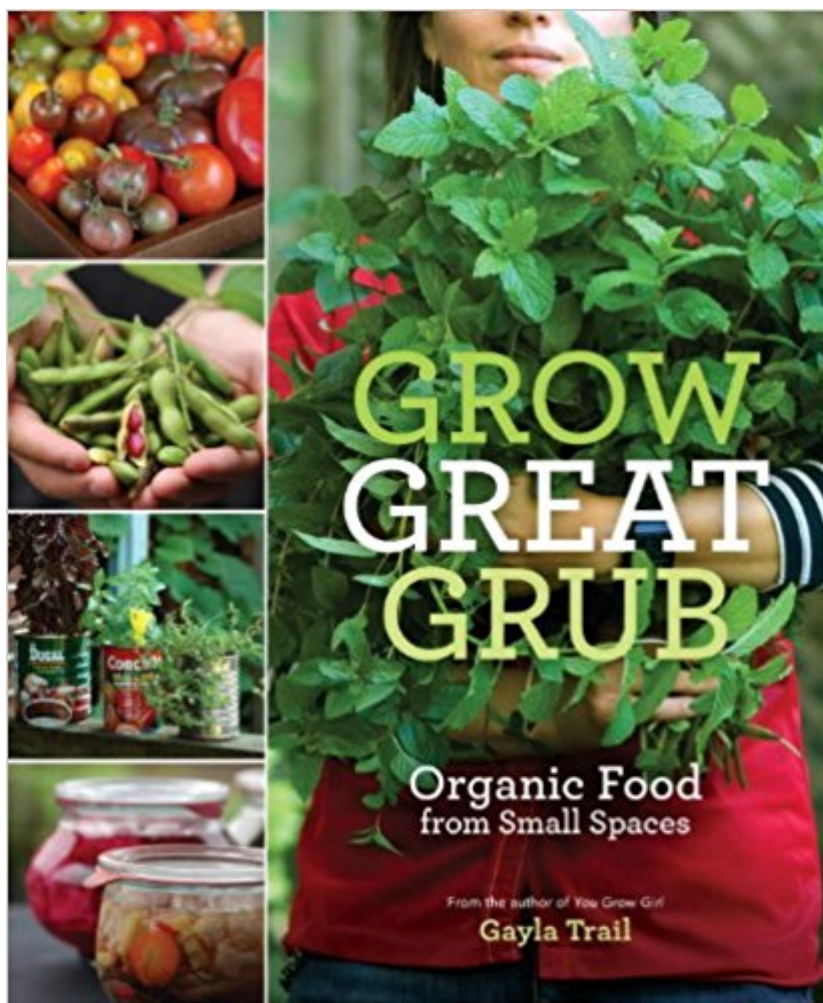


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Grow Great Grub: Organic Food From Small Spaces



Synopsis

Your patio, balcony, rooftop, front stoop, boulevard, windowsill, planter box, or fire escape is a potential fresh food garden waiting to happen. In *Grow Great Grub*, Gayla Trail, the founder of the leading online gardening community (YouGrowGirl.com), shows you how to grow your own delicious, affordable, organic edibles virtually anywhere. *Grow Great Grub* packs in tips and essential information about:

- Choosing a location and making the most of your soil (even if it's less than perfect)- Building a raised bed, compost bin, and self-watering container using recycled materials- Keeping pests and diseases away from your plants the toxin-free way- Growing bountiful crops in pots and selecting the best heirloom varieties- Cultivating hundreds of plants, from blueberries to Thai basil, to the best tomatoes you'll ever taste - Canning, and preserving to make the most of your garden's generosity - Green-friendly, cost-saving, growing, and building projects that are smart and stylish- And much more!

Whether you're looking to eat on a budget or simply experience the pleasure of picking tonight's meal from right outside your door, this is the must-have book for small-space gardeners—no backyard required. *GAYLA TRAIL* is the creator of the acclaimed top gardening website yougrowgirl.com. Her work as a writer and photographer has appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Budget Living*, and *ReadyMade*. A resident of Toronto who has grown a garden on her rooftop for more than 10 years, she is the author of *You Grow Girl: The Groundbreaking Guide to Gardening*.

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Customer Reviews

Recipe from Grow Great Grub: Root Vegetable Fries Ingredients: 1 large carrot 1 large potato 1 large sweet potato 1 large beet 2 tablespoons olive oil 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary Salt and pepper Roasted potatoes are good and all, but a roasted root vegetable medley is just as easy to make and a little bit fancy, too. Substitute any root vegetable, including starchy potatoes, turnip, parsnip, celery root, or rutabaga. While the veggies are roasting, toss a garlic bulb or two into the pan at about the 30-minute mark--the result: easy, creamy garlic! Yum. 1. Preheat the oven to 400° F. Cut the vegetables into 1/2"-wide spears and toss in a roasting pan with olive oil and herbs to coat. Keep the peels on; that's where the vitamins are. 2. Roast for approximately 40 minutes, turning regularly until all sides have turned a golden brown and the fries are cooked straight through. Serves 2-4

GAYLA TRAIL is the creator of the thriving online community YouGrowGirl.com. She is a regular contributor to magazines and frequently speaks on urban gardening, ecology, and community at major garden events. Her work as a writer and photographer has appeared in the O Magazine, New York Times, Newsweek, The Globe and Mail, Organic Gardening Magazine, ReadyMade, Domino, Budget Living, Garden Making, Gardening Life, Gardens Illustrated, LA Times, Life Magazine, and more. She is a frequent speaker and spokesperson on the topics of urban gardening, ecology, home preserving, and community.

Grow Great Grub: Organic Food from Small Spaces is full of gorgeous full-color photographs giving the new or experienced gardener easy and fun reference to practical information. Gaila Trail is the author's name and I wonder if that is her pen name or if her parents named her such so she is destined to happy gardening. Gaila discusses how soil is really your first crop and the plants are your secondary crop and yet that you can grow anywhere and everywhere. I especially appreciate how she covers for each crop their suitability for growing in containers and what the minimum depth to that container would be as well as the varieties most suited for containers and additional tips. I also really like her tip of reclaiming used toilet roll tubes to be used as seed starters which she says works better and are much cheaper than peat pellets and compressed pots. The author covers starting from cuttings and purchasing starts as well as when to move all three outdoors. Close to the end of the book is a very nice Seed Starting and Planting Chart giving growth period and when to set out for various vegetables, herbs, and edible flowers. She recommends cleaning your pots between plants with hydrogen peroxide or vinegar. She covers companion planting of opposites,

pest repellents, beneficial pests attractants, trapper plants, feeder plants, sheltering, flavor enhancing, and underplanting. She discusses seed sowing, crop rotations, when to plant, location, building a raised bed, composting, how to water, building your own self-watering container, mulching, fertilizing, and pests. The plants she covers are: vegetables: beans (bush, pole, runner, soy), brassicas (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale), cucumbers, eggplants, lettuce and leafy greens (arugula, lettuce, mache, mustard greens, spinach), alliums (chives, garlic chives, garlic, leeks, onions, shallots, scallions), peas, peppers (hot and sweet), root vegetables (beet, carrot, Jerusalem artichoke, potatoes, radish), squash (summer and winter), Swiss chard, and tomatoes. Fruits: blueberries, citrus, currants and gooseberries, melons, and strawberries. Herbs and edible flowers: anise, hyssop, basil, bee balm, borage, calendula, chamomile, cilantro, dill, lavender, lemon balm, lemon verbena, mint, nasturtium, oregano, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, sage, shiso, sunflower, and thyme listing each as annual, perennial or biennial. Gaila discusses how and when to harvest and gives a handy harvest chart to help predict the harvest time. She gives recipes as well as short-term and long-term storage including: dish towel storage bags, drying, freezing, canning, vinegars, and pickling. I enjoy reading and referencing this beautiful well-organized book. I feel great about giving it as a gift or recommending it to others.

I've spent years killing plants until getting *Grow Great Grub: Organic Food from Small Spaces* a few months ago, which finally revealed: -why the rosemary survived but did not grow (too small a pot) -why the basil died (unrelenting exposure to wind) -why the thyme survived where the basil did not (the thyme is drought resistant and didn't care that I'd ridiculously put all my herbs in a tiny coir-lined window basket on a wind-whipped second story balcony) -why the mint rotted (mints like to "stay wet" I'd been told by other books. Apparently not that wet, and only the soil not the leaves.. Excessively wet + poor air circulation = rot) -how all of them could have benefited from mulch (did not occur to me to mulch pots) -a clear metaphor to understand and see how often any plant needs water -how to make simple plant foods -and on and on! It also explained terms I had seen thrown around in several gardening books, like the warning to not let your plants "bolt" (which at the time I could only imagine involved my herbs running away to a more competent home). If years of looking at those unhelpful charts so common in other books, describing the exact conditions favored by each plant (type of soil, pH, full sun vs partial shade, etc) have led you to believe that each plant can only be grown in its own meticulously placed test tube, this is just the book to coax you out of that hopeless paradigm. And I spent maybe a decade thinking "partial shade" meant some kind of sparse, broken shade, like under a tree, when it turns out the "partial" refers to time; 4-6 hours of

direct sun per day compared to 8 hours of direct sun per day for "full sun." And if you've always wanted to grow herbs, but wondered what you might do with them beyond cooking and tea, then absolutely get *Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World*, a brilliant DIY book on everything from making hair detangler to tinctures to infusions (not to mention all the non-herb-related projects, like how to espalier). Or just look around at the things in your home. Trader Joe's sells sachets of lavender to toss into the dryer; now that I'm up to my eyeballs in lavender, I'm making a reusable mesh pouch that I can just refill. California Baby makes a nice bubble bath for chest colds; I can make an herbal infusion that does the same thing without the bubbles. The authors also have a blog, Root Simple. I love the post on harvesting and drying herbs [...]

CRITICISMS: The only point where I disagree is the suggestion to use newspaper and cardboard in compost (I'll pass on the glues, inks, and who knows what else). There could be a little more information with regard to harvesting herbs. For example, for lavender it says, "Harvest in the summer, just before the buds open." Well, if I just bought a transplant of lavender that has flowers and some or many of them have already opened, what do I do with those? Leave them, deadhead them, harvest them anyway with the caveat that they won't be *as* potent? I've found the blog Root Simple to be great for this kind of information. See this series on Calendula, which covers growing, harvesting, drying, infusing, and then using the infusion to make a balm. [...] I wish there was more information for fruit, specifically dwarf fruit trees and espaliers, beyond the 2 pages given to growing citrus indoors (how does that get pollinated?).

The Urban Homestead (Expanded & Revised Edition): Your Guide to Self-Sufficient Living in the Heart of the City (Process Self-reliance Series) says "Grow Edible Perennials: To work less, dedicate part of your garden to plants that bear fruit without you having to think about it. All fruit and nut trees fall into the perennial category. There are dwarf ... varieties that do not take up much room, but deliver plenty of fruit (and because the trees are small, between 8 and 10 feet high, all of that fruit is easily harvested). ... With trees you have yearly harvesting and pruning duties, which is some work, but less than shepherding annual plants from seeds to harvest. After trees, there are fruiting bushes, like blackberry and raspberry bushes. These are usually grown on trellises to control their growth and make harvesting easier. As with trees, this is some work when you set it up, but not constant work (all the years that follow)" I met someone today who has 390 fruiting plants on their 1/3 acre plot; they are definitely a worth including in any "food from small spaces" book. Since most fruit is grown either on a tree or a trellis, the section of this book specific to fruit is 11 pages compared to the vegetables' 47 (and 2 of those 11 are devoted to melons, which she says most small-space gardeners skip because melons sprawl and take up a lot of room in a bed). If anyone knows of a good dwarf orchard book, please

recommend it (to clearly explain when to fertilize and with what and why, when and how to prune (open center, central lead, thinning cuts, heading cuts, growth collars, waterspouts, suckers, dormant pruning, after harvest pruning, active growth pruning) troubleshooting and preventing various problems (spider mites, powdery mildew, leaf curl, caterpillars, snails, aphids), how to plant (I've heard something about "percolate the ground first"), equipment & care (bypass pruners, pull saw, loppers, a sharpening tool, disinfectant), culling fruit, or whatever can be covered before it gets too specific for a particular region (like chill hour requirements and what that means for what variety grows where).

When I first started veggie gardening, I was completely intimidated by how much there is to learn. I was always on the lookout for a good summary book, and this one fits the bill. It covers each vegetable (and some fruit) types in an easy-to-follow format. What temp the plant likes, how much sun, if the plant is going to yield its goods easily or if you'll really have to work for it. I started gardening about 5 years ago and for the past couples years in early spring I take this beauty out and read it cover to cover. One part that's great, particularly for beginners still trying to figure out what they can grow is the info she provides on shade-tolerant plant (hint: there aren't many, but for those of us who need to populate every area of the yard with edible vegetation, this is crucial information). I don't use this book for understanding veggies in small spaces, I use it for my whole 124 sq foot veggie garden. Only negative to this book -- take her suggestion about growing borage LIGHTLY. It's beautiful, but wow...really really really invasive.

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