

**GREEN MY FAVELA conversation with GMF community gardeners in Manguinhos.
A collaborative project between GMF / Hortas Cariocas / Manguinhos Residents' Association.
Conversation led by Natalia Westphal (GMF), 18 July 2014.**



Left to right: Edivaldo, Carlos Roberto, Robson, Ezequias, Natalia, Tyson.



Carlos Roberto.

Lives in Manuinhos (50 years).

Married with four children.

Retired, cleaner.

Avid gardener, always harvesting produce.

Garden is primarily a form of therapy.

Manages 13 beds.

Gardens every day for five hours.

Arrives at 5am to water.

Shares produce with community.

Carlos is a jack of all trades. He likes the garden because he has nothing to do at home.

Carlos gives food to anyone who asks.



Ezequias, from Souza Cruz.

Lives in Manguinhos (22 years).

Married with three children.

Manages five beds.

Gardens every day for five hours.

No previous gardening experience.

Previously worked at Souza Cruz, a cigarette factory. He is from the interior of Rio state.



Edivaldo, from Ceara.

Lives in Manguinhos (Moved to Manguinhos in April 2014).

Married with six children.

Driver / operator of heavy machinery.

Manages one bed (cilantro).

Gardens every day.

No previous gardening experience.

Edivaldo says he's the "Cilantro King" and that he doesn't sell it because there's enough to give it away for free. He says good morning to his plants when he arrives too early to see any people.



Robson, from Salvador, Bahia.

Lives in Manguinhos (26 years).

Separated with three children.

Driver, mechanic, BBQ chef, transit controller.

Garden is primarily a form of therapy.

Suffers from hypertension.

Manages four beds.

Gardens every day.

No previous gardening experience.

Robson mostly plants food for needy people--he hardly keeps any of his own produce.

Robson comes at midnight because he gets home late from work.

Robson has managed to grow everything he wants, except turnips, which never grew.



Claudio, from Ceara.

Lives in Manguinhos (12 years).

Married with two children.

Attended college.

Is not a gardener, but helps watch over the space and helps the gardeners.

Enjoys the garden because of the leisure aspect it offers.

Owns bar opposite garden.

Takes food from the garden regularly and distributes it to community members.

Suffers from hypertension.

Says that all the plants in the garden are beneficial (i.e. his interest in medicinal herbs), and that he brings food to "all his neighbors." He sees people come from the other side of the favela to pick food and herbs.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Whoever shows up earliest waters everything. Most of the gardeners didn't really know each other before the garden, except Carlos, because he has lived there so long. The gardeners all save money on groceries, Carlos more than the others, because he has more time to garden and he likes vegetables more. Everyone except Robson comes every day. They bring people to the garden to show off their work, including friends from other favelas, their wives, and other relatives. Carlos says he joined the garden because he saw Green My Favela volunteers working and he felt included because GMF was working. They all share with each other the gardening techniques they discover. At least 60 people get food from the garden. Everyone is very adamant about not selling the produce because people don't have very much money, because they want to give it whoever asks, because it never occurred to them, and because they are happy to be able to give food to people who want it. The best service GMF now regularly provides is picking up trash. They all agree the garden's primary benefit for them is the therapeutic stress relief it brings.