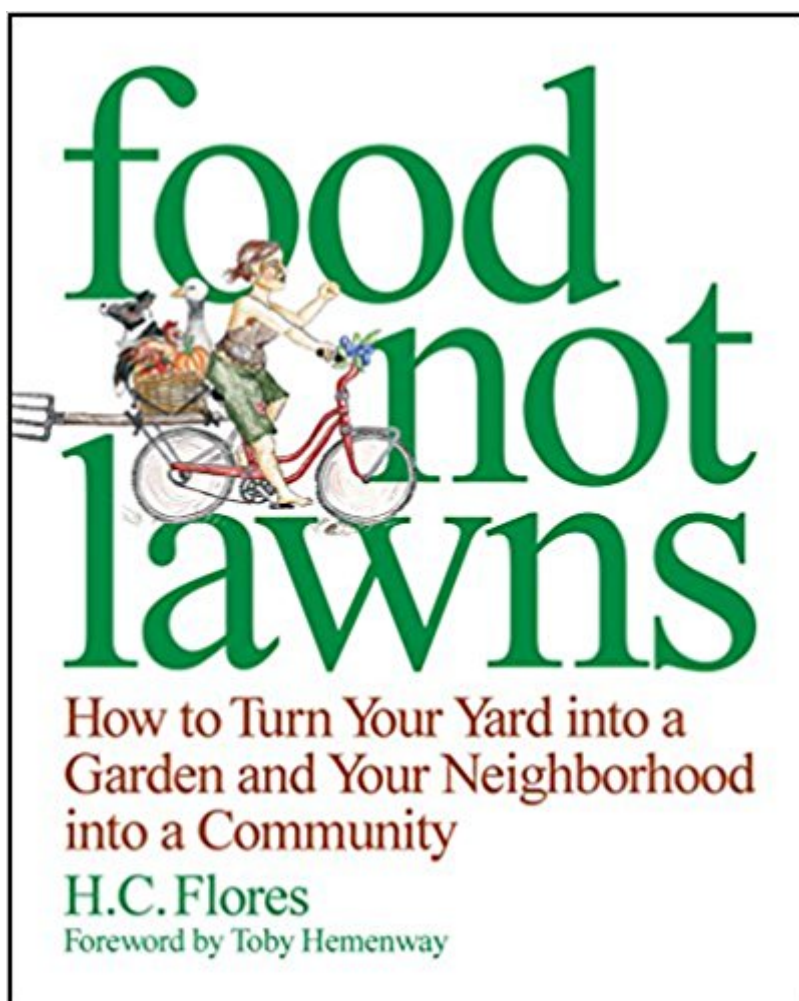


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# Food Not Lawns: How To Turn Your Yard Into A Garden And Your Neighborhood Into A Community



## Synopsis

Gardening can be a political act. Creativity, fulfillment, connection, revolution—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 garden—to simplicity, resourcefulness, creativity, mindfulness, and community—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

For Flores, "practicing ecological living is a deeply subversive act," and while most gardening books do not include warnings that COINTELPRO "can and will...rape you," it is only because most gardening books do not encourage "guerilla gardening" after describing the basics of garden planning and pruning. More advanced topics range from integrating barnyard birds into a garden to

getting more mileage out of the home water cycle to the benefits of a balanced insect population. The illustrations are amusing as well as helpful, and though the index is not extensive, the book, overall, is a much better read than the average gardening book, both in terms of range and entertainment value. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Bookwatch/Midwest Book Review-For activist readers who believe activism is a political pursuit, **FOOD NOT LAWN: HOW TO TURN YOUR YARD INTO A GARDEN AND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD INTO A COMMUNITY** offers a different viewpoint, maintaining that growing food where you live is a key method of becoming a food activist in the community. Chapters advocate planting home and community gardens with an eye to drawing important connections between the politics of a home or community garden and the wider politics of usage, consumption, and sustainability. Another rarity: chapters promote small, easy changes in lifestyles to achieve a transition between personal choice and political activism at the community level, providing keys to change any reader can use. Library Journal-Certified permaculture designer Flores advocates living an ecologically friendly lifestyle by creating gardens. Following a foreword by Toby Hemenway (*Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*), she discusses the identification of garden sites, the water cycle and water conservation, soils and composting, plants, how to save seed, project design, the fostering of community involvement, the inclusion of children in projects, the sharing of information, and activism. Many of Flores's ideas are for the extremely committed. She advocates dumpster digging, composting human feces, and living life without appliances like refrigerators. She also suggests growing food on land, not necessarily with the landowner's permission, and espouses gray-water conservation techniques that may be illegal in some communities. While growing your own food is a worthy goal, Flores doesn't always seem to recognize the hard work involved. She also doesn't expand on all of her ideas, but she does offer an extensive list of resources for further research. Flores has an engaging style and is clearly passionate about her subject, and her debut book provides an alternative viewpoint, but it will probably not interest mainstream audiences. Purchase as required. (Sue O'Brien)"More than just another gardening book, *Food Not Lawns* provides a road map for ecological and social literacy in our own backyards and neighborhoods. A quiet revolution is taking place across the country centered on small plots in urban and suburban areas where food is being produced, jobs grown, and real community developed. This timely book serves as an important guide, providing a source of both information and inspiration for one of the most hopeful and exciting movements of our

time."--Michael Ableman, author of *Fields Of Plenty*"Food Not Lawns is radical (rooted), subversive (underground), and seeded throughout with treasures that will sprout into savory, beautiful flowers. Don't just buy this book: Read it. Don't just read this book: Do it. Grow a garden. And let the weeds grow; they're good medicine."--Susun Weed, *Wise Woman Herbal Series*"Food Not Lawns is a wonderful book expanding on the idea that we can do more than just protest but that we have the power to create the world we want. Food Not Lawns is a practical guide to feeding ourselves and making positive change. In a time of so much hopelessness this book reminds us that there really is so much we can do. I encourage everyone seeking peace and well being to dig into this rich loam of information. It will inspire you to grow food not lawns."--Keith McHenry, Co-founder of the Food Not Bombs movement

I purchased this book used on after reading about it in a current issue of *Mother Earth News*. While I do believe that gardens are a better use of land than lawns in many situations, what I was interested in were ways to apply the concept of permaculture to our property. This book is more of an essay on H.C. Flores political views concerning the environment and against Big Business. She speaks repeatedly on making earth a paradise by bringing people together with gardens, food, and less commercialism. After about 4 chapters, I started looking ahead for more information on the gardening aspect of the topic. Far too much of this book is about her political agenda, and much less about the subject. After a lifetime in health care, meeting thousands of people at their best and worst, it is my opinion that society has too many variables in human beings to allow her ideal of paradise to flourish. Perhaps she could explain how utilizing gardens and giving the excess to neighbors to create a better sense of community is going to help remove the greed, fear, and lack of intellectual understanding that keeps people from being part of a bigger open community. I have always gardened and shared my food with friends, family and neighbors without asking for anything. But the sense of community gets stronger every year when the neighbors see my tomatoes and green beans ripening.

I was so disappointed in this book. I was expecting a practical guide to converting my lawn to a garden. What I got was a dense political manifesto. While I absolutely agree with Ms. Flores' agenda, reading this book was like being beaten to death with a political 2x4. There IS some useful practical advice in the book, but it is so buried by the ranting that it is hard to find and painful to extract. I did not find the book very readable, at all; even given my own environmental leanings and general agreement with what she was preaching.

Are you tired of mowing your lawn, pulling dandelions, spraying it with toxic chemicals, feeding it with artificial fertilizers that kill our rivers and oceans, and paying the water bill to keep it from turning brown every summer? If not, don't read this book. If so, then you really SHOULD read it, because Ms. Flores will tell you why you should get rid of all that worthless grass, and plant food instead. This is a revolutionary book about taking control of our food supply, and minimizing our negative footprint on the environment. Will you take all of her advice? Probably not. For instance, I probably won't reroute my human waste through a filter box and into my garden, but hey, if you wanna know how to do it, Flores will give you the information you need. In the meantime, she'll give you a lot of other practical advice on how to change your part of the world for the better, one garden at a time.

I found the book to be an important part of my life. My whole life changed in an instant, everything was gone at age 68. This book has helped me get through life. I have a garden and do gardening. Life is now worthwhile once again, I give away tomatoes, I now have a sense of purpose and acquired new valuable friends. Things that were once important to me are not now.

Very good book about natural gardening. I still have some lawn, but I have to say that my great NY suburban house is looking pretty good (and tasty) without EVER spraying or adding ANY kind of fertilizers to my backyard (besides compost, mostly homemade) in almost 2 years. I have learned with this book that landscaping is so much more than mowing and weed wrecking: It is a never ending learning curve. It infinitesimally starts and ends by studying and contemplating your green spaces, and it takes a lot of (fun) work to get it going well. Thanks Ms. Flores for getting me started!

Having never been able to afford proper permaculture education and living far away from where such courses are offered anyway, I found this book to be a real blessing, full of practical information on polycultural organic gardening, composting, vermiculture, ecological design, appropriate technology, edible weeds, biodynamic farming, seed stewardship, community organizing, conflict resolution, activism, ecological pedagogy, and more. Certainly, if you are interested in planting a backyard or community garden, then this book is one that you will want to read immediately. With our present capitalist agricultural system destroying the biosphere and our health via global warming, deforestation, pesticide run-off, top soil erosion, biotechnology, and cancer, one really needs to read and encourage others to read this amazing book. More importantly, we need to reconnect with the land, get some soil beneath our fingernails, and begin planting the seeds of that

better world we're always talking and dreaming about. Thank you H.C. Flores for this excellent book and for all the inspiring things you do to build a more rational, socially just, and ecological society!

I LOVE this book! I absolutely devoured it! The author writes so well and is absolutely captivating. What an inspiring book and woman. I HIGHLY recommend this book as one of the best Urban Permaculture, community building, ecological sustainable thinking and design. I just love her!

I haven't finished it yet, but I liked what I have read so far.

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