

Simplified Speech #002 – Gardening

Episode Description

In today's Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Harp talk about a hobby they both share: gardening. Join them as they chat about growing fruits and vegetables, gardening trends in Montreal, and having a green thumb!

Sample Dialogue

Harp: Have you heard of the community gardens in Montreal?

Andrew: Mmhmm. I've seen these. They're very cool.

Harp: They are very cool. So basically it's a small, kind of, backyard park area that's divided into small plots that a family or a person can sign up to have that for the summer. And you basically can garden whatever you want in that space.

Andrew: Mmhmm. I have a friend who did this last year and she said it was really cool. You get to go and there's a great sense of community at the garden because all the other gardeners are out watering their plants every day together. And it sounds really cool.

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- To carve out something
- Would
- A jack-o'-lantern
- Fort St. John, British Columbia
- An herb / a herb
- To have a green thumb
- To face a problem
- Cilantro
- A green roof
- Pickling



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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the detailed explanations section that follows the transcript.

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Andrew: And I am Andrew. And we're back with another Culips episode.

Harp: Yes. And remember to check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Andrew: And while you're on our site, please sign up and become a Culips member. When you're a member, you get our Learning Materials, which include transcripts for every episode, detailed explanations of all the key expressions that we talk about, and you get quizzes to test your comprehension.

Harp: Yes. And remember, we're on Facebook and on Twitter, so come on over there and say hello.

Andrew: Yeah. So Harp, today we are going to do a Simplified Speech episode, where we chat about an interesting topic but we speak just a little bit slower than we usually would in our other episodes.

Harp: Yes. And this is a new type of episode for us, so please let us know what you think.

Andrew: Yeah. So today, our topic is going to be gardening.

Harp: Gardening. I love gardening.

Andrew: Me too. I love gardening too.

Harp: Did you grow up with a garden?

Andrew: I did. I didn't have a huge backyard, my family home, when I was growing up, but I did **carve out** a little section of the yard for my very own vegetable garden.

Harp: Nice. What did you grow?

Andrew: My favorite plant to grow was pumpkins.

Harp: Pumpkin. That's ambitious!

- Andrew: I **would** plant pumpkins in the spring and I could watch them grow all season. They're like a vine, so they grow very, very big and they spread out all over the garden. And in the fall, I **would** get a huge pumpkin, where I could carve a **jack-o'-lantern** for Halloween.
- Harp: I love that. For me, growing up, we always had huge backyards because I lived in **Fort St. John, BC**, which is a very small town in northern BC and there was just so much land that everyone had a big backyard. And my parents had a huge garden. We grew everything we could. We had onions, and carrots, and lots of different types of **herbs**. And really, everything that could grow in northern BC, we tried.
- Andrew: That's so cool. You're very lucky.
- Harp: I was extremely lucky. And I loved gardening from a very young age, and I loved being outside. And even just the smell of **cilantro**, for me, always takes me back to my childhood.
- Andrew: Would you describe yourself as **having a green thumb**?
- Harp: Yes, for every plant that's outside. But I kill all indoor plants.
- Andrew: It's difficult, taking care of indoor plants.
- Harp: Yup. But outside, I'm pretty good.
- Andrew: And so, these days, do you have a garden too?
- Harp: I have a very, very small balcony, so I have two small planters. That's it.
- Andrew: Mhmm. This is something that I struggle with too, because we both live in the city. There's no space for gardening. So, like you, I have some planters on my deck, where I grow some **herbs** and vegetables in the summer. But I can't grow as much as I'd like.
- Harp: Have you heard of the community gardens in Montreal?
- Andrew: Mhmm. I've seen these. They're very cool.
- Harp: They are very cool. So basically it's a small, kind of, backyard park area that's divided into small plots that a family or a person can sign up to have that for the summer. And you basically can garden whatever you want in that space.
- Andrew: Mhmm. I have a friend who did this last year and she said it was really cool. You get to go and there's a great sense of community at the garden because all the other gardeners are out watering their plants every day together. And it sounds really cool.

Harp: Yeah. It seems super cool. I'm on a waiting list and I think it's gonna take me about 2 or 3 years before I get a plot.

Andrew: There's that much demand?

Harp: Yeah. There's a huge demand for community gardening space.

Andrew: Well, I'm happy to hear that, although you have to wait. But it's good that everybody wants to garden, I think.

Harp: Yeah. It's nice. It seems everyone really does want to.

Andrew: You know, I had a disaster with my garden on my balcony 2 years ago.

Harp: I remember. Your fruits and vegetables kept getting eaten by squirrels.

Andrew: That's right. The squirrels came and ate all of my plants.

Harp: Oh, that would be so frustrating.

Andrew: It was very frustrating. So last year, I was OK. My garden was OK last year. But I don't know what I will do for this summer. I think I'm going to have to think of some strategies just in case the squirrels come back.

Harp: It's so interesting that they left your garden alone last year.

Andrew: Well, actually, I moved in between, so I had... This squirrel incident happened at my old apartment, and then this summer, at my new apartment, it was OK. But I still see lots of squirrels in the trees and I know what they're capable of now.

Harp: Yup. They're able to get everywhere, so you might **face the same problem** this year.

Andrew: Mhmm. And now, it's funny that you mentioned **cilantro** earlier, because this is one of my favourite **herbs** to grow.

Harp: I love it. It grows so easily, the smell is amazing, and I like to use it in almost everything.

Andrew: Me too. I love cooking with **cilantro**. And as Culips listeners know, I spent some time overseas living in Korea. And when I was there, I couldn't find **cilantro** anywhere. I searched all over the place and it was very difficult to find. And when I did find it, it was so expensive, just unreasonably expensive. So, I ended up going on the Internet and finding some **cilantro** seeds, and I ordered them and I grew **cilantro** in my apartment. That was the one thing I grew in Korea.

- Harp: That's genius, because I had the same problem when I lived in Korea – that I couldn't find **cilantro** – but I never thought to grow it, which I should have.
- Andrew: Yeah. It was great. And I love it so much that I just had to grow it.
- Harp: Yup, I understand. Something I'm noticing in Montreal is that there seems to be a lot more gardens on the rooftops of different buildings, even commercial buildings.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. The **green roofs**.
- Harp: Yup. It's a great idea, I think, for gardening. And you get so much sun access that things grow so fast. And it's... It's a nice way to use space that was just sitting there wasted before.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. I get a lot of my vegetables from a farm in town that has a rooftop garden. And they grow all their own fruits and vegetables and they deliver them to you in a basket, once a week or once a month, it's your option. And so I get a lot of the food that I eat from one of these gardens. It's cool.
- Harp: Ah. I was thinking of doing the same thing. So you like the idea? Do you get an interesting basket every time?
- Andrew: It's a matter of debate. Sometimes I'm a little bit upset at what they give you because they give you a lot of random stuff. The quality is always very high and it's always very good. You get a lot of food, but occasionally – sometimes not occasionally but too often – you get some really random vegetables, like, we've been getting a lot of Asian radish recently. And actually, this is a vegetable that I hate, Asian radish. So I don't know what to do with it.
- Harp: I can't think of a single idea for you, other than maybe **pickling** it?
- Andrew: Yeah. You can **pickle** it, and... I don't know. I just don't know what to do with the radish. Maybe I'll bring one for you next time.
- Harp: Maybe. It sounds quite delicious.
- Andrew: Yeah. But it's a cool idea and it's a good way to support local farmers and eat fresh, healthy food.
- Harp: Yup, definitely. Because we can't all have our own gardens in the big city.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Unfortunately, yeah.
- Harp: OK, so I think we should wrap up today's episode on gardening.

Andrew: Mmhmm. So we had a nice chat about what we like to grow and how we like to grow it.

Harp: So remember, check out our website, Culips.com. And if you're on iTunes, you should leave us a rating.

Andrew: Mmhmm. Five stars, please. Thank you for listening and we will talk to you next time.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanations

To carve out something

In this episode, Andrew says that when he was a kid, he **carved out** a garden for himself in his backyard. When someone **carves out something**, they create or make something for themselves. In other words, Andrew created his own gardening space in his backyard when he was younger.

The phrasal verb **to carve out something** is often used to talk about people who work hard to create a successful career or an outstanding reputation for themselves. When you work hard to create something for yourself, you **carve out** that thing.

To think about this expression, we can imagine someone carving wood. Just like an artist uses tools to carve images into wood, someone can work hard to create or **carve out something** for themselves.

Here are a couple more examples with **to carve out something**:

Elijah: How is business these days?

Cody: As you know, the high tech industry is very competitive. My company is finding it difficult **to carve out** a position as a market leader.

Elijah: I'm sorry to hear that. I hope you're able to turn things around.

Cody: Thanks. We have some challenges to overcome but it's nothing that can't be fixed.

Darcey: You're a very powerful businesswoman. What was the key to your success?

Emilia: I was able **to carve out** a solid career for myself by working very hard. I worked two jobs to put myself through university and took unpaid internships during summer holidays to gain experience. After I graduated, I took advantage of every opportunity to advance in my career.

Darcey: Do you have any advice for recent university graduates like me who are just starting out?

Emilia: My advice is to never give up on your dreams. Clearly define your goals and then work hard to achieve them.

Darcey: That's great advice. Thanks.

Would

In this episode, Andrew talks about the garden he kept when he was younger. He describes how he gardened using the grammatical pattern **would**. He says, “I **would** plant pumpkins” and “I **would** get a huge pumpkin.”

The modal verb **would** has many different meanings depending on the context. In this context, Andrew uses **would** to describe actions that he repeated in the past. So, when he says that he “**would** plant pumpkins,” he means that this is something he did every year when he was younger.

So, when an action happened over and over again in the past, we can use the modal verb **would** to communicate that this action was repeated in the past.

To make a sentence using **would**, simply follow **would** with a simple, unconjugated verb.

Here are a couple of examples with **would**:

Reece:	What’s your favorite memory from when you were younger?
Scarlett:	Good question. Probably visiting my grandmother’s house.
Reece:	Oh yeah? Where did she live?
Scarlett:	She lived in Toronto, and my family would visit her every summer.
Reece:	Sounds fun.
Scarlett:	Yeah. It was the best.

Martha:	Did you ever cheat in school?
Louie:	All the time!
Martha:	What? Really?
Louie:	Yeah. I thought everyone did. You didn’t?
Martha:	No, absolutely not. How would you cheat?
Louie:	Whenever I had a math test, I would go to the bathroom and use my calculator to solve any difficult problems.
Martha:	That’s unbelievable.
Louie:	I just did what I had to do to pass the tests.

A jack-o'-lantern

A **jack-o'-lantern** is a pumpkin that has been carved and lit with a candle. **Jack-o'-lanterns** are associated with Halloween. In North America, people who celebrate Halloween carve a scary face into a pumpkin and then light the pumpkin with a candle and place it outside their house while neighborhood children go trick or treating.

In this episode, Andrew says that when he was younger, he used to grow pumpkins. He enjoyed this activity because every fall he would have a nice pumpkin that he could carve into a **jack-o'-lantern** for Halloween.



The expression **a jack-o'-lantern** is associated with British folklore. Although the term dates back as far as the 1600s, the modern-day practice of carving **jack-o'-lanterns** to celebrate Halloween first started in the 1800s.

Here's one more example with **a jack-o'-lantern**:

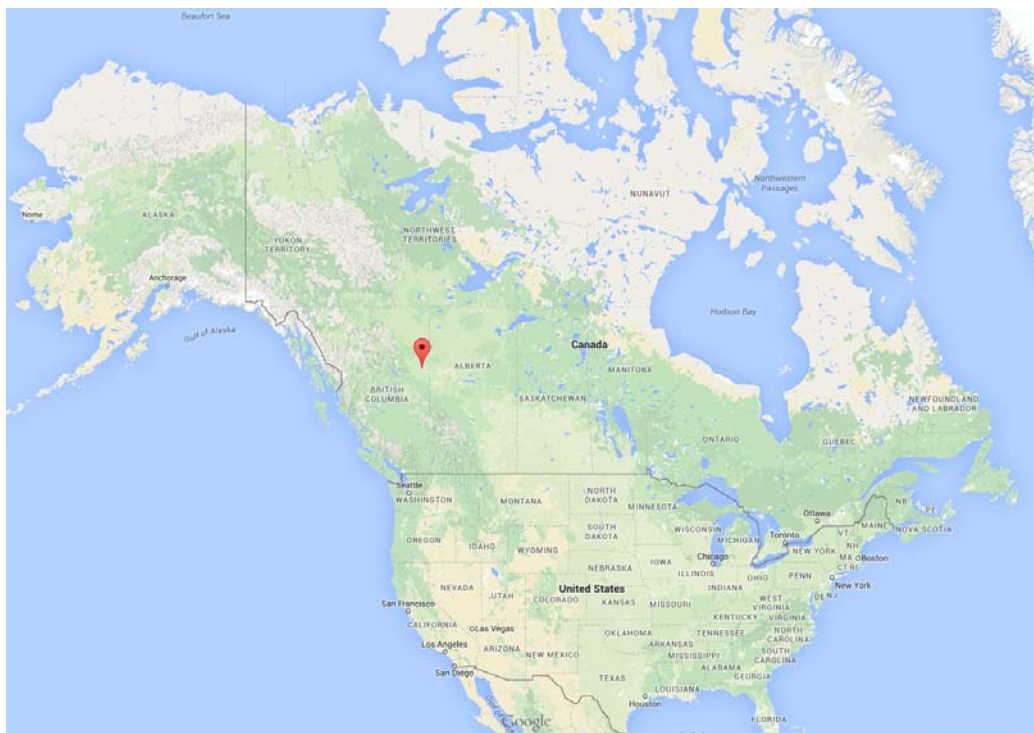
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|---------|---|
| Cedric: | Do you have any plans for the weekend? |
| Jackie: | We're going to have a Halloween party this year. So, this weekend we'll be getting ready for the party. |
| Cedric: | Sounds fun! |
| Jackie: | Yeah. We're going to do lots of cool things that the kids will love. We'll play games, eat candy, and carve jack-o'-lanterns . |
| Cedric: | I wish I was a kid again so I could come to the party. Your kids will love it! |
| Jackie: | Yup. I'm sure they will! |

Fort St. John, British Columbia

In this episode, Harp talks about the garden she kept when she was a kid growing up in **Fort St. John**. **Fort St. John** is a small town of 19,000 people located in northeastern British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province.

The main industries in **Fort St. John** are oil, gas, and forestry. Because of the city's northern location, the weather is intense. The average temperature in January is -13 degrees Celsius and in July is 16 degrees Celsius. The long winters make for a short growing season, although it is still possible to grow fruit and vegetables.

Here's a map of North America showing the location of **Fort St. John**:



An herb / a herb

In this episode, both Andrew and Harp talk about growing **herbs**. Do you notice anything different about the ways they pronounce this word? There are two accepted pronunciations of the word **herb**. Andrew fully pronounces the H, so that the word sounds pretty much like it looks: **herb**. This is the typical UK pronunciation of the word.

On the other hand, Harp deletes the initial H sound and says **erb**. This is the typical American pronunciation of the word **herb**.

Because Canadian English is influenced heavily by both American and UK varieties of English, both ways of pronouncing **herb** are accepted in Canada. In fact, about half of Canadians say it one way and the other half say it the other way.

To have a green thumb

In this episode, Andrew asks Harp whether she **has a green thumb**. Harp answers that she does **have a green thumb** when growing plants outdoors. When someone **has a green thumb**, they are a good gardener and can grow healthy plants. We can say that Harp **has a green thumb** because she is good at gardening.

In UK English, an alternative expression is *to have green fingers*. This means the same thing, but it isn't used in North American English.

These idiomatic expressions have an interesting origin story. Supposedly, King Edward I of England (who lived from 1239 to 1307) really loved eating green peas. He loved peas so much that he had many servants grow peas for him during the gardening season. When harvest time came, the servants would shell the peas (remove them from the pods) and give them to the king. Shelling so many peas made the servants' hands turn green. The king gave a special prize to the servant who had the greenest thumb at the end, because this showed that the servant had been able to grow the most peas.

Regardless of whether this origin story is really true, it makes for an interesting story. The important thing to remember is that when someone **has a green thumb**, they are a great gardener.

Here's one more example with the expression **to have a green thumb**:

- Ryan: Your garden is looking a little sad. When was the last time you watered your plants?
- Lisa: I swear I take good care of them, but plants just don't like me. They always die no matter what I do.
- Ryan: You don't **have a green thumb**, eh?
- Lisa: Nope, not at all. I think I have a black thumb! I want to be a good gardener but I guess I just don't have what it takes.

To face a problem

When you **face a problem**, you encounter a problem and have to deal with it. In this episode, Harp says that all gardeners in Montreal **face the problem** of squirrels. In other words, squirrels are a problem for all Montreal gardeners and every year the gardeners must do something to prevent the squirrels from eating their fruit and vegetable gardens.

So when something is negatively affecting you and you have to find a solution to the inconvenience, you can say you are **facing a problem**. When you **face a problem**, you are presented with a negative situation that demands your attention.

Here are a couple more examples with **to face a problem**:

- Jamie: I heard you were thinking about moving to New York City?
- Jay: You're right, I am. I would really love to live there. But I'm worried about one thing.
- Jamie: What's that?
- Jay: Well, I know that if I move there I'm going **to face the problem** of how to afford everything. New York is one of the most expensive cities in the world.
- Jamie: That is a big problem for sure. You'd just have to be like all New Yorkers and work really hard to make your dreams come true.
- Jay: Yeah, that's right. Anyway, I'm considering the move and one day I just might move there.
- Jamie: Very cool!

- Steven: How's your son doing these days?
- Roberta: He's doing OK, but lately he's been **facing a lot of problems** at school.
- Steven: I'm sorry to hear that. Is there anything that I can do to help?
- Roberta: No, I don't think so. He is struggling with his math homework these days. My husband and I are considering hiring a tutor so he can get some extra help.
- Steven: That's a very good idea.

Cilantro

In this episode, Andrew and Harp talk about how much they love the herb **cilantro**. Harp says that it reminds her of her childhood garden and Andrew tells a story about growing **cilantro** when he lived overseas.

Cilantro is a green leafy herb that is used as an ingredient in many different cuisines, including Latin American, Indian, and Southeast Asian. In some parts of the world, **cilantro** is also sometimes called coriander. In Canada, the word *coriander* is used specifically to talk about the seeds of the **cilantro** plant.



Cilantro is a unique herb because people have strong reactions to it -- either you love it or you hate it. People who love it enjoy its refreshing citrus-like flavour. On the other hand, people who hate it say it tastes like soap. Scientific studies have found that liking/hating **cilantro** is determined by our genes. A gene that is linked to smell and taste perception (the *OR6A2* gene) actually determines whether you like **cilantro** or not. Interesting!

A green roof

In this episode, Andrew and Harp chat about a new phenomenon in Montreal: **green roofs**. A **green roof** (also called a living roof) is a garden that is planted on the roof of a building.

Green roofs are great for many reasons. They help to keep the building insulated, which makes the inside temperature warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. They also help to keep the air clean, which is especially important in big cities. Finally, they can produce healthy foods like fruits and vegetables.



Andrew mentions that he gets a lot of his produce from a farm in Montreal that grows all its food on **green roofs** in the city.

Here's one more example with **a green roof**:

Anna: I just moved into a new condo. It's called The Greenery.

Philip: Oh, cool. Is that the one with **a green roof**?

Anna: Yup.

Philip: Awesome! Are you allowed to grow anything in the garden?

Anna: Yes. Each tenant is given a plot to garden. I can't wait till spring so I can start a little vegetable garden.

Philip: Very cool. I think you'll love your new place.

Anna: Yeah, me too!

Pickling

In this episode, Andrew complains about receiving Asian radish in his vegetable basket. He doesn't like this vegetable and doesn't know how to cook it. Harp says that Andrew should **pickle** the radish.

Pickling is the process of preserving a food by fermenting it with brine or vinegar. Some well-known **pickled** foods are sauerkraut, kimchi, **pickled** herring, and dill **pickles**.

Gardeners often **pickle** a portion of their vegetable harvest because **pickling** is an effective way to preserve vegetables so they can be stored for a long time without going bad.

There is some controversy over the nutritional benefits of **pickling**. Many people argue that **pickled** vegetables are very healthy and contain a number of probiotics. On the other hand, some organizations, like the World Health Organization, say that eating too many **pickled** vegetables might cause cancer. Regardless of the controversy, **pickling** is a very popular way to prepare foods around the world.

Here's one more example with ***pickling***:

Kim: What's for dinner tonight?

Vick: I'm going to make some Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches. They're made on baguettes with pork, cilantro, and **pickled** carrot and radish.

Kim: Sounds good. But where did you get **pickled** radish and carrot? Can you buy those at the supermarket?

Vick: Some of the Asian grocery stores in town have them, but I **pickled** these myself using vegetables from my garden.

Kim: Awesome!



Quiz

1. **When you are facing a problem, what's happening?**
 - a) You are avoiding trouble.
 - b) You have a pimple on your face.
 - c) You have overcome a struggle.
 - d) You are encountering a negative situation.

2. **Andrew says it's a matter of debate whether his garden baskets are interesting each week. What does this mean?**
 - a) They are never interesting
 - b) They are always interesting
 - c) It is debateable whether they are interesting.
 - d) It is non-debateable whether they are interesting.

3. **In which of the following circumstances do we use *would*?**
 - a) when talking about situations that repeated in the past
 - b) when talking about situations that will repeat in the future
 - c) when describing changes
 - d) when describing what we like and don't like

4. **In this episode, Andrew says there is a great sense of community at community gardens. What does this mean?**
 - a) The gardeners feel awkward at the gardens.
 - b) The gardeners feel they belong at the gardens.
 - c) The gardeners grow lots of vegetables at the gardens.
 - d) The gardeners don't interact with each other at the gardens.

5. **If someone has carved out something for themselves, what have they done?**
 - a) deleted something
 - b) recycled something
 - c) created something
 - d) destroyed something

6. What fruits are used for jack-o'-lanterns?

- a) pumpkins
- b) pears
- c) peaches
- d) persimmons

Quiz Answers

1.d 2.c 3.a 4.b 5.c 6.a

Episode Credits

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