

CHAPTER VII

DOORYARD GARDENS

Many plants apart from the dietary staples are grown only in the immediate vicinity of houses. Practical reasons may account for this localization: some plants need continual protection from pests (including thieves), some plants yield best when grown in the organic trash that accumulates around house sites, and some plants which would grow as well in fields are grown near houses simply for convenience. In addition, dooryard gardens serve as test plots for introduced plants and allow strong selective pressure to be put on highly variable plants or on transplants from the wild.¹

In the Polochic Valley settlement of Chichipate, only six out of twenty-two crop plants are grown exclusively in house yards.² But in the neighborhood of San Juan Chamelco not only is the list of plants different (by virtue of higher elevation and lower temperatures) but a larger number of plants is confined to dooryard gardens. One may compare Table 19 to Carter's Table 9.³

¹ Cf. Kimber, ms. 1972.

² Carter, 1969: 69.

³ Ibid.: 64-67.

TABLE 19

HIGHLAND GARDEN PLANTS

<u>Q?eqči?*</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Propa- gation</u> ¹	<u>Uses</u> ²	
				<u>Food</u>	<u>Other</u>
A:K?AB K?E	<i>huele-de-noche</i>	--	C	--	Tl,p
ARAKAČ	<i>arracacha</i>	Peru carrot	R	r,l	
BAXLAQ ČE?	--	--	?	--	Tp,Ml
ČI:N	<i>naranja</i>	orange	S	f	Ml
ČO:ČOKL	<i>cojiniquíl</i>	--	S?	--	Tp,l
Č?IMA (7)	<i>güisquil, chayote</i>	--S	f,r,l	Ml	
Č?OP	<i>piña</i>	pineapple	R	f	--
--	<i>durazno</i>	peach	S	f	Tw
HOROQ	<i>hierba mala</i>	--	C	--	Tp
IK (7)	<i>chile</i>	chili pepper	S	f	--
IK?OY	<i>ayote</i>	squash	S	f,s	--
(R-)ISK?- I?XUL TIB	<i>yerbabuena</i>	mint	C	l	--
IŠIM (2)	<i>maíz</i>	maize	S	f	Tl
IŠIM OQOB	--	--	C	--	Ml
KE:NQ? (13)	<i>frijól</i>	bean	S	f	-
KAMPANI:	<i>campanilla</i>	--	?	--	Mf,Tp
KIK'EL QAWA'	--	--	C	--	Ml
KOYOU	<i>coyou</i>	--	S	f	--
KULANTRO	<i>culandro</i>	coriander	S	l	-
KU:KIL	<i>izote</i>	yucca	C	i	Tp
K?ERK	--	--	R?	--	Tl
K?IB	<i>pacaya</i>	--	R,S	i,t	--
K?UM (3)	<i>ayote</i>	squash	S	f,s	--
LA (2)	<i>chichicaste</i>	--	C	--	Tp,l,Ml
MA:K?UY (2)	<i>hierba mora</i>	--	S	l	--
MALA:NK	<i>malanga</i>	taro	R	r	--
MAY (2)	<i>tobaco</i>	tobacco	S	--	Ml
MAY ŠUL	<i>algália</i>	--	S	--	Mf,s

...Continued

TABLE 19 (Continued)

<u>Q?eqči?</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Propa- gation</u>	<u>Uses</u>	
				<u>Food</u>	<u>Other</u>
--	<i>miltomate</i>	husk tomato	S	f	--
MO:R	<i>moro</i>	hibiscus	?	--	Tp
MOŠ Q?E:N	--	--	R	--	Tl
MUČ	<i>chipilín</i>	--	S	s	--
--	<i>níspero</i>	loquat	S	i	--
--	<i>nogál</i>	walnut	S	f	Tp,w
NOQ?	<i>algodón</i>	cotton	S	--Tf	
O (2)	<i>aguacate</i>	avocado	S	f	Ms
OŠ (2)	<i>quequescamote</i>	taro	R	r,l	--
PATA (3)	<i>guayaba</i>	guava	S	f	Tw
PIŠ (3)	<i>tomate</i>	tomato	S	f	--
PE:NS	<i>pimienta</i> <i>gorda</i>	allspice	S	f	--
Q?OQ?	<i>chilacayote</i>	--	S	f,s	--
RAŠTUL	<i>injerto</i>	--	S	f	Tp
RUM (2)	<i>jocote</i>	hog plum	S?	f	--
SAMAT	<i>culandrín</i>	--	S	l	--
SAY	--	--	S?	--	Tp
SES (2)	<i>bledo</i>	amaranth	S	l,s	-
SU (4)	<i>tecomate</i>	gourd	S	--	Tf
TU:S (3)	<i>flor-de- muertos</i>	marigold	S	--	Ri
C?IN	<i>yuca</i>	manioc	R	r	--
C?INTE? (2)	<i>palo de pito</i>	--	C	l?	Tp,w,f
C?ITON	--	--	-	l	--
C?OLOX (3)	<i>dália</i>	dahlia	C,S	l	--
C?UKR (2)	--	--	C	--	Tl
UC?AXL (2)	<i>caña de azúcar</i>	sugarcane	C	p	Tl

¹Symbols: C = cutting, S = seed, R = root

²Symbols: T = technical, M = medicinal, R = ritual; l = leaf,
i = inflorescence, f = fruit, r = root, t = trunk,
s = seed, p = whole plant

*Number of varieties is indicated in parentheses

Principal Garden Plants

A distinction needs to be made between dooryard gardens proper and the town garden sites called by their Spanish name, *sitios*. Often the majority of area in the latter will be devoted to production of a sequence of single crops which would otherwise be found mixed in a dooryard garden, especially cabbages and other introduced vegetables, or true field crops such as early beans, or the maize variety (*qʔambob*) which is only grown in *sitios*. While gardens will contain a diversity of crops at all times - and different collections of crops at different times - one would not expect to find even the principal plants discussed here growing all in one garden at one time.

Cucurbits

The standard cucurbit found in nearly every garden is *čʔima* (Sp. *guisquil* or *chayote*). This is a plant of many uses: the fruit is eaten boiled as are the enlarged roots (*šeʔ čʔima*; Sp. *ichintál*), dug only in January when the vine dies back, and the tender leaves are boiled for greens while the juice from fresh tendrils is a haemostatic used on minor wounds. At least seven varieties are recognized, based on combinations of size, color and spininess. Planting is by shallow burial of whole fruit, preferably in the last weeks of January or first weeks of December and at full moon (*čʔutčʔuqeb li qawaʔ; cʔaqal r-aubal li qa-čʔima*: "Our Lords are gathered together; it is right for our guisquils' planting"). Women do the planting, and the custom as of thirty years ago was to gather together the children and fill a *čampa* with rocks, etc., to assure abundant

rooting and tubers (*re naq mas naqk ta-e:lk, č?utč?uk li š-še?*). The germ of the seed (*š-po: its moon*) is delicious when taken from boiled fruit, which tends to be bland and fibrous. Fruit struck by frost or hail will not cook properly - *mas xut?xut? li č?ima:* the güisquil is very stickery. The starchy tubers are supposed to be dug early or late in the day, otherwise they will be found very deeply buried. *Š-ko sa? kayil*, "they have gone to market", expressed with tongue in cheek since one usually has to follow the root to a depth of 1.5 meters or more to find tubers. In the process of digging *še? č?ima* the garden soil gets a deep cultivation, at least in spots!

An ancient squash-like cucurbit cultivated more in the *aldeas* than in town is *q?oq?* (Sp. *chilacayote*); it is the only perennial cultigen in the genus and has a long history in both New and Old Worlds.⁴ The fact that it is perennial makes it something of a nuisance, since in weeding one is liable to kill it accidentally by cutting the vine. The vine covers a lot of ground and will not withstand the weight of its own fruit if these hang free of the ground, another awkward point. It is raised by few households, and the seed is reluctantly let go to others. Planting is in February and March, in the ash from clearing for early beans, and a full year is required to ripen fruit - provided rain does not damage the flowers. The seed is black and pops violently when toasted; the fruit is prepared by boiling with salt or sugar or by baking under coals. It must be thoroughly cooked to avoid stomach cramps and

⁴ Sauer, 1952: 66-67.

vomiting, though these symptoms may be cured by eating fresh-ground garlic. The fruit sells at 10¢ to 15¢ and each vine yields ten to fifteen ripe fruits, with many more going to rot before they ripen.

Two sorts of squash are raised, *k?um* and *ik?oy* (Sp. *ayote*). Both are planted in the ash from clearing for early beans, whether in open fields or *sítios* or gardens, so that flowering will fall in the dry season. Otherwise, a type of "worm" (larva) ruins the flower. *Ik?oy* fruit is ripe by May and June while *k?um* harvest drags out from August through December, with a peak at the time of its traditional use on November 1 and 2, *Día de los Santos* and *Día de los Muertos*. At this time the officers (*merto:m*, Sp. *mayordomos*) of the seven *cofradías de hombre* in San Juan pass, with a horde of children following, from house to house to collect cooked, candied pieces of squash to be given to the children. *Ik?oy* fruits sell for 1¢ to 5¢ in the market, according to size; *k?um* will fetch 5¢ to 10¢. The fruitless flowers (*r-oš ik?oy*, etc.)—not recognized as male—are gathered as pot-greens and for sale at 1¢ per bundle. The seed of all squashes (*sakil k?um*, *ik?oy*, etc.) is toasted and ground into a protein-rich paste that deserves its Spanish epithet, "*chicharrón del pobre*"; *k?um* is said to be mass-produced around Seból, San Gerónimo, and the South Coast just for its seed. Only *ik?oy* has axial ridges on the fruit and there is only one sort of *ik?oy*, but *k?um* comes in *peče?* (flattened), *t?ort?okil* (round and hump-necked), and *yokotun* (crook-necked) forms, and in solid green or white-mottled colors. A superabundance of *k?um*, more than a hundred fruits

per vine, is called *š-xolom kamenaq* (corpse's head) since it presages a death in the household. Cooked *k?um* is notorious for causing heartburn (literally, *k?atikuš*, burned throat), but *ik?oy* does not. Sections of hollow squash petiole may be played like reed instruments.

While fibers of the fruit of the dish-cloth gourd (*Luffa* sp.; Sp. *estropaje*) provide a common household implement and market commodity, the plant is an introduction from the Old World Tropics and appears not to be grown above 1,000 m. elevation. Its Q?eqči? name is descriptive (*xi?bal ru sek?*, dish-surface scraper) and rarely used.

True gourds (*Lagenaria* spp.) can be grown at the elevation of San Juan but they do not thrive. However, the dried fruits are widely traded and used as containers throughout the highlands. Varieties include *peče? su*, *se:l* or *tol*, round and used for storing and serving tortillas; *k?onoč? su*, crook-necked and used as a bottle; *yeneč su*, elongated like a wine bottle and similarly used; and *yut su*, wasp-waisted and used as a canteen - the top stoppered with a corn cob. Seed is extracted along with the skimpy flesh of the ripe fruit by boring a small hole, filling with water, and letting stand until fermentation allows the solid contents to be shaken out with the water. Raw fruits are quite fragile and must be hung, hole down, to drain and dry hard in the sun.

Potato Relatives

Potatoes (*kašlan is*, foreign sweet potato) can be grown quite successfully in the climate and soils of San Juan, though disease will take a toll, but the main discouragement to cultivation of this

introduced cash crop is the difficulty of preventing unauthorized harvest. The flavor and texture of potatoes are quite like those of several other local root crops so they agree all too well with supposedly maize-biased palates.

A genuinely ubiquitous crop is *ma:k?uy* (Sp. *hierba mora*), the *saq* (white) variety being a bland garden plant while the *q?eq* or *kaq* (black or red) sort found as a milpa weed is quite bitter. The *Q?eqči?* do not object to bitterness, but its acceptance has limits and custom says that one must pick *ma:k?uy* by breaking off branches rather than by nipping with the fingernails or else the harvest will be inedible. New growth is used in soups and may be lightly heated on the griddle as a substitute for beans; it is said to be a tonic for the blood.

A more important staple, though cultivated with much less success than *ma:k?uy*, is *ik*, chili. The dried market commodity, *k?ot c?ik ik* (mistletoe chili - but literally "bird shit chili"!), is a major trade item going from La Tinta, Cahabón and Salamá to be wholesaled in Quetzaltenango. It will grow in San Juan but is stunted to 20 cm., compared to 1.5 m. tall in the lowlands. Processing is done by the producers, using a moveable four-legged rack over a fireplace other than the hearth. The seed is white, the plant an annual. *Baq* or *če? ik* ("bone" or "tree chili") is said to be purely a local variety, perennial, and not so common now as formerly. The plant grows to 1.5 m.; the fruit is white-seeded, 7 cm. long by 1.5 cm. diameter. *Kaqi pum ik* is a recent introduction to San Juan, but it is put in a class with *kok? pum* or *t?ort?okil ik* and *q?an* or *ni:mqi q?an* or *k?um ik*, all of which are round-fruited (cf. *pumpu*, bloated; *t?ort?o*, globular). Only the last is extremely piquant, but all are

perennial and grow to 1.5 or 2 m. tall; flourishing plants often need the support of a scaffold. The chili called "big", *ni:mqi ik*, is in fact no larger a plant than the above and has a slightly smaller fruit than *baq ik*: 6 cm. by 2., cm. It, too, is perennial - provided the *teken* (Sp. *zompopo*) leaf-cutter ants do not attack and provided none of the other ailments of chili plants strike it down. The only really hardy *Capsicum* is *r-ik č?o* or *r-ik pim* (rat's or weed's chili). This is the lowland *chiltepe*, collected from plants growing among the coffee plantations or in low bush and piquant out of all proportion to the size of its tiny, candle-flame fruit.⁵ Some people transplant or plant this wild chili in dooryard gardens. Chilis planted in the highlands often fail even with constant care, but in the lowlands success is more likely and intercropped or monocropped fields are common.⁶

Tobacco (*may*) is another case of garden cultivation in the highlands and field production in the lowlands. Around Sebol it is smoked in home-rolled cigars (*rašbo:t*, green-rolled) and sold at 50¢ for a pound of dry leaves or given free to helpers at planting time. Around Chamelco the green leaves are in demand only for medicinal uses: tied to the forehead for headache, and rubbed or given as a cold bath to children suffering *čaqi iš* or *tiq re:k?* ("dry skin" or "hot ailment"; Sp. *hijillo*). Two varieties are named, at least in

⁵ On this and other chilis, see Carter, 1969: 64, 9,; he found five named cultivated varieties in Chichipate. See also Davenport, 1971.

⁶ Carter, 1969: 119-120.

the lowlands.⁷

Tomatoes (*piš*) are favorite constituents of side-dishes (*š-tibel wa*, tortilla's 'meat') but do not grow well around San Juan. Formerly they were grown in quantity all the same, but now almost the whole of highland consumption is supplied by commercial production around Guatemala City and in the irrigated dry lowlands. The old Chamelco variety was *koya? piš*, with a strongly flattened fruit; it can still be found for sale in March and April. Cherry tomatoes are also available, and termed *kok? (little) piš*. One tomato substitute which does grow fairly well in the highlands – except for infestation by a butterfly larva – is *če? piš* (tree tomato). This small tree is fast-growing (six months to fruiting) but not particularly fertile, as only one seed in a whole fruit is likely to germinate. Fruit ripens in October and November. Husk tomatoes (*Sp. miltomate*) are used as *če? piš* in making hot sauce but have no *Q?eqčiči?* name despite their similarity to abundant weeds called *kop*.

The psychedelic effects associated with *Datura* spp.⁸ are not recognized in *kampani:* (<*Sp. campanilla*); the large, white, pendant flowers which adorn many fencerows are tied to the forehead as a headache remedy rather than being ingested, while the leaf serves in several other ailments.

⁷ Carter, 1969: 65; Wirsing ms.: *kaqimay* (red) and *q?animay* (yellow).

⁸ Sturtevant, ed. Hedrick, 1919: 311-312.

Maize

In quantity if not variety, maize is a major crop in dooryard gardens and *sitios* as well as open fields. Maize supplies are at their lowest just before harvest in November, so most households set out a crop of *kok? hal* (little ear: cf. Chapter VI, p. 82) to tide them over. Those who have *sitios* also plant *k?ambob*, which ripens in August. One informant in Aldea Čaxaneb was accustomed to plant *čag li:č?* both in January and at the end of April so as to have staggered harvests in June and October, but overlapping cycles of this type are not commonly used. Several favorite foods can only be prepared with fresh maize, hence even the well-to-do usually maintain off-season maize in their gardens.

Legumes

Most of the climbing bean varieties are grown only in *sitios* and gardens though some, especially *lol* and *nun*, may be kept there or in fields. Garden legumes other than *Phaseolus* include *če? ke:nq?* and a curious condiment, *muč?* (Sp. *chipilín*). Leguminous shade and fence-row trees include *čalum* and *č?elel*, though these are unable to reproduce spontaneously in the highlands.

Musas

Every garden around Chamelco has one or two banana or plantain plants, but these are close to the upper limit of elevation for their type. My informant said that up to 1943 there were very few *Musa* of any sort in San Juan, and after a run of cold, clear nights in January of 1970 their number must have dwindled almost to zero again. Introduction of at least two varieties was by way of San

Pedro Carchá. Of the eleven named types known to my informant, three were restricted to the lowlands, two were found only at intermediate and high elevations, and two had variants for each environment (see App. E, *tul* and *kene:y*). An escaped introduction from E. Africa, *Musa ensete* (*čiko tul*), is propagated by birds and perhaps by children, who seem not to mind the extreme astringency of the fruit and its many seeds. Apart from the edible fruit, the leaves of any *Musa* serve as instant umbrellas while the leaves of non-astringent varieties are used as wrappers for sale and cooking of foods. In times of maize scarcity, *Musa* starch used to be one of the several "extenders" for maize meal (*š-yu li buč?*). Planting is always on poor land and as near the house as possible in holes about 3 *k?utub* deep by 2 *k?utub* square. The shoots must be kept in surveillance or they are likely to disappear since digging shoots from their parent plants is hard, dirty work.

Root Crops

Although maize is the staple, almost all of the alternative root starch staple crops are also cultivated by the Q?eqči?, whether in the highlands or lowlands.⁹

Manioc (*c?in*) is grown by a few people; the one observed plot was a one-crop garden across the trail from a house. Taro (*oš*) is much more widely grown and comes in two varieties: "white" or "round" (*saqi oš*, *t?ort?okil oš*), also called "manioc-taro" (*c?in oš*), and "red" (*kaqi oš*). The latter is distinguished by a red tinge to its

⁹ For the lowland case, see Carter's list of crops: Carter, 1969: 62-71.

new leaves and pink starch in the root, and a larger root, but there is no difference in flavor. However, oš generally grows much larger in lowland cultivation. Planting is by division of the "trunk" into pieces with one "eye" each and sowing in holes dibbled just as for maize. The leafy top may be re-planted, too, or the "candle" of new leaves may be boiled as greens with salt and chili. The ritual of planting is said to be like that for maize, too! The starch is eaten as *luk oš*, a soup of taro, salt and chili; the starch dissolves in cooking. If taro is cooked over a fire in which maize cobs are burned, an acrid flavor results (*cay cay*). The other sort of taro, *Colocasia* as opposed to *Alocasia* spp., is also grown but is known only by the Spanish term *malanga*, though it has been grown in San Juan throughout my informant's lifetime. The starchy base is without tubers and is eaten in whole, boiled pieces; its texture is almost soapy. The top is replanted each time the base is harvested.

A root crop of South American origin, the "Peruvian carrot" or *arracacha* (*arakač*), is an old staple in Qʼeqč'i? gardens; it, too, yields better at lower elevations though it is of highland origin.¹⁰ Propagation is by division of the root and preparation is by two boilings, the first to remove a strong flavor of coriander. The leaf is said to be used in stew and as boiled greens.

Both yams (*piyak?*, *yam*) and sweet potatoes (*is*) are grown in the lowlands; Carter found five named varieties of the latter in Chichipate and three were known to my highland informants, while the

¹⁰ Sturtevant, ed. Hedrick, 1919: 65.

former is a semi-domesticated which is collected but not planted.¹¹ *Solanum* potatoes are called *kašlan is*, as noted above on p. 152. Weed *Ipomoea* spp. abound in the highlands and the edibility of their roots is known, but these are too small to be worth digging.

Greens and Vegetables

The Qʼeqčʼiʼ diet is far better balanced by greens than that of Ladinos or even North Americans.¹² Introductions like radishes and cabbage have become great favorites and are grown in market quantities by many families, but they have added to the long list of indigenous greens rather than replacing these. Several plants mentioned above serve as green vegetables in addition to their other uses; the following list includes only those plants which have no other use.

The first green in terms of interest and probable antiquity is *ses*, grain amaranth. The seed used to be collected in quantity for toasting and grinding to make an emergency-food dough, and as popped grain has only recently been replaced by popcorn in the preparation of caramel-sweetened and -cemented festive sweets. At present the young leaves are boiled and may also be drained and fried up with eggs or alone in fat. Seed sold in the Chamelco market is said to come from Momostenango; at 2¢ for a one-ounce bag, it is toasted and ground for use (by Ladinos?) in tamales. Wild amaranth (*ses čʼo*) leaves are also picked and prepared, their rather bitter flavor

¹¹ Carter, 1969: 65, 95.

¹² The same is true for the Chorti: see Wisdom, 1940: 84-85.

being no detriment given Qʔeqčiʔ tastes.

Dahlias (*cʔolox*) can be seen around most highland Qʔeqčiʔ houses and all over the countryside, though they are not abundant. The growing tips maybe put in stew or *šep* dumplings if they are not eaten boiled, and they are a favorite food of chickens as well. Plants grow from cuttings as well as seed. Balls of boiled *cʔolox* mixed with ground *sakil kʔum* (squash seed) are sold in Poqomčiʔ towns like Tactíc and Tamahú at a penny apiece.

An unrelated but somewhat similar wild plant is used almost exactly like dahlias. *Cʔiton* thrives on rich soil cleared for cultivation, so it may be considered a semi-domesticate.

Green Medicines

The Qʔeqčiʔ pharmacopeia depends more on wild than cultivated plants,¹³ but a few much-used remedies grow only in dooryard gardens. Medicinal use of tobacco leaves has already been mentioned; other multiple-use plants as well as the one-use plants - *baxlaq čeʔ*, *išim oqob*, *kikʔel qawaʔ*, and *may šul* - are listed along with their applications in Appendix G on diseases and remedies.

Condiments

Apart from chili, only a few plants are raised for the flavor they impart to foods. First among these is *kulantr* (<Sp. *culandro*) which appears to be a substitute for the native *samat* (Sp. *culandrín*), a trailside weed in the lowlands but still found in a few dooryard gardens around Chamelco. *R-iskʔiʔixul tib* ("meat's

¹³ Dieseldorff, 1939 and 1940, is the authoritative source.

mint"; Sp. *yerba buena*) is used like *kulantr* in clear-broth stew (*ka:lt*, <Sp. *caldo*) and in blood sausage (Sp. *moronga*), though the root has uses as an emetic and vermifuge in addition. Other seasonings such as garlic (*a:ns*, < Sp. *ajo*), annatto (*šayau*; Sp. *achiote*), ginger (*šanši:br*, < Sp. *gingibre*), and black pepper (*kašlan q?e:n*, "Castillian herb") are collected or grown commercially at lower elevations; several are introduced.

Cane sugar may be considered a condiment; however, the small amount of it consumed in Q?eqči? households is mostly purchased as crudely refined *panela* from the South Coast. The rows of cane (*uc?-axl*) to be seen around the highlands are destined for use in *box* brewing, detailed in Chapter XI.

The other common sweet plant of Q?eqči? gardens is pineapple: č?op. This lowland fruit might be thought out of place in cool highlands, but it is commonly planted even though the root slips take two or three years to give fruit and the later side shoots take equally long. Carter lists two varieties for Chichipate,¹⁴ and one of these might be the tiny (8 to 10 cm. tall), sweet one termed č?op *pek* or č?op *cu:l* ("rock" or "mountain" pineapple).

Tree Crops

There exists a large vocabulary of fruiting trees from the lowlands, many of them semi-domesticates.¹⁵ Only the highland trees will be discussed here, though a few of these are out-of-place lowland plants which survive only by planting and careful tending.

¹⁴ Carter, 1969: 65, Table 9.

¹⁵ Carter, 1969: 95 (Table 14); see also Wisdom, 1940: 85.

The principal cash tree crop of San Juan and vicinity is *pe:ns* (allspice), though from a world trade perspective it is insignificant compared to the coffee grown by non-Indians and at slightly lower elevations. Chamelco *Municipio* is said to have been a coffee-producing area in the past, but low January temperatures forced the crop out. Household production of coffee remains, however, and in the last few decades even Indians have taken to drinking "kape" in very weak infusions well-sweetened with brown sugar and sometimes flavored with leaves or fruit of *pe:ns*. *Te:lom* (young man) is the term applied to the fruitless variant in dioecious trees, including *pe:ns*, though the factually male role of these trees appears not to be recognized. Seedling trees are often sought out from wild stands in the forest since propagation from seed is both slow and uncertain. However, ripe fruit can be lightly dried and planted in pots (or plastic bags, these days) with pig or cow manure to improve the potting soil. At 50 cm. tall the seedlings will be salable at 25¢ apiece even without any guarantee of eventual production, and even though the first crop will not come until five years after transplanting. The fruit is harvested in August and has a current wholesale value around 10¢ a pound green and 40¢ dry, though prices once rose to 20¢ and 75¢, respectively. Local retail is at 10¢ for 7 g. (¼ oz.) and use is as a powdered spice in maize-based drinks and coffee. Harvest used to be by lopping whole limbs and waiting two years between crops, but about five years ago there was a change to careful hand picking each year. The main district of production is said to be north of Cobán.

Peaches are an introduced fruit that is widely grown from seed. The fruit that passes as *durazno*, however, is not much more than a

greenish, thin-fleshed, astringent almond. It sells at a very low price in the market, and the tree may be more appreciated as a source of fine wood for weaving and other tools than as a fruit producer.

Whatever its status as native or not,¹⁶ the sweet orange (*čí:n*) is a favorite in Indian gardens and as often grown in the *aldeas* as in town. At its best the fruit is as juicy and sweet as the finest valencias, but grafting is not practiced and many other sorts of citrus are also grown so the variability of fruit is extreme. The wood is appreciated for its durability as tool handles and *trapiche* rollers, and tea from the leaf is a headache remedy.

K?ib is a small palm with several variants in both wild and cultivated forms; the immature flowers and fruit are eaten as a vegetable. *K?iš* (thorn) *k?ib* is one wild form that is brought to Cobán market from Chamá and has extremely spiny bracts enclosing the inflorescences. Harvest is in March, before the inflorescence ripens, and while 'male' (*te:lom*) is said to be more bitter than 'female' (*išq*) they are both quite strong-flavored (and may be reverse-sexed from botanical viewpoint). Children often do the picking since their light weight matches the slim trunks' load-bearing abilities. Old 'male' trees that no longer produce abundantly may be cut down and the trunk split to yield two handspans of edible palm cabbage and pith, also prepared by boiling. Propagation may be by seed or shoot or spontaneous seedling, with obvious consequences for variability in flavor from stand to stand. The land where *k?ib* is planted becomes useless for other crops (*kaq ru š-tōn*

¹⁶ Sturtevant, ed. Hedrick, 1919: 173.

li kʔib: "the *Chamaedora* spp. trunk is red-faced = jealous").

Native fruit trees which may be found in fence rows and beside some houses in the aldeas include *koyou*, *o*, *raštul* and *rum*. The first two are *Perseas*; *o* is the avocado familiar in North America while *koyou* is flavorless and pulpy-textured fodder for pigs. Two varieties of *o* fruit are recognized: *raš riš* (green skin) with sweet, moist meat and *kaq čí it* (red-assed) with a reddish-black skin and dry meat. The pits from either variety may be ground and boiled for an extract taken as a remedy for diarrhea. *Raš tul* is in the family that includes the various lowland sapodillas; it flowers in August to September and the fruit ripens by April. At either end of the season its fruits fetch 2¢ apiece but only ½¢ at the peak of abundance. Small fruits are termed *mutut* while a variety that is longer and sweeter than the ordinary is called *qʔuqʔ tul*. The nut may be chopped and boiled for twelve hours with frequent changes of water to produce, when further toasted and ground, a substitute for cacao. *Rum* (Sp. *palo de jocote*) is the hog plum (*Spondias mombin*), with at least two types available in the highlands: red and yellow. The red type (*kaq riš rum*) is eaten ripe or cooked when unripe while the yellow (*qʔan*) is more acid flavored and more often prepared by cooking with sugar. Flowering is in March and fruit is abundant from August through September when it is marketed at a *centavo* for three to five cooked and sweetened fruits or for only two or three ripe red fruits. The tree grows easily from cuttings but produces little fruit around San Juan; the main area of production is San Crístobal A.V.

The guava (*pata*; Sp. *guayaba*) is planted in the lowlands but is a spontaneous semi-domesticated in the highlands.¹⁷ Moreover, there are three highland varieties that are differentiated by fruit pulp color: *qʔan* (yellow), *kaq* (red), and *saq* (white). Trees are not deliberately planted but any ripe *pata* fruit is avidly consumed and the seed is known to sprout the better for digestive processing. Small wonder, then, to find guava trees close to houses and in pastures. The wood is prized for hearth use and for trap springs (see Chapter VIII).

Many leguminous lowland trees have pods with a sweet, edible pulp around the seeds. One such tree that is found in the fencerows of San Juan and scattered around the *aldeas* is *čo:čokl*, but at this elevation the pods (*čalum*) are small and dry. However, the tree makes fine firewood and the leaves are suitable for wrapping bean tamales (*sep*) since they impart no unwanted flavor (*mas čaqi ru li čo:čokl*: the Inga sp. leaves are very 'dry').

Two trees which are not purposely cultivated yet are dispersing successfully are the walnut (*nogál*; no *Qʔeqčičiʔ* name) and the loquat (Sp. *níspero*). Nearly indestructible black walnuts are collected and hurled and even opened by children; the trees were once planted as shade all along the road entering Chamelco from Cobán but annual infestation by stinging *čaxal* caterpillars caused them to be cut down for firewood, excepting a few near the church. Loquats came into Chamelco about thirty years ago. The trees produce fruit in November and children of all ages can be found in the branches then, eating the fruit and thus dispersing the seeds. The rose apple (Sp.

¹⁷ Carter, 1969: 66, Table 9.

mansana rosa) is in the same category as the loquat: escaped, spontaneous, appreciated but uncared for.

Ornamentals

Many individual Qʼeqčiči? are avid collectors of novel plants, useful or decorative, and when a market opens (such as the recently exploited demand for cut flowers by Ladinos as well as Indians in the Coban market) then mass production from packaged seed begins. Almost any handsome flower, wild or gardened, will be used as altar decoration in chapels (*ermi:t* < Sp. *hermita*) and the meeting-houses of *cofradías*.¹⁸ The one truly traditional and native ornamental, sacred to the dead in Aztec as well as Maya beliefs, is the marigold (*tu:s*). At least three varieties are recognized: *čot* or *qʼan tu:s* (double or yellow), *kaqi tu:s* (red), and *šubay tu:s* (*šubay* or *Bidens triplinervis* marigold) with only a simple ring of ray florets.

Hedges and Property Markers

To be effective protectors and markers of gardens and other property, plants must have either repulsive or prolific properties or both, at best. Examples from all three cases can be given.

The two most repellent living fences are those including *horoq* or *la*. The former is a euphorb with irritant latex and conical spikes on aged trunks; it grows rapidly from cuttings. The latter is a class of plants roughly coincident with the genus *Urera*; *saq*, *pančoy* or *kokošen la* (white, [untranslatable], or varicolored) has irritating hairs on both leaf surfaces while *kaqi la* (red) has them on the

¹⁸ Equally true for the Chorti: Wisdom, 1940: 388.

leaf underside only. New leaves from the former are said to be rubbed on cramped muscles for relief, and on arthritic joints; leaves from the latter may be used as food wrappers after singeing to destroy the irritant.

The commonest combined hedge and property marker is *ku:kʔil*, a yucca that grows well from cuttings and bristles with pointed leaves. It flowers in May and the inflorescences are boiled as a vegetable, though more often in Cobán than Chamelco. The leaves may be stripped into strings used to tie leaf-packets of ground coffee sold in the market.

The principal boundary-markers, though, are the *Erythrina* species *cʔinteʔ* and its forest relative *cʔinteʔ kʔičeʔ*. While *ku:kʔil* serves for immediate marking of corners and minor lines in the survey and partition of land at sale or inheritance, *cʔinteʔ* cuttings are often put in afterwards to provide long-term witness trees. The entire outline of aldea Koxila can be followed once one knows where to look for the broken line of *cʔinteʔ* set out between forty and fifty years ago.¹⁹ This is another plant with many uses: the flower is said to be eaten (!) fried with eggs; the beans make blowgun foresights, necklaces, and diviners' (ax *kʔe*, the thrower or caster) paraphernalia as well as being a known poison; the leaf is popped over a hollow fist as a child's diversion; and the wood serves for carving dance masks.

¹⁹ Estimate based on text in *Qʔeqčičiʔ* written by my informant from words of a 60-year-old resident of the *aldea*.

Two innocuous plants which nevertheless make up a part of the hedges in San Juan itself are *a:kʔab kʔe* and *mo:ro*. The first is a native shrub with deliciously-scented, night-blooming flowers. Hence its name: "throw-forth-in-the-darkness". Its leaf was crushed (like that of its rural relative, *saqyo:l*) as soap up to about 1948. The second is a hibiscus which has decorative flowers; the tube enclosing the pistil makes a musical reed when separated from the rest of the flower structure.

Technical Raw Materials

Gardens provide materials as well as food and ornament. The two main categories would be leaf and fiber sources.

Where 'modern' people would use kraft paper, waxed paper, plastic films, or metal foil, the Qʔeqčiči use leaves. Banana and čalum leaves have been mentioned in this context but there are several herbs grown for no other purpose. First among these is *moš qʔe:n*, propagated by division rather than seed and worth 1¢ a handful of plantlets. A day's work weeding milpa is occasionally paid in kind with 25¢ worth of plants. A large-leaved variety restricted to lowlands is termed *sal moš*. Carter mentions *moš* as a semi-domesticated in the Polochic Valley, but in the highlands it grows only where planted and tended.²⁰ *Cʔukr*, *kaqi cʔukr* and *kʔerk* are related plants with showy flowers as well as useful leaves.

²⁰ Carter, 1969: 95, Table 14.

Today the principal fiber plant apart from *ik?e* (Sp. *magu y*) is a sedge, *say*, but decades ago nearly every house is said to have had cotton (*noq?*) as well. In those days and before, the lowlands north of Cob n and around Cahab n were known for production and export of fiber from native cotton varieties to the Southern Highlands of Guatemala. Today the trade and the plant are practically extinct. Only the Poqom ci? *municipio* of Tamah  is reputed to have residents who still grow cotton and spin thread as well as weaving with it. However, Q?eq ci? women over forty nearly all remember the use of a simple spindle (*pete:t*) and some still use it for re-spinning commercial thread (see Figure 4). *Say* is used by plaiting rather than spinning; the three faces of the stem are split apart and woven into fine mats (*sayil po:p*) on which to sit or sleep. The central pith serves as weak string for use in the market and household.

FIGURE 4
SPINDLE (PETE:T)

