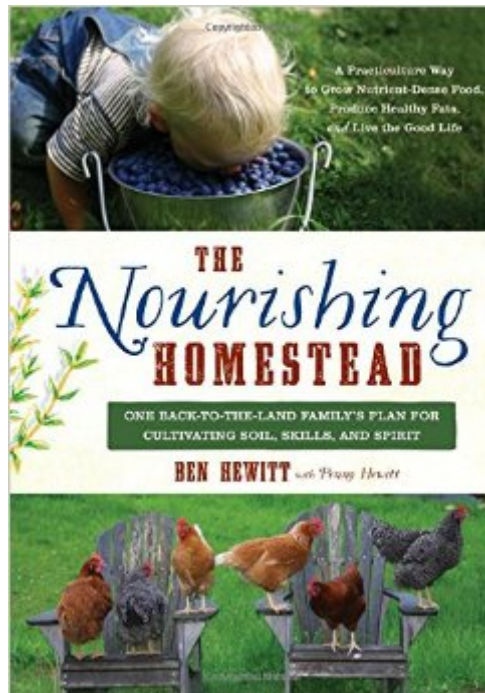


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# The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan For Cultivating Soil, Skills, And Spirit



## Synopsis

A practiculture way to grow nutrient-dense food, produce healthy fats, and live the good life The Nourishing Homestead tells the story of how we can create truly satisfying, permanent, nourished relationships to the land, nature, and one another. The Hewitts offer practical ways to grow nutrient-dense food on a small plot of land, and think about your farm, homestead, or home as an ecosystem. Much of what the Hewitts have come to understand and embrace about their lives of deep nourishment is informed by their particular piece of land and local community in northern Vermont, but what they have gleaned is readily transferable to any place—whether you live on 4 acres, 40 acres, or in a 400-square-foot studio apartment. Ben and Penny (and their two sons) maintain copious gardens, dozens of fruit and nut trees and other perennial plantings, as well as a pick-your-own blueberry patch. In addition to these cultivated food crops, they also forage for wild edibles, process their own meat, make their own butter, and ferment, dry, and can their own vegetables. Their focus is to produce nutrient-dense foods from vibrant, mineralized soils for themselves and their immediate community. They are also committed to sharing the traditional skills that support their family, helping them be self-sufficient and thrive in these uncertain times. Much of what the Hewitts are attempting on their homestead is to close the gaps that economic separation has created in our health, spirit, and skills. Ben uses the term “practiculture” to describe his family’s work with the land—a term that encompasses the many practical life skills and philosophies they embody to create a thriving homestead, including raw-milk production, soil remediation, wildcrafting, Weston A. Price principles, bionutrient-dense farming, permaculture, agroforestry, traditional Vermont hill farming, and more. The Nourishing Homestead also includes information on deep nutrition, the importance of good fats, and integrating children into the work of a homestead. The Hewitts’ story is reminiscent of *The Good Life*, by Helen and Scott Nearing, and is sure to inspire a new generation of homesteaders, or anyone seeking a simpler way of life and a deeper connection to the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There is no other way I can begin this review than to tell you up front, this is the best homesteading book I have ever read. It is also the best book of any kind that I have read in a long, long time. Those who know me, know these are not proclamations that I lightly throw out there. This is a masterpiece! This book should be mandatory reading for anyone considering pursuing the homestead life! Ben Hewitt and his wife, Penny, have two children and homestead in Vermont, where they use what they have coined "practiculture" to provide 90% of their calorie needs. They raise chickens, cattle, sheep, and goats. They raise an impressive amount of vegetables, of the highest nutrient and mineral content, as well as blueberries and other perennial crops. In addition to food, they produce and process fiber, firewood, and sawlogs. The children trap and hunt, and the whole family practices a wide array of traditional handcrafts like basket making, carving, and hide tanning. This book covers much of the practical "how-to" aspects of raising food with "deep nutrition". This is valuable information for sure, but not the most valuable information in the book. Hewitt has a deep and piercing understanding of true "homestead accounting". He has an understanding of industrialism, the modern economy, and what homesteading is really about. His understanding of these things far exceeds most of the homesteading authors out there today. To top it off, Hewitt has the ability to articulate it in a poetic, yet easy to understand manner. Hewitt is a gifted writer and this book is so easy to read, and flows so effortlessly that one cannot stop once they have started.

One beautiful morning last summer, my granddaughter Ruby and I stood side-by-side in the garden, picking first green beans and then blueberries. She had her favorite blue basket and I'd grabbed a colander, and as we picked, we talked about vegetables and things like soil, butterflies, and frogs. Suddenly she looked up and said, "You know, Nana, you really have a farm here." I smiled and said, "Well, sort of," but I knew from the reverberating of my heartstrings that she had named my secret dream: A simple, gentle homestead where I live in close harmony with the land, in

peaceable kinship with all that grows, appreciating and contributing to the web of blessing in which all life flourishes. Reading Ben Hewitt's new book, *The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan for Cultivating Soil, Skills, and Spirit* (Chelsea Green, 2014) made me feel like my heartstrings had been plucked yet again. This lovely, practical, story-and-philosophy-filled book makes real the dream of the wannabe homesteader: Finding the perfect spot; cultivating the land; living simply, sustainably, and with reverence for what you grow, raise, and reap. But this isn't just an inspiring book for armchair dreamers: It is packed with how-tos, recipes, tools, techniques, and more. Hewitt tells the story of how he and his wife Penny got started and what they've learned along the way. "Like many would-be homesteaders, we had a hazy notion of self-sufficiency, and when we thought about the life we would make for ourselves on our land, we felt warm and comforted." (p. 5) Hewitt calls their homesteading *practiculture* because none of the current terms seem to fit exactly the way they are choosing to live and work with their land.

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