we planted:



Photo of "Ashley Cucumbers" from *Harvest to Table*, "[How to Grow Cucumbers](#)" by Steve Albert (3-20-16)



Photo of "Early Fortune Cucumbers" from *Getting Back to the Basics*, "[Growing Cucumber from Seed to Harvest](#)" by "Mary" (3-2-14)



Photo from "[Great Boston Heirloom Pickling Cucumbers](#)" for sale on Amazon by David's Garden Seeds.



5-5-2016 our cucumbers coming up.



Morning of 5-11-2016.

## **We were growing heirloom *Russian Mammoth Sunflowers*:**

We planted them in a perimeter by the stone wall to create an aesthetically pleasing privacy barrier that would also serve as an abundant food source. We planted them in a few other places too.



*Soil conditioner added along edge of wall where Russian Mammoth Sunflowers were planted.*



*Photo of Russian mammoth Sunflower from [Renee's Garden](#).*



*Photo by [Sara Hill](#).*

**Cucumbers and mammoth sunflowers on 5-27-2016:**  
(photo taken *after* we were **dispossessed**)



## We planted corn, beans, and squash using “The 3 Sisters” technique:

A form of “companion planting,” the technique has been employed for hundreds of years by various Indian peoples, including the Haudenosaunee (aka Iroquois”), Tewa, and Anasazi. Steps include (1) plant the corn into *mounds* after danger of frost has passed, (2) plant pole beans when the corn is 5 inches high, and (3) plant squash seeds one week later. The purpose is that the beans will hang from the corn leaves and add nitrogen to the soil which in turn the corn thrives on. The large squash leaves keep in the water, and keep out the weeds. When corn, beans, and squash are added together in a dish it is called succotash.



*Glass Gem kernels we planted.*



*Photo of “[Glass Gem Corn](#)” from Sacred Ecology.*



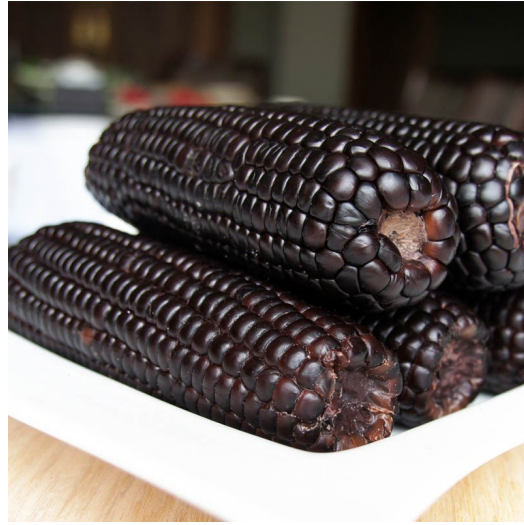
*Fertilizing the kernels with nettle broth.*



We also planted heirloom *Bantam Sweet* and *Iroquois Black* corn:



*Photo of Bantam Sweet Corn from [Organic Heirloom Seeds](#).*



*Black Sweet Corn posted on [AliExpress](#).*



*Eight planted mounds.*

We planted *Anasazi* and *rattlesnake snap* beans next to the corn:



Photo of *Anasazi* Beans from [Zurzan Idaho heirloom Beans](#).



Photo of *Rattlesnake Snap Peas* from [Nantahala Farm & Garden](#).



*Black Sweet Corn*



*Rattlesnake Snap* sprout, front yard-corn behind.

**Beans when they first came up:**



**Our corn and beans in May 2016:**



**Planted ~10 peach and ~10 apricot tree cuttings:**



*Apricot cuttings given to us from a friend we met at the Seventh Day Adventist Church we attended.*



*Apricot cuttings after they'd been prepared to propagate inside the "greenhouse".*



*Peach tree cuttings donated by Reverend Jim.*

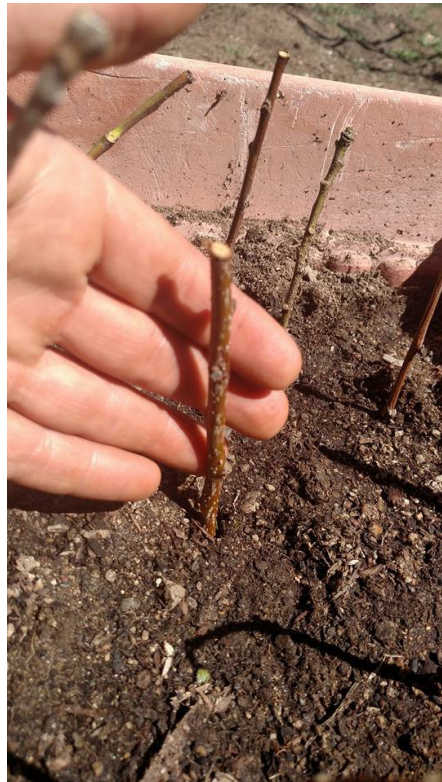
## Cutting the branches *cleanly* helps them take root:

To cut cleanly, a knife is held against the cutting, and a rock or hammer is used to pound the blade *suddenly* through the cutting.



## Preparing the cuttings to take root:

We measured the cuttings so they fit in a sealed plastic jug filled with ~2" of water. Every two days the cap was briefly removed to release the gases then resealed. After ~2 weeks the cuttings sprouted leaves and white nubs covered them from end to end (*bottom right photo*).



**Leaf growth after 2 weeks in the jar – freshly transplanted:**



**Planters were gifts from our neighbor Mark:**



