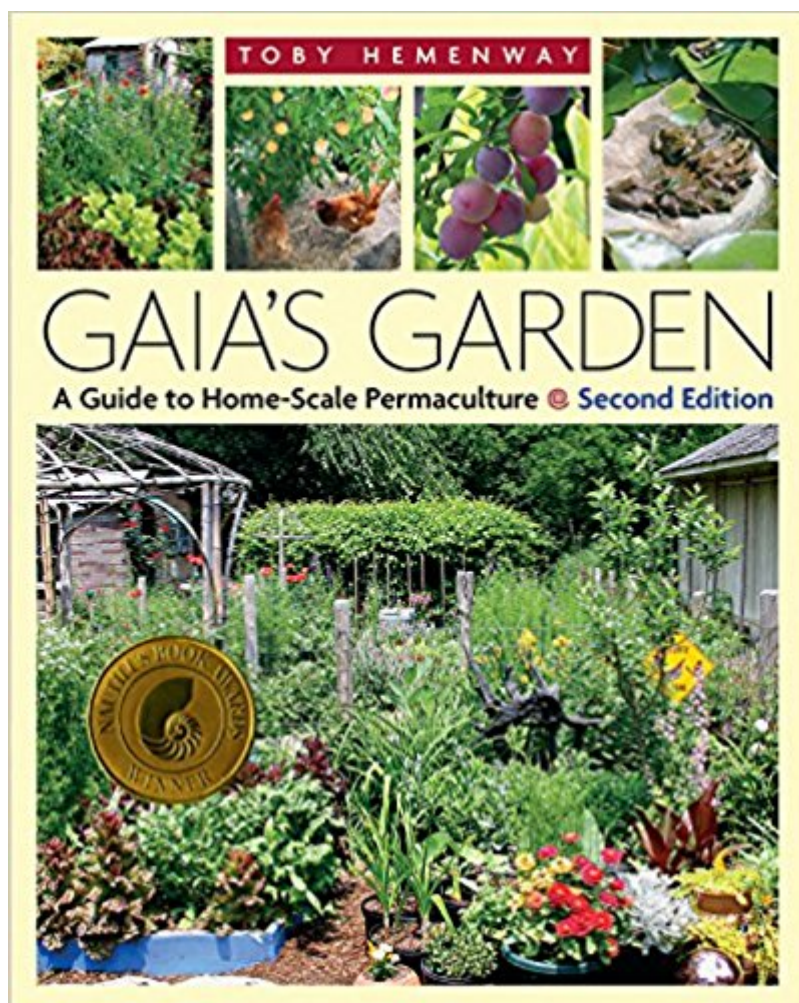




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# Gaia's Garden: A Guide To Home-Scale Permaculture, 2nd Edition



## Synopsis

The first edition of *Gaia's Garden* sparked the imagination of America's home gardeners, introducing permaculture's central message: Working with Nature, not against her, results in more beautiful, abundant, and forgiving gardens. This extensively revised and expanded second edition broadens the reach and depth of the permaculture approach for urban and suburban growers. Many people mistakenly think that ecological gardening "which involves growing a wide range of edible and other useful plants" can take place only on a large, multiacre scale. As Hemenway demonstrates, it's fun and easy to create a "backyard ecosystem" by assembling communities of plants that can work cooperatively and perform a variety of functions, including: Building and maintaining soil fertility and structure Catching and conserving water in the landscape Providing habitat for beneficial insects, birds, and animals Growing an edible "forest" that yields seasonal fruits, nuts, and other foods This revised and updated edition also features a new chapter on urban permaculture, designed especially for people in cities and suburbs who have very limited growing space. Whatever size yard or garden you have to work with, you can apply basic permaculture principles to make it more diverse, more natural, more productive, and more beautiful. Best of all, once it's established, an ecological garden will reduce or eliminate most of the backbreaking work that's needed to maintain the typical lawn and garden.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] wonderful, nature-embracing, and completely sensible vision of the future." —Justin Siskin

A graywater wetland      [View larger](#)

A forest garden for a rectangular yard      [View larger](#)

"Become a sustainable producer of resources instead of a wasteful consumer. This wonderful book shows you how by helping you create and enhance beautiful backyard ecosystems within the garden. Put this book into action, and you'll begin to live an example that positively shifts your own community and beyond. Best of all, doing so with this book is simple, juicy, and fun."--Brad Lancaster, author of *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond* and <http://www.HarvestingRainwater.com> "Toby's fun, well-grounded, and engaging book is fast becoming a classic, and deservedly so. Practical yet visionary, broad-ranging yet focused on the basics one needs to know, this is a great place to start on the permaculture path. The new edition builds solidly on the success of the first. Congratulations!"--Dave Jacke, co-author of the two-volume *Edible Forest Gardens* "The world didn't come with an operating manual, so it's a good thing that some wise people have from time to time written them. *Gaia's Garden* is one of the more important, a book that will be absolutely necessary in the world ahead."--Bill McKibben, author of *Deep Economy and Hope, Human and Wild* "Permaculture gardens are no longer a thing of the future. They are here to stay and flourish. *Gaia's Garden* is enlightening and required reading for all people who desire to make their home's landscape healthy, sustainable, and healing."--Robert Kourik, author of *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape--Naturally* "*Gaia's Garden* is simply the best permaculture book ever written, and is in the running for best gardening book ever written. No one should be without it."--Sharon Astyk, author of *Depletion and Abundance: Life on the New Home Front* "Toby Hemenway's *Gaia's Garden* will be recorded in history as a milestone for gardeners and landscapers--a fusion of the practical and the visionary--using the natural intelligence of Earth's symbiotic communities to strengthen and sustain ecosystems in which humans are a partner, not a competitor. An amazing achievement showing how we can and must live in harmony with nature!"--Paul Stamets, author of *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World*

Toby Hemenway was the author of the first major North American book on permaculture, *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*, as well as *The Permaculture City*. After obtaining a degree in biology from Tufts University, Toby worked for many

years as a researcher in genetics and immunology, first in academic laboratories at Harvard and the University of Washington in Seattle, and then at Immunex, a major medical biotech company. At about the time he was growing dissatisfied with the direction biotechnology was taking, he discovered permaculture, a design approach based on ecological principles that creates sustainable landscapes, homes, and workplaces. A career change followed, and Toby and his wife spent ten years creating a rural permaculture site in southern Oregon. He was associate editor of *Permaculture Activist*, a journal of ecological design and sustainable culture, from 1999 to 2004. He taught permaculture and consulted and lectured on ecological design throughout the country, and his writing appeared in magazines such as *Whole Earth Review*, *Natural Home*, and *Kitchen Gardener*. Toby passed away in 2016. Visit his web site at [www.patternliteracy.com](http://www.patternliteracy.com)

There is a lot to absorb from this book. After having spent the last two months reading it and applying tips from it, I wish I'd read the last chapter first since it summarizes everything. It takes the mountain of overwhelming knowledge and gives a simple path forward. Since reading this book, I have a more holistic view of my yard. I can see I've already made some mistakes in my yard, but it is exciting to begin to see results already. Instead of following the usual route of planting rows of veggies, I've started working on symbiotic blends of nitrogen fixers, vines, and other roles. Today I picked up a cheap bird feeder and post from a hardware store and put up a quick bird feeder over a dry, weedy patch in the back. I look forward to seeing how well the author's claim that doing this will lead to passive, ongoing returns in the form of birds' fertilizing the barren area with their poop and their weeding the area as some scratch around the ground looking for fallen seeds. His urban ideas are incredible, too. Don't miss out on that chapter, even though it's tucked in just before the end. He has a few pages devoted to what you can do with the "hell strip" between the road and sidewalk (usually just used for a mailbox and cable tv lines). Don't skip the observation step he gives in an incredible several pages and sidebar. While we did some of this work, I wish we'd done even more extensive up-front observation. It turned out we had to overhaul our plans once the people came out and marked the utility lines. They weren't where we thought they were originally. But I'm so glad this book showed us how to find out these things early on. It would be a shame to plant an expensive tree and pour water and resources into it only to have it uprooted later on. If there is one reason to buy this book, it's because it will shift your perspective away from seeing gardening as a chore with unending maintenance. Instead, by working with nature instead of against it, problems can become signals, temporary obstacles, or just part of the normal flow. The book is pragmatic, realistic, backed with science and research, and a lot of fun. Get it, read it, and try it out.

This is an incredible book on Permaculture. Yes it's nice to have pretty flowers year round, but it's even better when you can feed your family. the service was very fast and I am sure I will be making more purchases.

I love this book... Toby will be missed

Loved this book! Great information, well-written and very inspirational. Planning on planting a cherry tree and an asparagus bed this year.

I'm still reading it, but so far, I've learned new things, and I probably own 50 gardening books. Permaculture is the art and skill of growing one's own sustainable garden including planting things that have more than one use, like a shade tree that produces fruit; an ornamental herb that has medicinal qualities, a pretty flower that attracts beneficial insects to eat pest insects. Hemenway defines permaculture terms and tells you how to do it. One example I enjoyed was the story of a woman in the Southwest who started out with a barren patch of desert, who within 5 years, had turned it into a productive and beautiful piece of land, and Hemenway describes how it was done. This is of great value for those of us who live west of the Rockies in arid places. This also makes the point that a great garden takes time, but that once you've got it, you no longer need to replant every year because your plants went belly up. I was initially turned off by the title, but it refers to the way nature has plant communities and how those plants support one another. Great book.

This book surprised me. It was better than I expected, and nothing like I expected. I thought it was going to be more of a "how to," on permaculture, but the author approaches the subject matter in a more reasoned, grounded, and truly gifted way of expressing gardening from mother nature's point of view. I couldn't just skim this book because every word counted and was connected to the next. A very enjoyable read and full of information, ideas, and inspiration.

I've been researching permaculture and edible gardening for 2 years and stumbled across this book. It changed my outlook completely. I savoured every page and was sad when it was finished. It is unbelievably well written and full of incredible advice. I cannot recommend it enough! It's now my bible!

UrbanHerbs is a project in the Department of Pharmacology at Georgetown University Medical Center. We use Gaia's Garden as one of our textbooks and loan copies to our student interns. Following their internship we find that many of our interns end up buying their own copy. This is a fantastic book that works great as both a textbook for instructors and students, as well as, an excellent guide for your average green thumb who is looking to expand their skills and their gardens to incorporate sustainable, ecologically savvy gardening practices. Gaia's Garden is well-written and fun to read. Moreover, it offers easy-to-follow steps for building upon, and putting into practice, what you've learned from the text. Gaia's Garden is a must own!

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