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The Vegetable Gardener's Bible: Discover Ed's High-Yield Organic System for Growing Your Best Garden Ever!

Edward C. Smith
Storey Books (Feb 15, 2000)
Unknown $37.50 (320pp)
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Vegetable plants can get too much nitrogen. Garden pests can be confused by strong-scented companion planting. Peppers “love to hold hands,” i.e. to be planted close together.

Along with both general and specific instructions for gardening and advice from years of experience, these are the kinds of useful facts planted throughout Smith’s book. Gardening in Vermont (“where gardening is only slightly easier than in Siberia!”) for thirty years, Smith has refined a high-yield system of gardening. After a consideration of planning, especially Smith’s method of wide, raised, deep beds, the reader learns how he can get an early start on his garden using cold frames for small plants since “they can become an all-you-can-eat buffet for bugs and diseases.”

Content is divided into three parts, “From Seed to Harvest,” “The Healthy Garden” and the largest section, “Vegetables & Herbs, A-Z.” The first two sections might be considered a study section while the last one is solid reference for a reader who wishes to research the particular vegetables he plans to grow.

Smith covers specifics that are often overlooked in gardening books, subjects such as tools, use of seed catalogs, water friendly gardens and checks for ripeness. The healthy garden section is largely pro-active, emphasizing nurturing vegetable-friendly soil and composting, but also covering pests—“bugs, slugs, & things that go chomp in the night.”

Like other garden books of comparable length, it is practical. It is also a clear coverage of comprehensive garden care. While it might expect a little too much for the beginner with a small backyard garden, for example, pH testing the soil, it will not disappoint readers. Smith will please those who want to learn about the many aspects of gardening and also have clear and accessible reference material. His advice, hints, insights, illustrations and charts will benefit any gardener.

SALLY KETCHUM (December 16, 1999)

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