

## ABSTRACT

A kitchen garden, or *huerto familiar*, is a small patch of comestible, commercial, and/or medicinal plants located directly adjacent to a home. The women of the house maintain these gardens, and use their contents as spices and additions to the family's daily diet. The kitchen gardens managed by Oaxacan women play an important role in the cooking, economy, and "*Oaxacanismo*" of a household but have been largely overlooked in anthropological literature. This is unfortunate as these gardens are a means by which a woman directly contributes to her household's subsistence, either in terms of the actual food she produces or the money that she can earn by selling her products

In this paper, I explore first, the important role of the kitchen garden in the life of rural women, and second, the economic contribution women can make to their households through such gardens. My data comes from fieldwork in a rural Zapotec community in Oaxaca, Mexico—Santa Ana del Valle. I will describe what women grow in their gardens, how much time per day they dedicate to the gardens, how they cook with what they grow in the gardens, the cultural value the gardens hold for socialization and the construction of identity, and how much the garden contributes to a household's food budget.

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