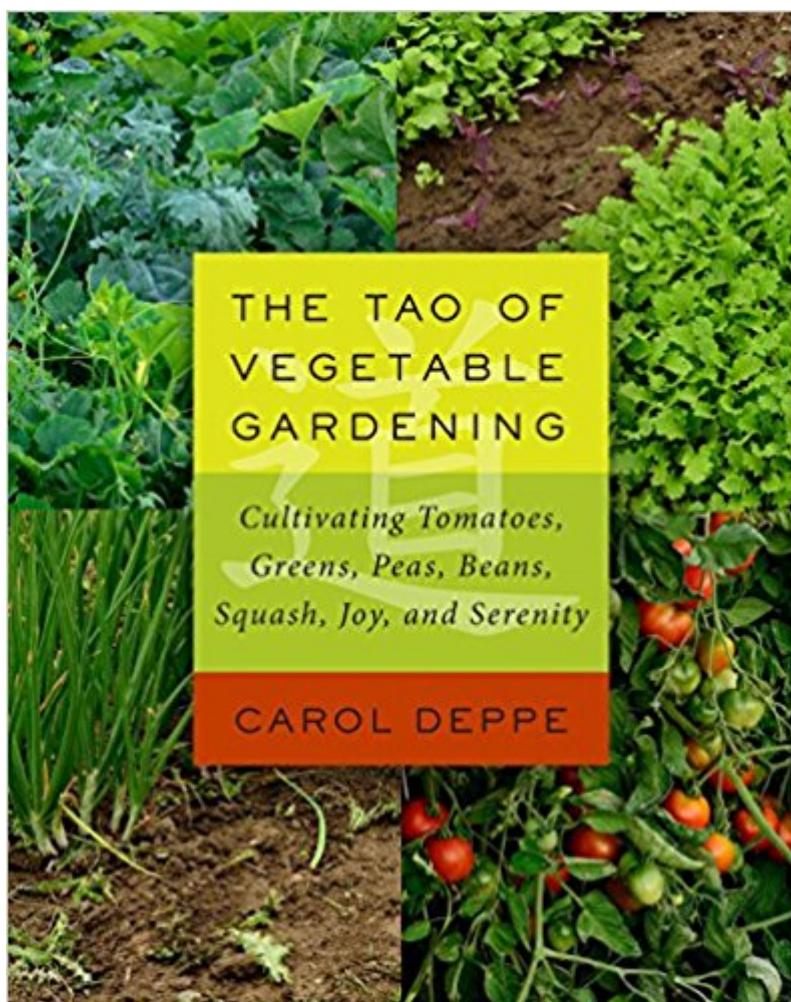


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# The Tao Of Vegetable Gardening: Cultivating Tomatoes, Greens, Peas, Beans, Squash, Joy, And Serenity



## Synopsis

The Tao of Vegetable Gardening explores the practical methods as well as the deeper essence of gardening. In her latest book, groundbreaking garden writer Carol Deppe (The Resilient Gardener, Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties) focuses on some of the most popular home garden vegetables—tomatoes, green beans, peas, and leafy greens—and through them illustrates the key principles and practices that gardeners need to know to successfully plant and grow just about any food crop. Deppe's work has long been inspired and informed by the philosophy and wisdom of Tao Te Ching, the 2,500-year-old work attributed to Chinese sage Lao Tzu and the most translated book in the world after the Bible. The Tao of Vegetable Gardening is organized into chapters that echo fundamental Taoist concepts: Balance, Flexibility, Honoring the Essential Nature (your own and that of your plants), Effortless Effort, Non-Doing, and even Non-Knowing. Yet the book also offers a wealth of specific and valuable garden advice on topics as diverse as: • The Eat-All Greens Garden, a labor- and space-efficient way to provide all the greens a family can eat, freeze, and dry—all on a tiny piece of land suitable for small-scale and urban gardeners. • The growing problem of late blight and the future of heirloom tomatoes—and what gardeners can do to avoid problems, and even create new resistant varieties. • Establishing a Do-It-Yourself Seed Bank, including information on preparing seeds for long-term storage and how to hybridize—hybrids. • Twenty-four good places to not plant a tree, and thirty-seven good reasons for not planting various vegetables. Designed for gardeners of all levels, from beginners to experienced growers, The Tao of Vegetable Gardening provides a unique frame of reference: a window to the world of nature, in the garden and in ourselves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Publishers Weekly- "This thoughtful book is a guide for growing tomatoes, squash, and greens, but its most significant contribution is Deppeâ™s approach to gardening. She encourages the gardener to cultivate an intuitive relationship with plants and almost a sixth sense about when to actively work in the garden, and when to stand back and let the plants do the growing they need to do. She calls it the Tao of gardening, a form of 'non-doing' or 'doing that which gives maximum effect for the minimum effort,' so that unnecessary action has been eliminated. It is about balance: not watering too much, not fertilizing too much. She further enjoins the gardener to create a relationship with the garden, knowing what needs tending what needs to be left alone. The advice for raising tomatoes and greens will benefit the gardener, but the magic of the book is the way it teaches the gardener how to grow with the garden.â•œWith the insight of a skilled breeder Carol Deppe has drawn together the best of ancient wisdom and traditional crops. Gardeners rejoice! The past has never promised us a better future than in these pages.â•--Roger B. Swain, host of PBSâ™s âœThe Victory Gardenâ•"In The Tao of Vegetable Gardening Carol Deppe uses Taoist philosophical concepts to communicate gardening wisdom learned through longtime practice and experimentation. She seemlessly integrates excellent how-to advice with her reflections on cultivation, plants, soil, the elements, and life. This book is as profound as it is practical, and will be a great source of information and inspiration for both experienced gardeners and those just starting out."--Sandor Ellix Katz, author, *The Art of Fermentation*âœThere are many knowledgeable gardeners but very few wise ones. Carol Deppe is both. Her excellent new book, *The Tao of Vegetable Gardening*, serves up generous portions of homegrown know-how gleaned from three decades worth of experimentation. It will, no doubt, make you a better gardener. What sets this book apart, though, is its potential for making us into happier gardeners by sharing the deeper life lessons our gardens have to teach. The Chinese word tao can be defined in different ways but my favorite is "path," and Carol Deppe shows us that the timeless path to health, happiness and wholeness cuts right through our own backyard, if we choose to take it.â•--Roger Doiron, Founding Director, Kitchen Gardeners InternationalâœWhy do different ripe tomatoes harvested from the same plant in the same seasonâ taste different? What does bean seed color have to do with vigor and flavor?â After nearly forty years in the seed business, I still learn amazing things from each new book by Carol Deppe. The Tao of Vegetable Gardening melds the observational skills and curiosity

of a molecular geneticist with the sheer joy and inner harmonies of a practicing participant in the garden's dance of life.â •--CR Lawn, founder, Fedco Seedsâ œThe Tao of Vegetable Gardening is another absolutely brilliant book from Carol Deppe. Itâ ™s smart, ultimately sensible, refreshing in the way old assumptions get questioned, vastly informative about gardeningâ •plus itâ ™s a really good read. I mean, how many gardening books make you laugh out loud and get you to pick up the phone and order a tool from a place called Red Pig? Iâ ™m so grateful for this bookâ •I will have it memorized by the time the soil is ready to work.â •--Deborah Madison, author, *Vegetable Literacy*Â œIf you want to read the complete, deepest-down lowdown on how to grow organic vegetables successfully, this is the book. It also stands as a guide to the most genuine, independent lifestyle possible, relying only on nature and the author's awesomely detailed knowledge of plant life to achieve successful food production and a contented way of life. The reader learns not only how to grow and cook vegetables, but how to breed new varieties and save the seed. And while you read her book, you are also charmed with the Tao philosophy of living--something I have come to believe is a sure path to tranquility.â •--Gene Logsdon, author, *Gene Everlasting* and *The Contrary Farmer*Booklist- "Biologist and plant breeder Deppe (*The Resilient Gardener*, 2010) shares principles and practices that will 'allow a gardener to do nothing whatsoever after sowing the seed until it is time to come back andâ harvest.' Such wonderful pragmatism does not mean that this is a cut-and-dried how-to. Far from it. Deppeâ is lively, thoroughly engaged, and cheerfully direct, and her use of the tao is no gimmick. She infuses herâ in-depth, hands-on guide to growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating the most popular and nutritionalâ vegetables with pithy and resonant philosophical observations, including such aphorisms as these, whichâ preface the weeding section: 'Deal with the small before it is large. Deal with the few before they areâ many.' Age-old wisdom graces comprehensive, clear, and timely instructions on every aspect of vegetableâ cultivation and enjoyment, including Deppeâ ™s guidance in avoiding late blight, the disease now threateningâ heirloom tomatoes, and her 'eat-all greens' strategy for growing succulent kale, mustard, and other leafyâ greens. Whether writing about squash or serenity, Deppe is pleasurable and enlightening company, andâ this is a vegetable gardenerâ ™s treasury.â •

Oregon plant breeder Carol Deppe, author of *The Tao of Vegetable Gardening*, holds a PhD in biology from Harvard University and specializes in developing public-domain crops for organic growing conditions, sustainable agriculture, and human survival for the next thousand years. Carol is author of *The Resilient Gardener: Food Production and Self-Reliance in Uncertain Times* (Chelsea Green, 2010),â *Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties*, 2nd ed. (Chelsea Green,

2000), *Â Tao Te Ching: A Window to the Tao through the Words of Lao Tzu* (Fertile Valley Publishing, 2010), and *Â Taoist Stories* (Fertile Valley Publishing, 2014). Visit [www.caroldeppe.com](http://www.caroldeppe.com) for articles and further adventures.

Carol Deppe has a new book out. Readers of my blog will know I really like her stuff as discussed in my corn post, but I'm not sure if you know why. It's not just that she provides a lot of practical information not provided elsewhere. All the books on my gardening shelf have that distinction, which is why they were purchased as opposed to the scores I just borrowed from the library and returned. There's only about 5-6 of them there frankly. Carol's books are not on my shelf; Carol's books are on my Kindle, and besides my Kindle itself, I have a Kindle app on my phone. Carol's books are with me in the garden so I can look stuff up right when I need it. But again, it's not just the wealth of information she provides. A lot of it is just... her. First, I Just Like Her There are certain authors you read and it's not just the story (for fiction) or information (for nonfiction) that is enjoyable; you just know you'd like them if you met them in person. Carol infuses enough of her personal experiences and thoughts into her books that I really get that. Aside from piles of useful info no other book has provided, I just know if she weren't on the wrong coast, if we sat down one night after dinner with a cup of coffee, we'd be up all night talking. Always assuming she liked me, of course! There's few authors who've hit me like this. C. S. Lewis is one. Heinlein absolutely was another. Nancy Friday is a third. None of these folks write gardening books though. As far as authors go, this particular bit of my life is only "shared" with Carol. Carol Approaches Gardening as a Scientist Carol experiments with gardening like I do with cooking. As an example, all the rest of us gardeners buy inoculant for our peas and beans, cause we know we're supposed to. The symbiotic bacteria allow legumes to extract nitrogen from the air. Every single seed catalog, every gardening book, tells us to do this. Instead of following the instructions, Carol instead inoculated half a crop and didn't inoculate the other half, proving to herself it didn't matter at all. In her new book, I particularly enjoyed her experiments with regards to whether carrots really do love tomatoes. Hilarious! The Resilient Gardener (previous book) I've read this book through easily 10 times in a year, not to mention the number of times I searched for reminders of her advice while out in the garden. Though it is largely about how to grow real food crops for serious calories: dry beans, squash, corn, potatoes and eggs; it is also about how to garden in the practical sense. Having a great heirloom corn around isn't nearly so handy if you don't know how to cook it. And as another example, she doesn't just tell you why you have to weed, but which hoes she's found most useful, how to use them without straining your back or wrists and how to sharpen them. There's gobs of useful information gleaned from years

of gardening experience boiled down and useful not only for beginners, but for experienced gardeners as well. If you are a prepper, of either the gardening or cooking variety, this book is for you. *The Tao of Vegetable Gardening* (new book) Besides going all Zen on us, Carol again addresses both the beginner gardener and more experienced gardener in her new book with many practical tips. The crops covered include tomatoes, greens and fresh peas and beans, more typical of the crops newbie gardeners grow than the previous book. The book wasn't supposed to be released until late January, but I pre-ordered the Kindle version weeks earlier and it was delivered the next day. So I had read it twice before it's release date! As expected, she covered the crops in detail, provided much practical information from her years of experience and many personal stories. But honestly, I didn't buy it for those reasons. There were two topics I was particularly interested in: what Carol calls eat-all greens and late blight.

**Eat-all Greens** This is a method Carol came up with to make greens easy to deal with. Basically, it involves planting a fast-growing greens crop at the appropriate density that it grows upright out of the dirt. Then to harvest, you whack it off high enough to avoid the ickiest outer leaves and dirt, so you have a nice bunch of greens ready to cook without doing a bunch of clean up post-harvest. She explains this system and the appropriate spacing for her favorite greens. Unfortunately, she does not like chard, which is my primary spring/summer green, so I shall have to experiment to find the best spacing to use it for eat-all greens. And while she does do a kale, which is my primary fall/winter green, it's not my favorite kale, so I'll have to experiment with that too.

**Late Blight** This is a disease that is spreading through North America affecting tomato crops. It is related to the disease that caused the Irish potato famine, so pretty serious stuff. When I saw this was one of the topics of her book, I freaked out a little bit. See, last year, my tomatoes started getting icky towards the end of the season. The thing is, I had so darned many of them, and was so far behind on processing them, that I didn't care. Hubby asked me at one point what was wrong with them and I just said it's probably because I'm not watering them cause I have too darned many tomatoes. But when I saw Carol was covering the topic, I googled for pictures and saw I had this nasty stuff. The thing is, not knowing about it, I did everything wrong. I threw tomatoes that didn't seem worth processing over the fence for the chickens, nicely spreading the stuff around through the surrounding yard. I left the vines in the garden after I tore them off their support, cause no other nightshade is going to grow there for a while. So I've got this stuff all over. I think this year to get a primary tomato crop, I'm just going to have to bite the bullet and spray a fungicide. The copper stuff seems to be basically the copper salt of a fatty acid, which does not strike me as too bad. But it will be the very first time I've sprayed stuff in my garden. 13 years here, and I've never added anything but compost, wood ash and some minerals before.

:(Carol provides a list of the heirlooms that seem to have some resistance. I grow Brandywines for fresh eating cause they're famous for yumminess and are from right here, Pennsylvania. I grow Matt's Wild Cherry cause it's the only cherry I've ever liked, but only a plant or two cause I just eat them outside, they're too small to bother hauling in the house. But my beloved Opalkas! This variety is what I grow most of for processing. They're yummy enough fresh, but they're just HUGE sausage-shaped tomatoes, thick and almost no juice or seeds. I tried a number of paste-types before I settled on these and I adore them. And if I don't do something, they may cease to exist cause of late blight. Here's the deal, I don't save seeds. I never have. I approve of seed-saving. I pretty much only grow open-pollinated stuff so seed saving is possible. I want seed catalogs to keep doing the growouts, so I keep buying the seed. I just have never been a hardcore gardening geek like Carol is. Last year was the first time I had planned to save seed, Carol's Magic Manna because I wanted to keep growing it. I wanted to acclimate it to my region. And frankly, Carol is one person and the stuff might go away if something happens to her and I WANT it. Unfortunately, my chickens were blissfully unaware of how important this corn was, they broke through my fence and ate all my corn. Having put up a new and more chicken-proof fence, I have ordered more seed from her this year. That was my first time even intending to save seed and it failed. But I've certainly never considered breeding. I mean, I just grow stuff. That's what I do. The complicated stuff is for other people. Carol is a biologist and therefore has a different attitude to breeding than I do. I only ever took a single genetics course as an undergraduate and all I really recall is gobs of fruit flies were involved. As a graduate student, I took a recombinant DNA course. Dammit Jim, I'm a chemist, not a geneticist! Carol manages to explain how to breed our favorite heirlooms with hybrids to achieve blight-resistance. And her explanations are such that even those of us who have forgotten more about genetics than we ever knew, thus yielding an actual negative knowledgebase, can follow her reasoning. Apparently, I'm going to have to get into this as she does not seem to love Opalkas like I do and they may cease to exist if I don't do something. And That's The Other Reason I Love Her Books. Chickens notwithstanding, I attempted to grow a flour corn last year - for the first time. And next year, I am going to give over my entire SFG to breeding experiments to try to build a blight-resistant Opalka. And THAT is the mark of a truly great book, that after you've read it, you change your actual behavior. But I need to read her Breeding Your Own Vegetable Varieties book first... If You Are a Gardener, Buy Her Books Seriously. And if you are NOT a gardener, but want to cook more fresh foods, at least buy The Resilient Gardener.

I love all of Deppe's books. I was anticipating this one, but for me, the writing is not as well thought

out as usual. The writing is a bit all over the place. Some is about gardening and some is about random musings of the garden which I could really do without. I'll explain. There is this whole movement of do-it-yourselfer's, bloggers and the likes, that recycle information (some of it they never experienced.) and sell it as if it is their own. Ulgh! And I am tired of buying books with all that recycled gardening info that helps no one. Carol Deppe is the opposite of these scammers. She really knows her stuff and when I read her words I learn an incredible amount about gardening, from basic biology to genetics to the amounts you should plant and what specific kinds and results from her experiments and how to do your own experiments and what to be looking for to improve. I really hold her writing to a much higher standard- her books are my most used and most favorite. This book is all of that, and I did learn new things, especially in the tomato section about genetics and the eat all greens section about how to be self-sufficient in growing those and how nutritious they are, but I found half of the book really useless for me. The book seems a bit rushed for me, half impeccably done and half I could really do without. That being said I would still recommend it to serious growers because it still has new, valuable information from a skilled grower.

This instantly became one of my favorite gardening books (and I own an embarrassingly large number of them). The author is intelligent, funny, concise, and has a great deal of practical knowledge to pass along. As her previous book, "The Resilient Gardener," utterly revolutionized my thinking about what I wanted from my vegetable garden and how I would attain that, I am unsurprised by the quality and clarity of her new offering. Ms Deppe's writing produced in me a paradigm shift in perception of why and how I garden - and, to be blunt, her techniques work rather better than mine ever did! I particularly appreciate all her time-saving and ergonomic tips. I'm not getting any younger, and her coaching has REALLY made maintaining my garden much easier. If you read even a small sample of this book, I believe you'll be hooked!

This is my favorite author of books dealing with gardening . I have loaned her books to a number of people and they have all bought their own copies. (They also returned the copies I loaned them, which is sadly not always true. I'm not sure if this was an effect of her writing, or just some inexplicable desire on their part to remain friends with me.) Some people are intimidated by her vocabulary. She is describing how to select seed to save, how to select for resistance to late blight in tomatoes (and why that is such a bid deal that is going to get even worse), how to de-hybridize commercial seed and cross it with heirloom varieties and why it is up to us if we want to save those varieties. She is trained as a scientist and uses language that is necessary transmit this information.

This is good stuff and it is as deep as it needs to be and really well presented. If this doesn't immediately appeal to you, I would suggest checking out one of her books from a library and immersing yourself in it. You will not be disappointed. She is a good writer and a very interesting person. Then go and buy all her books. If you want them autographed or if you want some of the seed she has developed, check out her website: <http://www.caroldeppé.com/> Recommended!

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