

Leonardo Sanchez - 2015

“There is a legacy in agriculture, it is engraved in me. I’ve never really been good at things, but this? It feels good to be good at something.”

Leonardo has a wandering spirit and it took a while though for Leonardo to settle down into agriculture. He says, “I used to ride bikes.

On one trip I got really hurt and that’s what made me settle down and reflect. I lived at home and my grandpa lived with us. He comes from Mexico, where what you grow is what you eat. He had grown things all his life, so he started a garden at the house. I helped him out and it really developed into something cool, because I felt for the first time in my life that I could see the rewards of what I was doing, not monetarily, but it felt essential. That first harvest is what got me hooked. I liked being outside and I started really looking at how to learn about growing things better.”

He started at Hartnell College and took a plant science class that became a huge inspiration. “I wanted to go all in. I did my education first, then I got some real jobs in agriculture and I transferred that knowledge into my work.” Leonardo has found its home in the plants and flowers he grows with care. “Anyone can grow plants, but not everyone can grow quality plants or market it to get it sold. And I’m not intimidated by plants.” He has taken many opportunities, like internships with prestigious organic farm companies, and digging his hands into everything from the soil, to the packing, to relationships with brokers and customers.

Today, he continues to work under the tutelage of several Alba graduates on his own plot, after finishing his 2015 PEPA Farmer Education program. But he is motivated to travel to other countries, to learn from organic experts around the world.

“I’m just following my passion, and I know it will pay off. I’m not trying to make money, but I am trying to find to the most ethical farming process possible. I want to find a way to reverse all the damage we’ve done to the environment, to actually enhance it and then I want to settle somewhere and put that into practice. I wish my grandpa was here to see how far I’ve come and what I’ll accomplish in the future.”



