

## **Octavio Garcia – Graduate 2009**

“I want to be a successful person in this country. I want to do something big. Hispanics are put down, and they look at us as if we were less than, and I want to prove the other side, that we came to this country to triumph.”

Octavio has been working and learning with Alba for the last 10 years. He began by assisting on the farms of other works, and then, with encouragement, decided to enroll in the Framers Education course, PEPA. Even though he was 17, and hardly knew what he wanted from life, he graduated from the program in 2009 and his first couple of years planting went very well. He got more and more enthusiastic about organic agriculture and transferred into Hartnell College. Inspired by the education and detail of schooling, he enrolled in Fresno State College and graduated with a degree in plant sciences. “I knew that getting a university degree was a guarantee for a good future. No one can take that future away from me.”

Today, Octavio is a certified Pest Control Advisor and currently dedicates 100% of his time to the Garcia Brothers Farms. With 28 acres, a diversity of vegetables and crops, and the academic background that PEPA launched him into, Octavio is optimistic about the future. “In the short term, I want to get more experience in what I studied at the university. In the long term, I want to be able to sustain myself through my business, and sell directly to the clients who are buying my products.” Overall, Octavio’s mission is to continue growing organically to work towards eliminating harmful chemicals. “I really see the future going towards organic. We are in a transition period right now, but organics is the way of the future.”

Octavio believes that there is always something new to learn in agriculture. “Not just anyone can do this. It’s hard work and to get good results you have to learn and know what you’re doing.” As one of the younger agriculturalists to graduate from PEPA, he takes an interesting look at the future. “I see the plants as my children. You have to watch over them, make sure they aren’t hurt or sick, and give them the right nutrients. Everything turns out right when you treat the plants like your sons and daughters.” With his knowledge of plant science and his early success, Octavio is sure to reach his dream, of being that successful person who has done something great with their life.