



Fresh From the Garden

An Organic Guide to Growing Vegetables, Berries, and Herbs in Cold Climates

By John Whitman

University of Minnesota Press

ISBN 978-0-8166-9839-4

February 2017|

Gardening

FRESH FROM THE GARDEN is a marvelous book. It is a large and comprehensive volume for growing edible food plants only, but discusses edible flower garden plants and other unusual and unexpected edible plants. This book is for gardening in cold areas like mine, and as a long-time gardener, I know this can be difficult.

Part I is devoted to the basics of gardening and growing crops organically. It explains a variety of approaches from growing in containers to creating many types of land gardens. Soil and compost is explained along with how to water and fertilize. Directions for plant seeds is provided, but it also includes other methods of propagation. It explains how to grow crops and how to weed and harvest them. The information goes further to include culinary terms, food storage, and even gives reasons why some people love or hate a particular vegetable. All the tools and products necessary for gardening are listed along with safety tips. Great photos and many easy-to-understand charts supplement the text.

One thing among many I learned was that pH means potential hydrogen. I've known what a pH reading was and how it applies to plants, but not what the acronym meant. It's not only the solid information but also the good advice provided, such as the myth the gardener controls their garden, and many ways exist to achieve a bountiful harvest. Author John Whitman encourages gardeners to use whatever method works best for them.

The most wonderful part of FRESH FROM THE GARDEN is Part II– an extensive listing of all the vegetables, berries and herbs that can be grown in the food garden. Many I have grown, but

even more I haven't. From asparagus to zucchini, every crop is described. The information includes when and where to plant, the plant's nutritional facts, the varieties available, how to grow it, problems and pests that can occur, and how to harvest and store the crop.

While FRESH FROM THE GARDEN is invaluable for gardeners in cold areas, defined in the book as anywhere the temperature can dip below -20 degrees Fahrenheit, the basic information is relevant anywhere. The extensive list and discussion of crop foods makes this garden book one every gardener will seek out repeatedly, not only when choosing plants to grow for the upcoming season, but also whenever problems or questions occur during growing or harvesting of those crops. For beginning gardeners or experienced gardeners, FRESH FROM THE GARDEN offers effective gardening know-how.

Robin Courtright