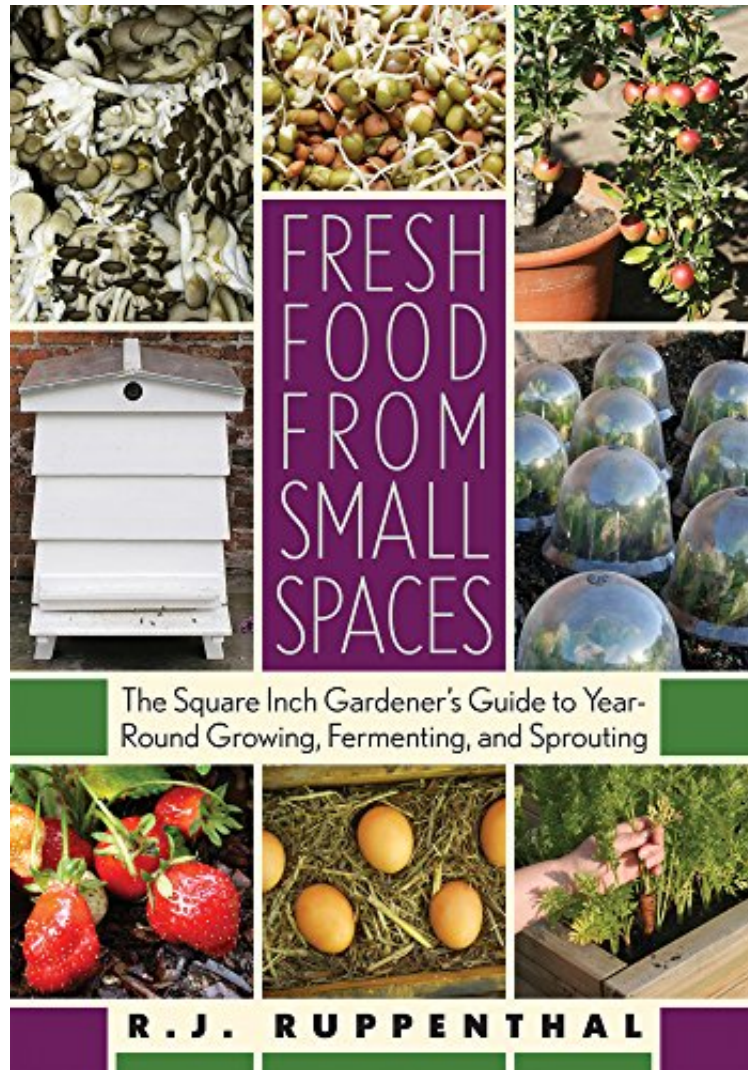


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Fresh Food from Small Spaces: The Square-Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting, and Sprouting

R.J. Ruppenthal

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R.J. Ruppenthal : Fresh Food from Small Spaces: The Square-Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting, and Sprouting before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fresh Food from Small Spaces: The Square-Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting, and Sprouting:

114 of 115 people found the following review helpful. Be more self-reliant - grow lots of food in a small areaBy P. Meadows[Update: I read the book again; and I wish I had given it five stars rather than four. I cannot seem to edit the

number of stars. But just pretend that I gave it five stars, OK? Thanks!]'Fresh Food from Small Spaces' is an exciting book, an inspirational and informative book. Ruppenthal's main topics are container gardening, sprouting, fermenting, growing mushrooms, and small livestock (chickens and bees only), making compost and worm boxes. He lists and describes steps that anyone can take towards helping to build a more sustainable planet and living more lightly on the earth, as well as being more self-reliant. I was very glad to see a short chapter on 'Survival During Resource Shortages' and one on 'Helping to Build a Sustainable Future'. The 'Introduction' also touches on these topics. I was also glad to see that Ruppenthal recommends the use of Self-Watering Containers. I know from personal experience (and from being the listowner for a list devoted to Edible Container Gardening) that this is a very, very superior way to grow vegetables in containers. What the book is *not*: it is definitely not a how-to book. It is *not* the only book you'll ever need about *any* of the topics that it covers. If you buy the book thinking that it is, you'll probably be disappointed. Instead, it gives an excellent general overview and introduction to some very disparate topics. It gives you ideas for things *you can actually do*. The author also points you towards more detailed sources of information on each topic. I doubt if anyone could have written a detailed instructional guide on all of these very different topics. Major disappointment: the only illustrations are black-and-white stock photos. Some color photos - and more personal photos - would have been a great addition. This is really a very glaring lack. (Shame on you, Chelsea Green Publishers!) Second major disappointment: no index. I would have expected an index in anything published by Chelsea Green, a quality publisher. Major plus: The book is referenced, with endnotes. There is a list of resources as well. I would definitely have given this book my unalloyed praise if it only had better photos and an index. I have no other criticisms. Ruppenthal writes well, too, by the way. [...] 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A great overview, plus enough information to get started. By Reader I ought to give this a 4.5, and if you just accept it as an introductory book, not a detailed treatise, it's a 5. There are some things in this book that not everyone may be comfortable with, though. I am a master gardener, so most of what's in here is not new, but there are some great ideas. For example, just seeing how the Europeans do fruit trellises on backstreets was inspiring. Learning how to make your own self-watering container is smart. The book covers vegetable gardening, berries and fruits, sprouting, yogurt/kefir making, bees, chickens, compost and worms, mushroom growing, container gardening, cold frames and building arbors/trellises to use more vertical space. It is written clearly and points you to other books to read after you've gotten started. And that's all great. Could you have found all that on the internet for free?... yes. But it's still a nice book. I think what I choked on while reading it is how much time is involved to keep up all these little projects. I would have also loved a "shopping list", with costs, for each project (like the self-watering container, for example, or how much it costs to build a trellis). If you've ever actually done any of these things, and I have, the sobering take away is how much work and time and money goes into getting the results, whether they are a couple of berries in your hand, or a small green salad with lettuce, sprouts and tomatoes you grew yourself. The book does not talk about this factor. It's significant. Most vegetable gardeners will get a merry twinkle in their eye if you ask them about \$6 tomatoes, or even \$2 zucchinis. Growing food is time intensive and labor intensive. The other thing (and I like this, but I may not be in the majority) is the last chapter talks about resource depletion, and a time when peak oil or other factors may knock the stuffing out of our food production system. This may not sit well with some people, and this "prep because the world is at end" sensibility is very lightly woven through the book, especially at the beginning and the end. It is where the author is coming from. Again, I personally was reassured by this, because it meant the author and I were on the same page about why we should be learning about this stuff in the first place. But, my mother (for example), would be really thrown off by any "prep for the end is near" talk and might just put the entire book aside for even bringing up something as crazy as peak oil. If your mother is like that, too, you might want to get a different book for her. 119 of 124 people found the following review helpful. Really Disappointing. By J. Caldwell I ordered this book because it seemed well reviewed and the title is exactly what I have to deal with - square inches. However, after getting it I have to say this was really a disappointment. To begin with, the book is not well-edited, and the same general observations on gardening are repeated in many different places throughout the book - it felt like the author had to fill space. There were very broad chapters on how to keep chickens, bees, grow mushrooms, make your own kefir, etc. but without any sort of in-depth knowledge. Mostly, just a vague overview with references. There are good websites referenced throughout the book but overall, anyone with a little time and Google can probably do better to find the same information online, in far more detail. I had been hoping for a true play-by-play breakdown of maximizing space and food production, but no luck. If you are looking for concise, informative, and practical tips, move on. If you have absolutely no idea how to garden, then maybe this would be a good starting point. But I'm still searching....

Books on container gardening have been wildly popular with urban and suburban readers, but until now, there has been no comprehensive "how-to" guide for growing fresh food in the absence of open land. Fresh Food from Small Spaces fills the gap as a practical, comprehensive, and downright fun guide to growing food in small spaces. It provides readers with the knowledge and skills necessary to produce their own fresh vegetables, mushrooms, sprouts, and fermented foods as well as to raise bees and chickens all without reliance on energy-intensive systems like indoor lighting and hydroponics. Readers will learn how to transform their balconies and windowsills into productive

vegetable gardens, their countertops and storage lockers into commercial-quality sprout and mushroom farms, and their outside nooks and crannies into whatever they can imagine, including sustainable nurseries for honeybees and chickens. Free space for the city gardener might be no more than a cramped patio, balcony, rooftop, windowsill, hanging rafter, dark cabinet, garage, or storage area, but no space is too small or too dark to raise food. With this book as a guide, people living in apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and single-family homes will be able to grow up to 20 percent of their own fresh food using a combination of traditional gardening methods and space-saving techniques such as reflected lighting and container "terracing." Those with access to yards can produce even more. Author R. J. Ruppenthal worked on an organic vegetable farm in his youth, but his expertise in urban and indoor gardening has been hard-won through years of trial-and-error experience. In the small city homes where he has lived, often with no more than a balcony, windowsill, and countertop for gardening, Ruppenthal and his family have been able to eat at least some homegrown food 365 days per year. In an era of declining resources and environmental disruption, Ruppenthal shows that even urban dwellers can contribute to a rebirth of local, fresh foods.

Library Journal-Many gardening books describe ample land and space as being a prerequisite for growing flowers, plants, and food. And the ever popular container gardening books, generally written for those with little land or space in which to garden, do not always cover the question of raising fresh food that way. Ruppenthal, a business professor and lifelong trial-and-error gardener, here fills a gap in gardening literature and helps readers discover techniques for sustainable food production--even on a small scale--by using every square inch of space that is available to them. His book walks gardeners through assessing their available space and its lighting, deciding what to grow in the spaces they have, and buying (or building) vegetable garden containers. Using his techniques, gardeners will learn to grow herbs, vegetables, fruit, grains, and mushrooms, as well as raise chickens and honeybees and produce fermented foods such as yogurt. It may be nearly impossible to live completely off the grid in an urban environment, but through practice, patience, and creativity, it is possible to establish such a productive urban garden that you can eat some homegrown, fresh food every day of the year. Highly recommended for public libraries, special and academic libraries with strong agricultural collections, and all those who are serious about producing food and creating a more sustainable lifestyle."Fresh Food from Small Spaces is a helpful guide to the range of food production strategies for urban spaces. A great resource for urban dwellers, enabling even those in basement apartments to produce copious food through sprouting and mushroom production. I particularly appreciated Ruppenthal's first-hand experience in building low-cost self-watering planters."--Eric Toensmeier, author of *Perennial Vegetables* and co-author of *Edible Forest Gardens*"This is one of the most important gardening books in years. Ruppenthal is ahead of the curve, promoting sustainability and even self-sufficiency in the burgeoning urban environment. His holistic approach to nutrition, conservation, recycling/repurposing, and composting will help redefine urban gardening. *Fresh Food From Small Spaces* is loaded with great ideas for urban gardeners. Ruppenthal gives great tips and background info to get beginners started. Yet, the diagrams, charts, and plant lists make it a satisfactory and intriguing reference even for experienced gardeners."Besides being a timely, progressive, intelligent reference, *Fresh Food From Small Spaces* is a great story and comfortable read. I enjoyed following Ruppenthal's personal struggles and ordeals. This is a fun, informative book."Ruppenthal has seen the future of city gardening and I like it! Fresh herbs on every windowsill. Pole beans on every balcony. Beehives with honey on every rooftop. And tasty shitakes in every garage."--William Moss, "Moss in the City" columnist at the National Gardening Association's Garden.org "Every generation there is a move back to growing food close to home for various reasons: victory gardens, back-to-the-land gardens and community gardens come to mind. Now, as oil prices permanently increase, we have 'post-petroleum gardens' and *Fresh Food From Small Spaces* is a timely guide for a highly productive home food system, full of new and proven sustainable ways to grow and process your favorite foods in the smallest of space."--Will Raap, Founder, Gardener's Supply Company "While the information in this book will benefit all those seeking to grow and prepare their own food at home, it is especially informative for people with only limited space. Ruppenthal covers every food I ever heard of and a whole bunch I never heard of, like water kimchi (!) that can be grown indoors or outdoors where there is not enough room for a regular garden. This is the perfect answer to the question many people are asking me: How can I take charge of my own life now that food prices are soaring when I hardly have space for a container-grown tomato or two? Reading Ruppenthal, I get a distinct feeling that one can grow enough food to survive on down in the cellar and out on the porch."--Gene Logsdon, author of *The Contrary Farmer* and *Living at Nature's Pace: Farming and the American Dream* "*Fresh Food From Small Spaces* is a passionate manifesto as well as a practical primer for urban food production. It presents clear information, innovative strategies, and enthusiastic encouragement that will motivate, inspire, and empower city dwellers seeking to grow food and build greater sustainability into their lives."--Sandor Ellix Katz, author of *Wild Fermentation* and *The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved* "Unfortunately, many urban-dwellers avoid gardening due to a perceived lack of space. Ruppenthal explodes these barriers by showing us in cogent hands-on detail how to cultivate meaningful quantities of healthful food from the air, sun, water, and earth available to us in our own spaces, no matter how small."--Stephen Rebekah Hren, authors of *The Carbon-Free Home*About the AuthorA licensed attorney and college professor, R. J. Ruppenthal has never given up on his

gardening passion, even when his day jobs led him to a more urban life. He currently teaches at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, California, and lives and gardens in the San Francisco Bay area.