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Steve Solomon

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Pacific NW Gardeners only need purchase. By Mary Ellen I had two issues with this book: #1: It applies ONLY to the Pacific Northwest. I am in drought-stricken California. It is totally useless to me. #2: The last review said it was a cheap rip-off. I don't know about that. I do know that it keeps mentioning photos plans that are not there. I don't hate it, but I really cannot recommend it, especially to desert type gardeners. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Unauthorized reprint, missing illustrations, title changed -- BUYER BEWARE By A Customer This is NOT a Steve Solomon book. It's a cheap, dishonest rip-off. Text appears stolen off Steve's free archive and reprinted, cheaply and dishonestly.

Gardening Without Irrigation or without much, anyway First, you should know why a maritime Northwest raised-bed gardener named Steve Solomon became worried about his dependence on irrigation. I'm from Michigan. I moved to Lorane, Oregon, in April 1978 and homesteaded on 5 acres in what I thought at the time was a cool, showery green valley of liquid sunshine and rainbows. I intended to put in a big garden and grow as much of my own food as possible. Two months later, in June, just as my garden began needing water, my so-called 15-gallon-per-minute well began to falter, yielding less and less with each passing week. By August it delivered about 3 gallons per minute. Fortunately, I wasn't faced with a completely dry well or one that had shrunk to below 1 gallon per minute, as I soon discovered many of my neighbors were cursed with. Three gallons per minute won't supply a fan nozzle or even a common impulse sprinkler, but I could still sustain my big raised-bed garden by watering all night, five or six nights a week, with a single, 2-1/2 gallon-per-minute sprinkler that I moved from place to place. I had repeatedly read that gardening in raised beds was the most productive vegetable growing method, required the least work, and was the most water-efficient system ever known. So, without adequate irrigation, I would have concluded that food self-sufficiency on my homestead was not possible. In late September of that first year, I could still run that single sprinkler. What a relief not to have invested every last cent in land that couldn't feed us. For many succeeding years at Lorane, I raised lots of organically grown food on densely planted raised beds, but the realities of being a country gardener continued to remind me of how tenuous my irrigation supply actually was. We country folks have to be self-reliant: I am my own sanitation department, I maintain my own 800-foot-long driveway, the septic system puts me in the sewage business. A long, long response time to my 911 call means I'm my own self-defense force. And I'm my own water department. Without regular and heavy watering during high summer, dense stands of vegetables become stunted in a matter of days. Pump failure has brought my raised-bed garden close to that several times. Before my frantic efforts got the water flowing again, I could feel the stressed-out garden screaming like a hungry baby. As I came to understand our climate, I began to wonder about complete food self-sufficiency. How did the early pioneers irrigate their vegetables? There probably aren't more than a thousand homestead sites in the entire maritime Northwest with gravity water. Hand pumping into hand-carried buckets is impractical and extremely tedious. Wind-powered pumps are expensive and have severe limits. The combination of dependably rainless summers, the realities of self-sufficient living, and my homestead's poor well turned out to be an opportunity. For I continued wondering about gardens and water, and discovered a method for growing a lush, productive vegetable garden on deep soil with little or no irrigation, in a climate that reliably provides 8 to 12 virtually dry weeks every summer.