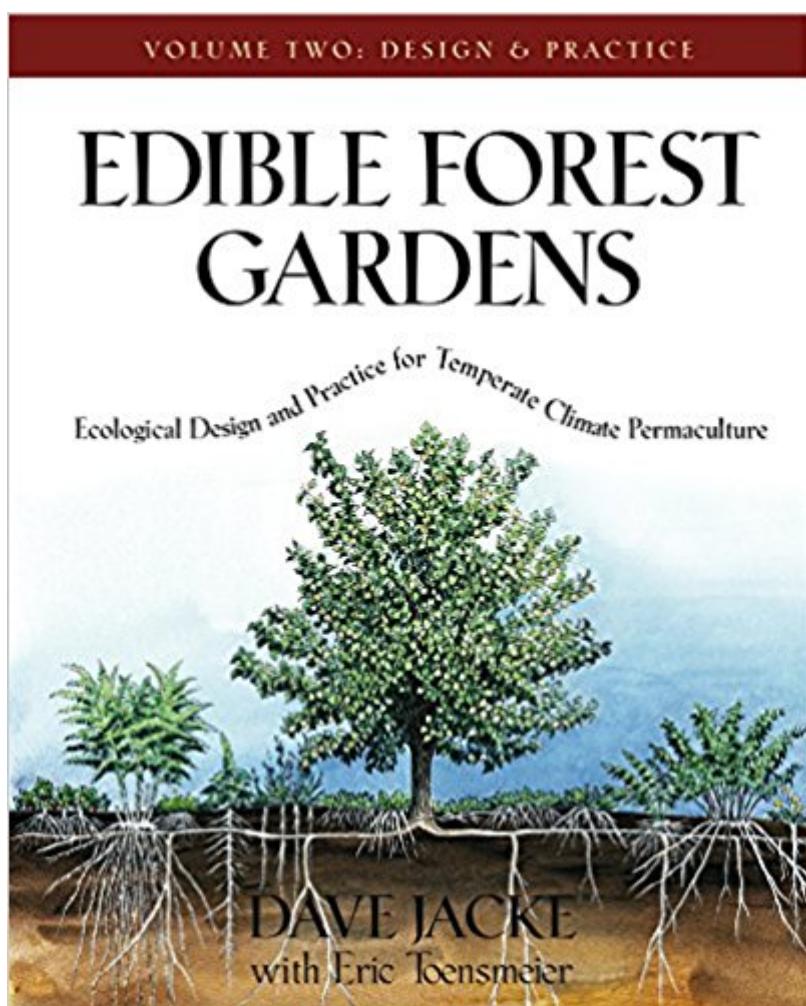


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# **Edible Forest Gardens, Vol. 2: Ecological Design And Practice For Temperate-Climate Permaculture**



## Synopsis

Edible Forest Gardens is a groundbreaking two-volume work that spells out and explores the key concepts of forest ecology and applies them to the needs of natural gardeners in temperate climates. Volume I lays out the vision of the forest garden and explains the basic ecological principles that make it work. In Volume II, Dave Jacke and Eric Toensmeier move on to practical considerations: concrete ways to design, establish, and maintain your own forest garden. Along the way they present case studies and examples, as well as tables, illustrations, and a uniquely valuable "plant matrix" that lists hundreds of the best edible and useful species. Taken together, the two volumes of Edible Forest Gardens offer an advanced course in ecological gardening--one that will forever change the way you look at plants and your environment.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

HortIdeas-We reviewed the first volume of this two-volume set in September 2005 HortIdeas--in fact, we were so impressed by it that we devoted that month's Book Reviews section entirely to it. Until Mycelium Running--another amazingly important and well-done book--appeared, we were considering doing the same this month for the second volume of Edible Forest Gardens, which is much thicker (by more than 270 pages!) than the first volume. The shorter length of this review certainly does not reflect the relative importance of the volumes--we recommend that anyone interested in experimenting with temperate-zone "gardening in the image of the forest" should study both. Although Volume 2 ostensibly emphasizes "practical" information building on the "theoretical"

ideas in Volume 1, it is clear that both volumes are essentially theoretical. That's because (as we discussed in our review of Volume 1) nobody has yet convincingly shown the viability of forest gardening (relying heavily on perennial crops) in temperate areas as a sustainable alternative to conventional gardening (based mainly on annual crops). Jacke and Toensmeier are, admirably, attempting to disseminate ideas gathered from a variety of source that might enable such viability. Ultimately, at this stage development of temperate-zone forest gardening techniques, virtually all approaches are experimental and in need of validation. We simply do not currently know their limitations. Understanding that knowledge on "best practices" for temperate-zone forest gardening needs to be established experimentally can be exciting for those willing and able to adopt the scientific attitude: no matter how they turn out, the results of an experiment, performed appropriately (meaning especially that adequate control treatments are provided), are never "bad." In other words, we think that would-be temperate-zone forest gardeners who are sincerely interested in helping to establish this novel form of agriculture should proceed by trying to test some of Jacke and Toensmeier's numerous design, site preparation, species choice and establishment, and management guidelines. We view Volume 2 of *Edible Forest Gardens* not as a recipe book for what works but rather as a compendium of possibilities for what could work--an invitation par excellence to experimentation instead of complacency. Right on! (Greg Williams) *Plants and Gardens News*--Patricia Jonas, Brooklyn Botanic Garden--But even if you grow enough organic food to feed yourself, are you doing what's best for the ecosystem? "Many drawbacks of modern agriculture persist in organic farming and gardening," Dave Jacke and Eric Toensmeier write in *Edible Forest Gardens*, because they do not "mimic the structure of natural systems, only selected functions." Even Quail Hill Farm members are still harvesting mostly annual crops grown in plowed fields. Jacke and Toensmeier offer a radical vision for stepping out of the conceptual continuum of conventional agriculture and organic farming. They point to the productivity of temperate forests--which is twice that of agricultural land in terms of net calories--and take that as their design model. Building on Robert Hart's classic book, *Forest Gardening*, and incorporating permaculture practice, Jacke and Toensmeier propose a garden where many species of edible perennial plants are grown together in a design that mimics forest structure and function. *Edible Forest Gardens* is an ambitious two-volume work whose influence should extend well beyond ecologists and permaculturists and, in the best of all outcomes, reach into the mainstream. Volume one lays out the "Ecological Vision and Theory for Temperate Climate Permaculture," and it also includes a very useful analysis of existing forest gardens (one only 50 by 90 feet) and a tantalizing 30-page appendix of "top 100" species. As of this writing, volume two, which focuses on practical design and

maintenance considerations, is just being released, but on the evidence of volume one, I have no doubt the set will be an indispensable reference for gardeners and farmers for decades."When people have food gardens," the authors write, "they usually are tucked out of sight and out of view of the neighbors. They rely on external inputs of energy, nutrients, insect and disease controls, and water and are based primarily on annual plants. For some reason, growing food is considered unsightly, unseemly, possibly antisocial, and in some towns and cities, illegal! The tremendous infrastructure we have built in our cities and towns reflects a culture and horticulture of separation and isolation." The consequences of such attitudes about growing food have been disastrous, and each of us can contribute to the repair effort. Jacke and Toensmeier say that the principles of forest gardening can be applied even in a tiny urban yard or on a rooftop. Containers of edible perennials and annuals on a rooftop are not most farmers' idea of agriculture, but I grow nearly 20 percent of the authors' top 100 species and intend to look for ways to take this small start much further. And what about chocolate and oranges? Clearly there are foods that cannot be grown in a temperate forest. "We do not expect forest gardening to replace regular gardening or the foods we know and love," the authors admit. "Just how far we can take forest gardening in supplying food for ourselves is not yet determined." Finding the answer may be the most optimistic work gardeners and farmers can do."A tree de force! A must-have set of books for anyone serious about polyculture, integrated organic garden and landscape design, permaculture in the temperate zones and, of course, food forests. The charts of condensed information alone are worth the price of admission. The best book on these topics in years Keep these books within arm's reach at all times!"--Robert Kourick, author of *Designing and Maintaining Your Edible Landscape Naturally*

"While the scope of the permaculture concept has expanded from its initial focus on forest gardening, it is exciting to see how the authors have brought together the ecological theory and practise necessary to further this aspect of the permaculture agenda." David Holmgren, cofounder of permaculture and author *Permaculture: Principles and Practices Beyond Sustainability*  
"...Perhaps as important as its applied ecological contributions is its psychological gifts of hope and visions of achievable, more meaningful ways of living in a post-oil world." Dr. Stuart Hill Foundation Chair of Social Ecology, University of Western Sydney, Australia "Your book blows me away! So much work, so much depth. I hear the voice of this good and gentle earth in *Edible Forest Gardens* . . . and am excited to keep reading more!" Michael Phillips, author *The Apple Grower: A Guide for the Organic Orchardist* and coauthor *The Herbalist's Way*.

This was a required text for a course on Ecological Design that I was taking. It is a fabulous book. My instructor chose this volume because it includes more of the design process than Volume 1 (which was not required, but is on my wish list for reference materials). Dave Jacke takes you through the fundamentals of site analysis, evaluating opportunities and constraints and working through the design process. The appendixes alone are probably worth the cost of the book. His nectary calendar is extremely useful for trying to identify plants that will provide food for various pollinators; the species by function chart helps you easily see the best nitrogen fixers and dynamic accumulators; his species lifespan list gives you a reference point for how often you will either need to purchase or regenerate a given species... This is the first time I've ever felt strongly compelled to highlight and mark in my book. Normally, I sell my books back, but this one is a definite KEEPER! I have highlights and stickies throughout marking my most frequently referenced charts. The only caveat/issue I can even think of is... the plants/species are more tailored to the North Eastern United States and less to the Western United States where I live... A great number of the species from the northeast are naturalized here or will grow here, but that may be a limitation/problem for some people.

It's no surprise to learn that Dave and Eric worked for seven years to write the Edible Forest Gardens books; the depth and breadth of permaculture knowledge that they present is incredible. Although I've heard some say that these books are not an easy read, I've found them to be fascinating, enjoyable and indispensable. I started my journey into permaculture with Gaia's Garden by Toby Hemenway, then decided to plant an edible forest in the back yard, so I purchased Volume 2 of Edible Forest Gardens, since it covers the practical consideration of forest gardening. Although this book is written so it can stand on its own, I also highly recommend volume 1, which focuses on the ecological vision and theory for temperate climate permaculture. Highly recommended!

This book is amazing. Even just the appendices in the back is worth the price of the book. If you're interested in permaculture, this is a must buy.

I like the species matrix charts and certain sections, like the excellent coverage of beneficial microbes. I expected this book to have more specific "Design and Practice" information. It does contain lots of specifics, but is easily 70% basic theory and concepts. This book has the style and format of a college text book. This book is going to seem dry and unnecessarily wordy for most dirt-in-the-fingernails practitioners of permaculture. The charts and index make it an invaluable

edible forest species reference manual, but it's not a great book to read cover-to-cover, and I often wonder while reading it, if the author has practical field experience with the concepts presented,

This book is a tome. Wish it had more pictures, but you can't beat the info!

If you want to become an expert in edible forest garden design (as well as an expert in general design in your own right) then study this book and its companion volume 1. You won't regret the investment, and neither will the rest of society, after all is said and done!

all i need is volume I now....going backwards and getting theory book second: but volume II here is super informative. not really an "easy read" but when you're interested and/or passionate about this stuff it soaks in and book certainly isn't too much for novice to keep up with

very useful text I would own crawfords text first tough

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Permaculture Edible Forest Gardens, Volume I: Ecological Vision, Theory for Temperate Climate

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