

EDIBLE FOREST GARDENS. Jacke, Dave and Eric Toensmeier. *White River Junction, IT: Chelsea Green, 2005. 2 vols. xvii, 378 pp.; xv, 655 pp. (ISBN: 9781931498791, 9781931498807) \$60.00 each.*

As society becomes increasingly aware of the importance of balancing ecological systems, *Edible Forest Gardens* provides an excellent resource for refining this line of thought and action. Following eight years' of rigorous research, Dave Jacke and Eric Toensmeier, both educators and researchers, produced this two-volume work; they appear at just the right time to promote a greener lifestyle. The books send out a profound message of the value of permaculture, a philosophy and application of ecological design. Jacke and Toensmeier use key concepts of forest ecology to integrate vision, ecology, design, and practice within the framework of permaculture. In addition, the book stresses how edible forest plants can be used for energy, shelter, and a wide range of human food production.

Volume One begins with a section entitled, "Vision," and explores the ecological and cultural context for forest gardening with an emphasis on eastern North America. Goals for edible forest garden design are set to achieve that vision. The following section, "Ecology," explores the ecology of the forest and forest gardens. Thus, the book sets a solid theoretical foundation and knowledge for prospective forest gardeners.

The detailed appendices include a list of forest gardening's "Top 100" species, plant hardiness zone maps for North America and Europe, and a list of publications and organizations related to forest ecology and forest gardening. Content is substantial and the many colorful pictures add to the ease and enjoyment of use. The glossary, bibliography, and index also enhance readers' efficiency. Throughout Volume One, readers will find in-depth insets and feature articles. In addition, three case studies provide real examples of forest gardens, making this book quite practical.

Volume Two offers even more practical ideas as well as guidance on how to actually build a forest garden. Readers are led from their interest in edible forest gardening to the pleasure of having one of their own. Like Volume One, the first chapter provides an overview of forest gardening's conceptual and ecological foundations and its most fundamental strategies and techniques. From there, the book points out the patterns of forest gardening design and moves into step-by-step assistance for the detailed designing of a forest garden. Challenges are addressed along with solutions for dealing with them. Instructions are provided for how to oversee the design; obtain high-quality planting stock; organize for planting day; plant trees, shrubs, and herbs in a professional way; and care for them afterwards. The final part of the book discusses the practicalities of management and maintenance after the plants are in the ground. The appendices offer detailed information and resources to help readers navigate, select and locate plants, and create beneficial animal habitats. The practical aspects of Volume Two complement the visions and theories laid out in the first volume, facilitating one's dream of building an edible forest garden.

Employing precise instructions and illustrations, *Edible Forest Gardens* offers readers all the information they need to create authentic, edible gardens based on the principles and values

of permaculture. Although the second volume lacks color pictures, it remains quite attractive for readers. Originally written for the "educated suburban gardener," *Edible Forest Gardens* has drawn immense attention from forest gardeners, plant seekers, backyard breeders, agricultural researchers and educators, and environmentalists. More than a guide to fascinating and tempting edible plants, these volumes encourage an appreciation for nature and maintaining a greener and more sustainable human life. If more and more people adopt their unique perspective, the authors' vision of ecological balance is within reach and will become a greener reality.

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