



Keeping Your Farm Healthy and Looking Good

The Farmer's Market Cookbook, Outdoor Woodwork, The Home Winemaker's Companion, Keeping Livestock Healthy

The Farmer's Market Cookbook

Summer, with its bounty of ripening fruits and vegetables, is an exciting time of year for the hobby gardener. Cooking takes on a special joy when some of the tastiest ingredients come from your own backyard and you can dine al fresco with friends and family. The Farmer's Market Cookbook by Richard Ruben is an excellent book to consult when looking for new ideas for your summer harvest. Simply flip to the Summer section, see which of your garden's vegetables, herbs and fruits match the items on the author's list of "Summer's Bounty" and choose your menu from the plentiful delicious recipes that follow. Can't make enough salads to get to the bottom of an overflowing basket of cucumbers? Then try the chilled cucumber mint soup. There's lots to do with those leftover mint leaves too—including flavoring black mint juleps, yellow watermelon sorbet and even zucchini. A handful of blank pages at the end of each seasonal section allows for your own notations. You may want to jot down information about a local market that offers scrumptious ingredients not found in your own garden, or potential growing ideas for next year.

Other recipes that tempted my own palate included grilled eggplant and whipped feta torte; strawberry tomato salsa; pumpkin gnocchi with gorgonzola sauce; and chicken fillet with roasted peppers, rosemary and chili. Most recipes feature short ingredient lists and uncomplicated cooking instructions.

Ruben's division of recipes by spring, summer and autumn seasons is especially useful for hobby farmers and thoughtful cooks. Although modern transportation and technology mean that grocery stores are rarely lacking in the fruits and vegetables Americans crave, Ruben believes in cooking with local ingredients at the peak of their natural growing season to get back in touch with our own region's natural cycle. One note of warning: The author's comments before he introduces each new recipe may tempt you to close up the farm and travel to markets around the globe. Ruben discovers wild mushrooms in San Francisco, is fascinated by a tuna auction in Tokyo and wanders the markets in the south of France, just to mention a few of his adventures.

—JM

Outdoor Woodwork

The perfect time to relax and enjoy your garden landscape, enhanced by an arbor seat, modular decking or the shade of a pergola, is of course, summer. Build these yourself with *Outdoor Woodwork: 16 Easy-To-Build Projects for Your Yard & Garden*, by husband-and-wife team Alan and Gill Bridgewater. The book includes a variety of projects including a decorative picket fence and gate, various planters, outdoor benches and chairs, functional items such as a potting table and tool shed, as well as a children's playhouse, treehouse and even a rabbit hutch.

Every good woodworking project starts with a sound plan. This book does a good job of explaining the design process and important considerations before making sawdust. These include project size, location, possible interference with water and power lines and even what the neighbors might think.

Overall, I would give high marks to the projects presented. They are aesthetically pleasing both in form and proportion, as well as how they fit into a backyard and/or garden environment. In general the projects are well thought out and constructed. The authors dispense some woodworking wisdom with helpful hints and techniques, such as showing how to measure the diagonal for squareness and using workboards and spacers. Up front, they supply a comprehensive list of the tools commonly used in the type of woodworking described in the book. They also include sections covering materials, fasteners and hardware.

A specific material list is included for each project, and there are helpful schematics throughout. Color illustrations feature exploded detail including several views. The step-by-step photos are good, but more of them would have been better.

While recommending the use of inexpensive wood for these projects, the authors fail to mention why this wood costs less. Often it will be warped or hard to work due to knots and/or irregular grain. They also fail in providing techniques on how to deal with these problems.

At times I felt the authors had a tendency to oversimplify. Constructing a properly fit mortise and tenon joint is an art form, and just sawing straight with a handsaw can be difficult. The physical difficulty and time to completion of these projects is



greatly increased by using a handsaw versus an electric compound miter saw. They don't warn the novice of this fact, and routinely list only the handsaw (crosscut saw) in the tool section of each project. A helpful addition to this book would have been levels of difficulty assigned to projects so that a novice could better assess what he or she would be reasonably able to complete.

—Adam Forney

The Home Winemaker's Companion

If you've been intrigued by our "Home Vineyard" column in each issue and want to branch out and perhaps delve into the exciting world of home winemaking, pick up a copy of *The Home Winemaker's Companion* by Gene Spaziani, past president of the American Wine Society, and Ed Halloran.

Spaziani and Halloran pare down the art of winemaking to its simplest form and present the steps involved in a straightforward manner. Beginning with two chapters devoted to a general overview of winemaking and the equipment and supplies needed, the author then walks us through the entire spectrum of winemaking, from the simple (use of kits) to the most complex (making red wine from grapes). The chapters progressively deal with more difficult recipes and the processes involved in making them.

With helpful charts, sidebars and illustrations, the authors make their subject a joy to read about. I really felt as though I was getting to understand this seemingly daunting process. The science and chemistry of winemaking wasn't so intimidating after reading explanations of concepts such as sanitizing equipment and raising degrees brix. Essential how-tos such as keeping your work area and bottles clean, determining sugar percentage and testing for acid content helped set parameters in my mind for what would be involved and the diligence required.

Recipe upon recipe is presented for making various wines of varying levels of complexity. From "White Wine from Chenin Blanc Grape Concentrate" to "Red Wine from Zinfandel Grapes," the recipes were either reasonably doable in my mind or fun to dream about doing one day (60-75 pounds of fresh grapes required!).

Regardless of whether you set out on your own personal winemaking journey after reading *The Home Winemaker's Companion*, I do believe you'll gain a deeper sense of understanding and appreciation for the process and will enhance your next winetasting trip—or simply your next glass.

—KKA

Keeping Livestock Healthy

As the trend away from large-animal and medium-animal (goats, sheep and pigs) practice continues among veterinary school graduates, it will become increasingly difficult for hobby farmers to find vets equipped to handle livestock problems. Livestock owners, therefore, must learn as much as possible about animal health. *Keeping Livestock Healthy* by N. Bruce Haynes, DVM, (revised and updated fourth edition) takes a proactive approach, explaining the nature of the disease process and emphasizing ways to prevent illness.

First published in 1978, *Keeping Livestock Healthy*, according to the publisher, has been used in leading colleges of veterinary medicine and been used by livestock owners as a way to keep up-to-date on the latest research on each of the five animals covered—horses, cattle, swine, goats and sheep. The author also addresses recent developments in vaccines, artificial insemination, ultrasonography, disease testing, drug treatments and diseases such as West Nile Virus, bluetongue, mad cow disease and foot-and-mouth disease. Black-and-white photos and charts help illustrate various disease symptoms and methods of management.

Because the goal is to keep animals healthy, this is not a book on how to treat sick animals. Rather, it attempts to explain the nature of the disease process and outlines ways to prevent illness in the major farm-animal species. The great majority of farm-animal health problems are preventable. This book empowers readers by sharing critical knowledge and effective insights gained during more than 50 years of veterinary practice.

Farm animals provide us with food, fiber, livelihood and pleasure. In return, we owe them comfortable quarters, adequate feed, compassion and good health. *Keeping Livestock Healthy* presents a deliberate, easy to understand and compassionate approach to preventive medicine that should result in healthy animals and cost-effective management of livestock.