

Indigenous Ethiopian Technology & The Modern Maker Movement

Section 1: Cultural Knowledge Embedded in the Crafting & Use of Tools

Interview with Gethawe Wotsah, Ethiopian Gardener and Derese Demessie, Interpreter

“This is like my history.”

Name: _____ Date: _____

View the short video of Gethawe Wotsah, an Ethiopian Gardener. Gethawe is currently the head gardener for a large hotel located in Sodo, Ethiopia. He enjoys growing false banana, mango trees and “real” banana trees in his home garden in Arba Minch, Ethiopia. He also has experience growing green chili peppers, sugar cane and coffee trees. He is concerned with soil quality and adds compost to soil which consists of cow manure to enrich the soil for plant growth. When asked how he trains new gardeners that he supervises, Gethawe indicated that he teaches them to first observe his techniques for pruning, digging and cutting grass then they can independently garden. Gethawe says cutting grass by hand is a challenge; but, “the machine” (lawnmower) saves time.

Refer to the short video above and Gethawe’s comments about his history of gardening. Gethawe mentioned in the video, “...this is like my history. Keeping everything in order.”

1. What inferences can you make from Gethawe’s quote above?

2. Think of various occupations that your family members and neighbors hold today or in the past. Are there any particular skills that they have learned that been passed on from one generation to another?

3. Interpret why Gethawe believes in observation first then allowing his trainees to proceed with tasks. What is the significance and importance of this method of teaching a skill?
