




What's in Your Urban Farm? with Greg Peterson

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Most farmers live regimented lives: strict schedules, automated watering, neat and tidy rows of crops. At his plot in Central Phoenix, urban farmer Greg Peterson takes a looser approach. "This is very much a forest growing here, and nobody heavily manages a forest. I just kind of let things go," Peterson says. This month marks Peterson's 20th annual fruit tree education program (September 7, November 1-2) and the fifth year of The Great American Seed Up (September 27-28, urbanfarm.org), a seed exchange he co-founded to "instill food into our landscapes." He let us peep his farm tools.

Peterson buys inexpensive carpet knives at the hardware store to cut off the tops of weeds. "I like weeds in my yard. People look at me kinda funny, like, 'Whaaaaat?'" The weed tops go to the chickens for feed and weed bases die and "compost" themselves in the soil, so to speak.



"It's priceless for moving stuff around," Peterson says of this "dooley" cart. "It's not cheap - it was \$400 when I bought it. But it's lasted 15 years."

"I'm not a believer in suntan lotion or [sunscreen] because of the chemicals," Peterson says. He covets up with this Slovakia kerchief (a nod to his mother's homeland) and "I'm an Urban Farmer" hat. "And I have a farmer's tan."



"My favorite shovel," Peterson says of this sharpshooter. "I have a couple with fiberglass, but this is a full metal rod in here... It's super heavy-duty." He uses it to dig holes for fence posts and trenches. "It came from [my wife] Heidi's dad's collection."

The alligator chainsaw is aptly named. "It looks like an alligator mouth," Peterson says. "For the tree trimming that I do, I only have two large trees on the property that I have to pay to get done. This does all the rest of it."

