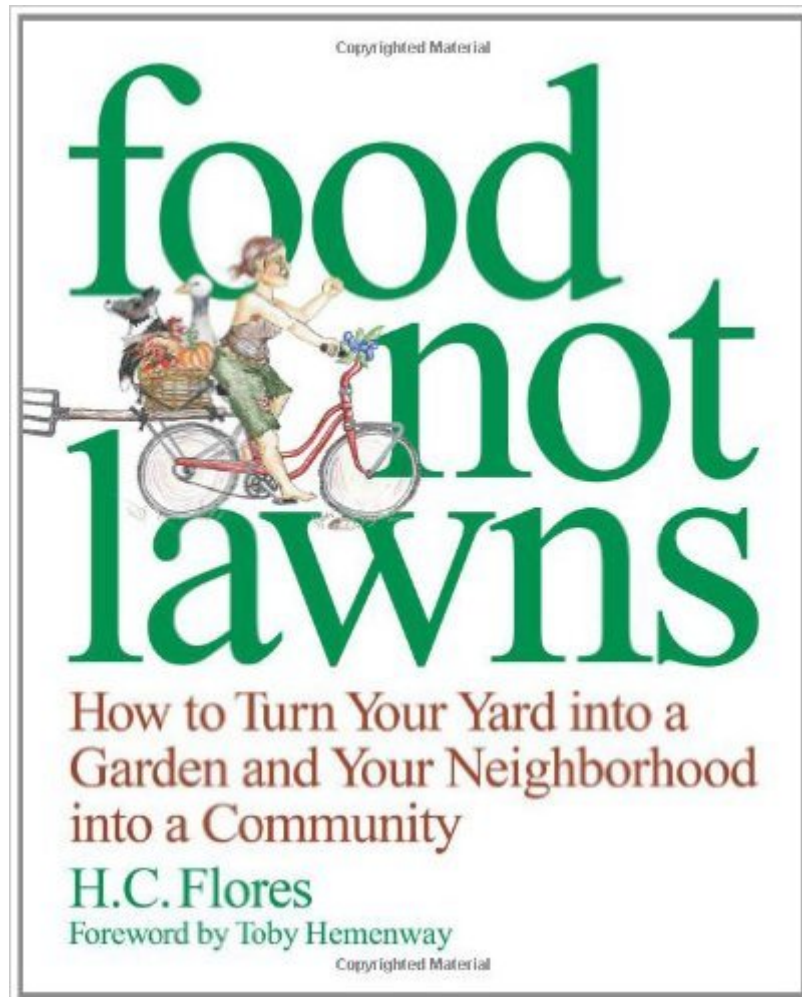


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Food Not Lawns: How To Turn Your Yard Into A Garden And Your Neighborhood Into A Community



Synopsis

Gardening can be a political act. Creativity, fulfillment, connection, revolutionâ "it all begins when we get our hands in the dirt. Food Not Lawns combines practical wisdom on ecological design and community-building with a fresh, green perspective on an age-old subject. Activist and urban gardener Heather Flores shares her nine-step permaculture design to help farmsteaders and city dwellers alike build fertile soil, promote biodiversity, and increase natural habitat in their own "paradise gardens." But Food Not Lawns doesn't begin and end in the seed bed. This joyful permaculture lifestyle manual inspires readers to apply the principles of the paradise gardenâ "simplicity, resourcefulness, creativity, mindfulness, and communityâ "to all aspects of life. Plant "guerilla gardens" in barren intersections and medians; organize community meals; start a street theater troupe or host a local art swap; free your kitchen from refrigeration and enjoy truly fresh, nourishing foods from your own plot of land; work with children to create garden play spaces. Flores cares passionately about the damaged state of our environment and the ills of our throwaway society. In Food Not Lawns, she shows us how to reclaim the earth one garden at a time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There's a tendency among activists these days to see their focus as the solution to all the world's problems. For one author, feminism envelopes all issues; for another communism (or capitalism) does. For others, it's Christianity. As an avid, beginning gardener, I understand the appeal, but I feel like the connection between world peace and gardening wasn't adequately argued in the book.

Having scrounged myself a piece of a neighbor's yard, I expected that this would be a good book to get me started on a practical bent. However, I found that the idealism often prevented extensive practical advice which is necessary for the beginner. Perhaps advanced gardeners can "make space for all plant species" and can't recommend one species above another, but there was limited - almost non-existent - acknowledgment that some species are easier to grow than others, and some are more useful in terms of food production, especially if space is extremely limited. For a first "food" garden, would I be better off growing potatoes? Tomatoes? Spinach? I found the transition from garden-related activism to community activism quite rocky. I wish the sections on seed-saving and connecting with neighbors were expanded. On a personal level, I found many of the asides (which I will paraphrase as "well, *of course* all right-minded people agree that _____") were off-putting, as hard-core radical leftists are not the only ones who are interested in producing clean, local food and making communities. I was also troubled by the exhortations to get rid of appliances, go vegetarian, and dumpster scavenge to save the environment, while at the same time suggesting extensive driving (to farms, to dumpsters, around town, between bakeries). All that aside, Food Not Lawns is an interesting read.

Food Not Lawns is a terrific and timely new paperback from activist and urban gardener H.C. Flores. Flores is a proponent of permaculture, a sustainable way of landscaping inspired by natural eco-systems. Her book presents a nine-step plan to transform the typical wasteland of turf into a productive, environmentally friendly "paradise garden" bursting with edible bounty. "The average American lawn," according to Flores, "could produce several hundred pounds of food a year." Food Not Lawns began as an offshoot of the grassroots group Food Not Bombs, a non-profit with chapters all over the country that provides free vegetarian meals to the hungry using donated ingredients that would otherwise end up in a dumpster. Flores' experience cooking and serving meals with Food Not Bombs gave her a new ambition; instead of simply providing food to others, she wanted to teach people how to provide for themselves. She describes Food Not Lawns as a "grassroots gardening project geared toward using waste resources to grow organic gardens and encouraging others to share their space, surplus, and ideas toward the betterment of the whole community." The more Flores learned about food, agriculture, and land use, she says, the more she came to see the typical suburban lawn as a symbol of "gross waste and mindless affluence." Flores reveals that there's nothing green about our love of lawns, which gobble up more resources and create more pollution than industrial farming. Her book explains how the weaknesses of our industrial food chain, and the unsustainable terrain of turf that surrounds suburbia have inspired a

grassroots movement to grow not grass, but food. Food Not Lawns is the perfect introduction to the permaculture revolution.

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