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## A Little Farm in Pt. Loma Feeding Tender Greens Diners

From the street, the hilltop Pt. Loma property of the Reeb family looks like just another suburban home. Sitting on a cul-de-sac over a canyon, the house was built in 1937 and has the old-fashioned charm of a place that was built for family living. Even stepping into the back yard -- with its pool and grass -- doesn't reveal the scope of what Paul Reeb and his son Steve are up to: gardening for the masses. Or at least for the masses who eat at local restaurant [Tender Greens](#) literally across the street in Liberty Station.



Reeb has taken land, now owned by his mother, that's just under an acre and turned it into a produce oasis with a little greenhouse and even a little vineyard that produces grapes that he, in turn, crushes to make wine. And that wasn't easy since much of the property slopes steeply down into a canyon.

I first met Reeb late last summer at a dinner hosted by Tender Greens to show off Reeb's bounty. A graphic designer by trade, he's long had a yearning to be a farmer. Living just a few blocks from his mother's house means he can spend a lot of time working this land when he's not doing his "day" job. Having 23-year-old Steve help out when he's not working at Tender Greens himself is a huge help, Reeb says. And chef/owner Pete Balistreri buys everything Reeb grows, including tomatoes, greens, zucchini, radishes, and artichokes.

Reeb has recently finished his winter crops so most of what's in the ground currently are young plants just getting started for a summer harvest. Zucchini is in the ground around the pool, tomato plants are almost everywhere you turn and there are about 25 heirloom varieties, plus 10 Reeb is experimenting with -- about 200 in all, including Abe Lincoln, Dr. Whyche, Risentraube, German Pink, Hillbilly, Black Krim (which Reeb says is the best tasting), Omars Lebanese (which get huge), Bonnie's Best, and Blonde Kopftashen.



"I grow these for taste not looks," Reeb says. "Taste is number one."

Reeb gets his seeds from [Seed Savers Exchange](#), plus he harvests his own. With all those

tomatoes, his wife often freezes the tomatoes whole to use in the winter for soup or sauce. Or she dries them.



Up near the house is a little greenhouse where a sea of micro greens, mostly daikon, is growing. Behind the greenhouse is a tiny man-made pond filled with bluegills and crawdads. The nitrogen they produce in the water fills a gerry-rigged irrigation system constructed by the Reebes.



Surrounding all this are beds brimming with tall, swaying anise, fragrant lavender, and mounds of Easter Egg radishes. Anaheim and poblano chili plants are just getting a start, along with onions and green beans. There are some citrus trees, an ancient, still prolific, avocado tree, and, well, a lot of weeds.

The canyon garden is what's most impressive. Seven years ago men started clearing out what was

long a fire hazard, cut down some diseased Torrey Pines, and began the job of terracing and planting grapevines down the steep slope.



Right now the chardonnay, zinfandel, and pinot noir grapes are just popping out. Around them are colorful nasturtiums, bushy sage plants, fennel, mounds of cardoons -- which has thistles that look like artichokes but you don't eat the thistle, you eat the stalk -- and artichokes.





While Reeb is harvesting many of his plants, the big harvest comes in late July and into September. Reeb invited me to return then, when I can see the "after" of this "before" visit. Stay tuned.