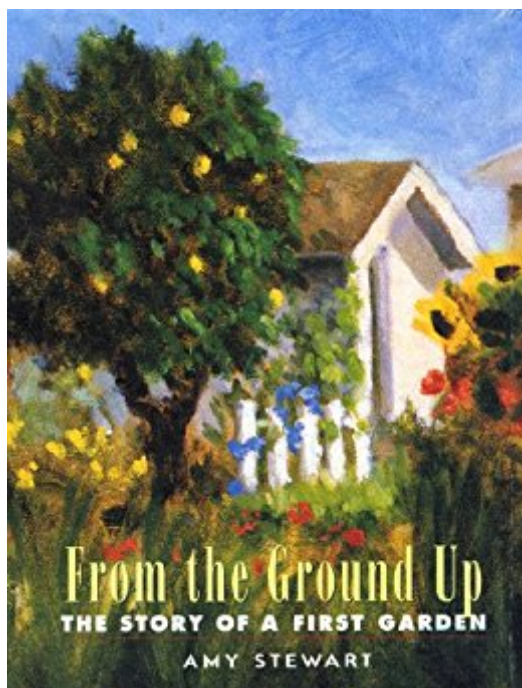


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From The Ground Up: The Story Of A First Garden



Synopsis

Amy Stewart had a simple dream. She yearned for a garden filled with colorful jumbles of vegetables and flowers. After she and her husband finished graduate school, they pulled up their Texas roots and headed west to Santa Cruz, California. With little money in their pockets, they rented a modest seaside bungalow with a small backyard. It wasn't much--a twelve-hundred-square-foot patch of land with a couple of fruit trees, and a lot of dirt. A good place to start. From the Ground Up is Stewart's quirky, humorous chronicle of the blossoms and weeds in her first garden and the lessons she's learned the hard way. From planting seeds her great-grandmother sends to battling snails, gophers, and aphids, Stewart takes us on a tour of four seasons in her coastal garden. Confessing her sins and delighting in small triumphs, she dishes the dirt for both the novice and the experienced gardener. Along the way, she brings her quintessential California beach town to life--complete with harbor seals, monarch butterfly migrations, and an old-fashioned seaside amusement park just down the street. Each chapter includes helpful tips alongside the engaging story of a young woman's determination to create a garden in which the plants struggle to live up to the gardener's vision.

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> West

Customer Reviews

When I'm diving into a new field I know nothing about - Buddhism, photography, wine, wrestling, or gardening, to take a few recent examples - I'm always looking for a certain kind of writer: an opinionated, first-person guide to this confusing new world. My model for this kind of writing is Bill James, the great baseball analyst. I'm always on the lookout for "the Bill James of wine" or "the Bill James of wrestling." The point isn't that I want an expert to tell me what to think. Rather, I want to hear about this new universe from a distinct, coherent point of view. From there, I can develop my own perspective. I don't want an authority so much as a critical sensibility. These new subjects always teem with boggling amounts of details - the eightfold path of Buddhism, the varieties of wrestling holds, the latin names for all those flowers. I'll never learn all this stuff by trying to memorize it, and that wouldn't be much fun, anyway. Rather, what I want is to absorb the perspective of a savvy participant, so that the field as a whole makes sense to me. Once I do that, the details can fall in place over time, if I decide to stick with it. I appear to be in the minority in this preference - most people seem to prefer the bland-to-cutesy textbook style of the Dummies guides. Guide series do have their places - I'm a big fan of the ". . . for Beginners" series of cartoon guides. When they're done right, as in the classic Marx for Beginners by Rius, those are a great way to get your bearings on a subject. The newer "Introducing . . ." cartoon series is also great. And Oxford University Press has a nifty ongoing series of "Very Short Introduction to . . ." books. The Jung books from both of the latter series have been great entry points into a massive body of work.

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