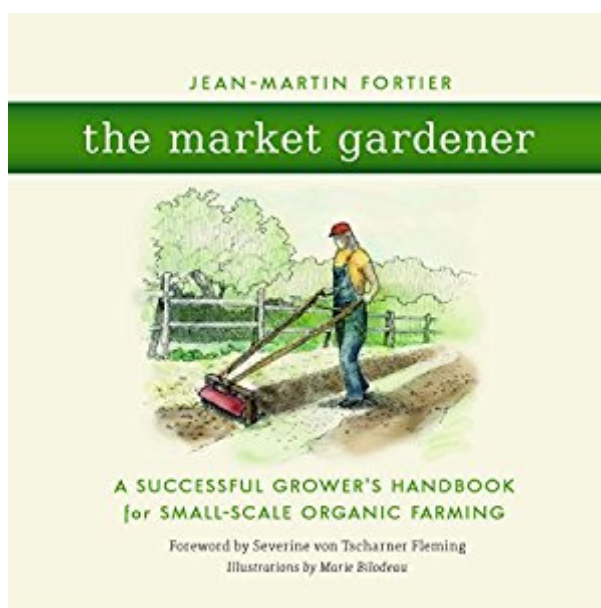


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# The Market Gardener: A Successful Grower's Handbook For Small-Scale Organic Farming



## Synopsis

Growing on just one and a half acres, owners Jean-Martin and Maude-Hélène feed more than 200 families through their thriving CSA and seasonal market stands and supply their signature mesclun salad mix to dozens of local establishments. The secret of their success is the low-tech, high-yield production methods they've developed by focusing on growing better rather than growing bigger, making their operation more lucrative and viable in the process. The Market Gardener is a compendium of proven horticultural techniques and innovative growing methods. This complete guide is packed with practical information on: Setting-up a micro-farm by designing biologically intensive cropping systems, all with negligible capital outlay Farming without a tractor and minimizing fossil fuel inputs through the use of the best hand tools, appropriate machinery, and minimum tillage practices Growing mixed vegetables systematically with attention to weed and pest management, crop yields, harvest periods, and pricing approaches Inspired by the French intensive tradition of maraichage and by iconic American vegetable grower Eliot Coleman, author and farmer Jean-Martin shows by example how to start a market garden and make it both very productive and profitable. Making a living wage farming without big capital outlay or acreages may be closer than you think. Jean-Martin Fortier is a passionate advocate of strong local food systems and founder of Les Jardins de la Grelinette, an internationally recognized model for successful bio-intensive micro-farming.

## Book Information

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Agriculture

## Customer Reviews

I stumbled across *The Market Gardener* while searching for ways to (organically) maximize the yield I could get from my tiny back yard vegetable garden. Even though I knew the book was geared toward someone planning to sell their produce as opposed to a home gardener like myself, I decided to buy the book based on reviews and what I saw in the book via Amazon's "Look Inside" feature. (I bought it from a different store only because I had a gift card that needed to be used.) This book does not disappoint. Keep in mind- this isn't a guide on how to do permaculture or sustainable agriculture. It's about maximizing revenue and profit on an organic micro-farm. So he may not provide information on everything you would expect from an organic grower. For example, I was surprised to read that they buy their compost instead of making it themselves, the way every other organic/sustainable gardener seems to do (or at least claim they do). The impression I get from other books and articles is that you can totally sustain your garden forever and ever off the compost you make yourself, and that may be true, but Jean-Martin states that the time and space they would need to create and maintain compost piles is better utilized by growing more produce- plus the organic compost they buy is predictable in terms of quality and composition, which are both important. It made sense to me when I read it. However, he never suggests that it cannot or should not be done on your own- just that it makes more sense for their farm, all things considered, to buy compost instead of make it. Jean-Martin's writing style is also refreshing compared to many organic growers. Too often they come across as if their way is the only right way, no matter the circumstances, but I found no such attitude in *The Market Gardener*. Jean-Martin discusses the various topics in a matter-of-fact way, explaining not only how they do things on their farm but why. He will explain various things they have tried, why they may or may not have worked on the farm, and give the pros and cons to each method, including the method they use, and the impression I was left with was "Here is what works best for us and why. Your situation may be different, so I will give you all the information I have and the reasoning I use, and trust you to choose what you think will work best for your situation." The practical advice throughout the book is stellar. There are no photographs, but honestly the book doesn't need them. *The Market Gardener* is about substance, not fluff. The pages are packed with useful charts, tables, and relevant drawings. Whether they're about crop rotation, crop planning, planting, insect management, financial aspects or anything else, the tables and charts are easy to read, practical, useful, AND (for me, anyway), easily adaptable. I spent a lot of time before I bought the book building spreadsheets that would provide me with a good "at a glance" for things I wanted to know, so I was happy to see information presented in a similar fashion. This book contains, hands down, THE MOST useful information on crop rotation

(and how to implement it) than any other resource I have found to date. Before buying this book I had spent literally weeks on the web, trying to figure out the best way (or at least a practical way) to implement crop rotation and not finding anything beyond very generalized advice to "rotate by crop families" or "follow heavy feeders with light feeders" or "don't plant the same things in the same beds every year". Trying to find out if plants needed a two, three, four, or more year rotation was difficult and there was a lot of conflicting information on what plants were heavy vs. light feeders (or in between), how long rotations should be, and so on. I also couldn't find any information on how far move plants for the next season in order to avoid diseases that may be present in the soil. One foot? Five? Ten? A whole field? I never could find that info. This book presented me with a wealth of actual, practical, applicable information on crop rotation, the whys, and how they do it. With all the information on how to run a successful small market-garden, I honestly did not expect a section of the book to be devoted to different vegetables and how to grow them, but the first appendix is devoted to just that. It isn't as comprehensive as some vegetable-growing books and guides, and the varieties he prefers are (obviously) more cold-tolerant than the kinds I would choose for the heat of Texas, but the information he DOES provide is great. He gives the common name, the plant family and fertilization needs (good to know for crop rotation), intensive spacing requirements, days in the garden (which may or may not be days to maturity depending on if he direct seeds that plant or not, but it's easy to tell which are which) and some other various bits of information and notes on the plant in question. The rest of the appendices are also jewels and contain, in a condensed format, information that was otherwise scattered throughout the book, such as the different tools they use and how to source them, or other books to reference. All in all, I can't recommend the book highly enough.

It's a very good book with detailed explanations of various crop types and tools. The division of topics into chapters is well done and the explanations are good and thorough. There is a lot of focus on the author's own farm and farming habits, but he does discuss alternatives and why he chooses certain ways of doing things. The only reason I'm giving this book 4 stars instead of 5 is that the tables and charts are not very legible in the Kindle version of the book, which is the copy I purchased.

Dude is sharp, a must read for any gardener. I will continue to watch for further info posted from his farm. He boast \$140k per yr production on 1.5 acres. With what we produce I believe it is entirely

feasable. Has great ideas on keeping weeds down organically and has great info on tools that make a small operation a ton less work. Just the introduction to the few tools of his trade was worth the price of the book. The info on crop rotation, crop planning, and setup...totally invaluable. I work for an organic farm but aside from that I would honestly suggest that everyone who ever plans on vegetable gardening should read this book. You will probably go smaller scale with higher production and a lot less effort.

I purchased this for my husband as he wanted to add produce to our farm in the next few years on top of grass raised beef, pastured poultry and bees. I used this to help educate him on what all is necessary in raising produce for sale from deciding what to grow to ground prep to harvest and finally to market. There is more involved than most people realize. I have to admit until I took a pre/post harvest class through UMass there were many steps I hadn't considered not to mention the difference in storage environment between products. After he completed reading the book we've been able to discuss different possibilities with both sides having a fuller understanding of what's involved.

One of the best books around for small/urban based farmers and larger market gardeners/farmers like myself. Gives great info that any beginner and seasoned gardeners will benefit from. It's always great to see other perspectives, ideas when it comes to gardening and farming! I would say this is a must have read! Inspires and gets you excited to try something new the following growing season!

Fantastic book if you are interested in gardening on any level. I gave my husband this book as a gift and he immediately started seedlings and we have tomatoes, watermelon, peppers, strawberries, herbs and lots of other wonderful healthy things growing as we speak! Lots of practical step by step instructions on soil mixes and what, when and how to plant almost anything. Highly recommend if you want to feed your family or start a business selling produce. We plan to do both!

This book provides an overview of the process of small scale or market gardening. The author does an excellent job of explaining the strategies and skills used to create a profitable farm. Even though my own experiences with gardening are very limited, I was able to understand most of the concepts presented. The author's love of working with the land shines through the entire book. However, he provides a realistic view of farming as opposed to a romantic view. Hard work, proper tools and techniques, creative problem solving, and commitment to high standards are major themes of his

success. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in turning the love of gardening into a sustainable career.

By Far the most thorough hands-on cutting edge gardening resource in my library. Jean-Martin has shown me how to take the puzzle pieces, I have accrued from 35 years of gardening, and put them into a time-table of efficiency that works! - Definitely a must for the serious gardener. Thank You Jean-Martin for taking a load off my back! ;-)

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