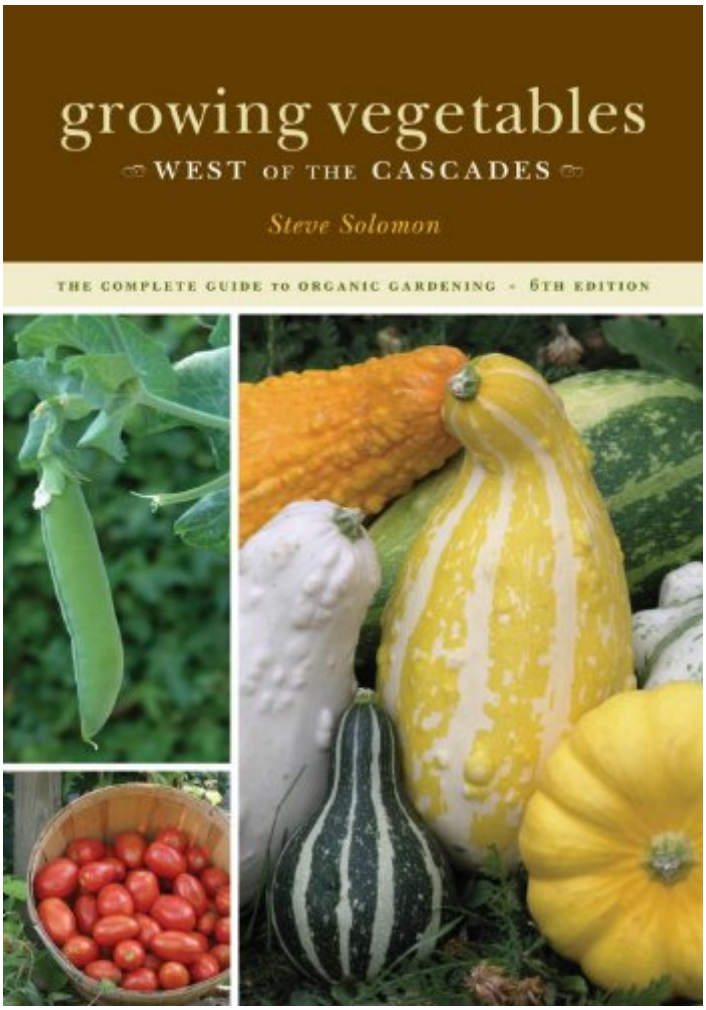
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Growing Vegetables West Of The Cascades, 6th Edition: The Complete Guide To Organic Gardening (GrassRoutes)



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Synopsis

This is the updated 6th edition of Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades, which has evolved from a self-published pamphlet to the master guide to organic vegetable gardening over the past 28 years. Steve Solomon, who was a founder of the Territorial Seed Company, was one of the early proponents of organic gardening, and the first to codify and refine the best practices of small-plot vegetable gardening in the Pacific Northwest. The approaches to understanding and preparing soils, composting, chemical-free fertilizers, efficient uses of water, and garden planning are universal to any climate or region. Solomon gets specific in his extensive advice on growing specific crops in the gentle maritime Northwest climate. This update includes his latest findings on seed sources, refinements in growing and cultivation techniques, and other organic gardening best practices. Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades lays out the principles, but the author advocates that readers think for themselves and grow their gardens as they see fit.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Update on 4/16/2011:It's a year later, and I'm less of a gardening novice. At the start of this season we dug up the grass in the backyard and put in a small garden (last year's garden was in the front yard, which didn't work out very well). I reread most of this book as I was preparing the new bed for planting. Not only do I understand this stuff much better now, I'm thoroughly impressed by the way the author gets into soil science in a way a layperson can understand. For instance, he explains why letting a vegetable garden lie fallow for 2 years (after 3 years of continual planting) is the only way to return it to productivity, and how you shouldn't import too much organic material from outside sources (to prevent buildup of potassium in the soil). This is something I've not seen in other vegetable gardening books I own and have paged through. I still find the book's regionality and the author's experience utterly valuable.Original Review:I'm a complete beginner to gardening (even in containers) and decided to start a small vegetable garden this year. I picked up this book based on reviews and got some other beginner gardening books from the library to supplement my learning. Even though the author says that it's not a comprehensive gardening book, I found myself referring to it much more than the other books I got. He has a down-to-earth, scientific, thoughtful writing style that gained my trust through his explanations of his gardening methods and experiences.Some points I found invaluable as a beginner:1. Importance of fertilizing - basically, soil quality is poor all over the PNW because of constant rain, so fertilizing (without adding too much compost) is crucial.2. Not over-watering, which lowers soil temperature and leeches nutrients.3. Approximate sowing dates for various vegetables.4. Buying quality seeds - the home gardener often gets sold the cheapest quality seeds, which can affect your entire harvest (and all the time, money, energy you've spent on it). It's important to buy from catalogs that test their seeds and insist on commercial quality.5. And of course, the list of vegetables and how to raise them, how well they adapt to our climate, etc.

I found this book to be incredibly useful. I get tired of being told to wait until my soil thaws in the spring, and articles talking about those humid summer nights are definitely not by locals. Much of the advice that applies well to gardeners across the continent comes up pretty short around here. From soil fertility to choosing suitable varieties to planting schedules, Steve Solomon covers all the specifics that make Cascadia a unique growing climate.He is realistically, thoughtfully organic. Most organic authorities seem to blindly promote anything that seems like a natural product, and shun anything that seems like a chemical. Steve realizes that blood meal comes from the meat industry and may not be in line with the goals of healthy gardening (Mad Cow, anyone?) although he chooses to take his chances. He suggests Roundup in a couple of sections and explains why it's

not just another persistent harmful chemical.The only irritation I have is that he clearly has a bigger garden than I do. I've got about 200 sq. ft. He talks in fractions of an acre. Sheesh.

This author truly understands how to grow vegetables in the Northwest--unlike most garden books, which work great for the Midwest and Eastern states, this one is exceptionally unique. Instead of reiterating the standard tips about composting and mulch and soil pH found in most garden books, this author gets his knowledge from years of doing tests and trials on his own land, in the northwest, AND by listening to his intuition and getting into the mind of the plants, so to speak. His observations and recommendations are in direct contrast to many standard garden books, but with good reason.The only reason I gave it 4 stars instead of 5 is that I had to re-read several of the chapters 2 or 3 tines, and discuss them with my more scientifically-minded husband to make sure I understood the science behind chapters correctly. It's not difficult science, there are no complex equations or anything, it's just such a different way to look at gardening that it required some thinking. His philosophy is in sharp contrast to the other book I bought, Square Foot Gardening which is all about mastery over the plant rather than working with the plant.

I have read a lot of gardening books but this one was so helpful for my area. Only problem is his acceptance of using round-up while calling himself an organic gardener.

Awesome book! Better that any other gardening book in the store or library! All of Steve Solomon's books are amazing and so truthful! Not the average gardening book. Top this book off with his Gardening When It Counts book, and The Intelligent Gardener. No need to read any others!

For those of us in the Pac NW, who aspire to growing a garden in our unique conditions, Steve Solomon is the hands down best source of information. This book is my bible for gardening (although of course I reserve the right to do some stuff my way --don't worry Steve, I'm sure I'll learn my lesson). He has a wide range of experience and is a recognized expert for our area. I thought some of his writing got a little overly impressed, but he does have the creds. AND there are a couple of places where he completely redeems himself with his recognition of the magic of seeing things grow, and being part of that process. Highly recommended for anyone west of the Cascades who wants a good garden. Invaluable!

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