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Foreword Review GARDENING

The Resilient Gardener: Food Production and Self-Reliance in Uncertain Times

Carol Deppe
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In *The Resilient Gardener*, scientist and author Carol Deppe offers readers an inspiring approach to gardening. For many, gardening is a hobby—a source of solace and an experiment in self-sufficiency. Gardens are designed to offer up good things during good times—handfuls of bulbous tomatoes after weeks of careful watering, weeding, and monitoring for invading insects, for example. But what happens when gardeners—along with the rest of society—face uncertain times?

Uncertain times, caused by an unstable economy, changing weather patterns, or personal injury, result in an expanse of time when the "garden suffers because people have other priorities." With this premise in mind, Deppe introduces the concept of resilient gardening. In Deppe's world, gardening transcends the world of leisurely pursuit and transforms into an act of empowerment.

In twelve intensely detailed chapters, *The Resilient Gardener* empowers readers with the knowledge they need to design, build, and maintain gardens that can withstand intense hardship and thrive despite periods of complete neglect. The first half of the book marries the practice of gardening with emerging global issues, such as climate change, increasing attention to weight control, and the rise of food allergies. Readers must first achieve a firm grasp of how these issues intersect with the process of gardening in order to fully benefit from the hands-on guidelines provided later in the book. Deppe's analysis is thorough; her research delves deep. By discussing the interaction between gardening and prevalent world issues, she establishes gardeners as hubs of sustainability and survival, their individual efforts producing movements of resilience that can benefit society as a whole.

One of the major strengths of this book—and what sets it apart from the deluge of gardening books currently on bookstore shelves—is the union of Deppe's scientific knowledge with her personal gardening experience. The second half of the book details the five essential crops of self-reliance—potatoes, corn, beans, squash, and eggs—and how to grow them. Though these sections are largely "dip and skip" depending on the reader's level of knowledge, they are expressed in crisp, detailed, and incredibly fluid prose. Deppe is able to transmit the nitty-gritty of gardening through invaluable parcels of personal anecdotes that make the material relatable and a pleasure to read.

Deppe's unique approach to her topic makes *The Resilient Gardener* an appealing selection for both experienced and beginner gardeners, as well as readers interested in issues of sustainability and global reform.

SHOILEE KHAN (November / December 2010)

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