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Homegrown Humus: Cover Crops In A No-till Garden (Permaculture Gardener Book 1)



Synopsis

Homegrown humus is easy with cover crops! Cover crops are a simple, cheap way to boost your soil's organic matter, to fight weeds, to prevent erosion, to attract pollinators, and to keep the ecosystem in balance. Unfortunately, most information on growing cover crops is written for people who plow their soil every year and are willing to spray herbicides. You can get all of the same benefits in a no-till garden, though, if you're clever. Homegrown Humus details five no-till winners in depth --- buckwheat, sweet potatoes, oilseed radishes, rye, and oats. Profiles of other species suggest gardening conditions when you might want to try out sunflowers, annual ryegrass, barley, Austrian winter peas, crimson clover, cowpeas, or sunn hemp as well. Meanwhile, the book delves into finding cover-crop seeds, planting cover crops in a no-till garden, and easily killing cover crops without tilling or herbicide use. Understanding the C:N ratio of cover crops helps determine how long to wait between killing cover crops and planting vegetables, as well as how to maximize the amount of humus you're adding to your soil. Cover crops are an advanced gardening technique bound to increase your vegetable yields, but are simple enough for beginners. Give your garden a treat --- grow some buckwheat! This second edition is updated with three new chapters and contains a total of 54 photos.

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Customer Reviews

In this really good short summary, you get pretty much everything you needed to know about Green Manures aka cover crops. This is a book for hobbyists, gardeners, and backyard farmers, and perhaps a good review of the topic for professionals. However if you are looking for a painfully detailed chemical analysis of the soil, or an in depth soil science book to put you to sleep, please look else where. This has all of the practical information you need to be able to understand and use cover crops, nothing else. The book is accessible for the layman (or woman) and with almost 30 years of gardening experience and 4 years of professional experience working on development projects in the third world, I can say this is the best book written on the subject I have read so far. You will not be disappointed in this book if you want a quick read giving you only the essential information on the topic. My hat comes off to Anna Hess for writing this spectacular book.

It can be difficult to find information on cover crops that focuses on not tilling your soil, which is something I'm not willing nor interested in doing for our first garden on our new farm. We have heavy clay content in our rocky soil, and I discovered right away with a small test garden that digging to incorporate organic matter and nutrients was laborious and inefficient (not to mention, back breaking). Nearby neighbors have tractors and tilled gardens, and I'm sure I could sweet talk one into plowing up a garden spot for us, but I don't want to rely on that and am trying to focus on permaculture practices instead. That being said, I need a way to bring organic matter in other than simply trucking in pre-blended soil for my raised beds from the closest source, which is over an hour away and can also get very expensive. Homegrown Humus addresses this need perfectly and gave me both the background information I craved to understand how cover crops work as well as ideas and solid information on actual implementation. The author writes in both an easy and fun to understand style that will wet your appetite for her other excellent e-books that address a variety of permaculture and homesteading related projects. Very pleased with this selection and will be referring back to it as needed during the upcoming gardening season.

Good book like all her others. I will use the info. in here to get my next ground cover right. i don't own livestock, but if I did, this would really help with quick green manure fix and fodder ideas. Nothing goes to waste. Love that she has tried these methods and knows what works and what

doesn't, even with the animal feed from what is left over when spring arrives. Great info. am going to use as soon as i can!

Although short, this is a very good primer on getting started growing your own mulch year round in the garden. Much of the US once had as much as nine feet of topsoil. Many areas now have less than an inch or two. Following the author's simple suggestions will have your soil organic content increasing over time. If you are outside of zone 6 you will have to experiment with the cover crop species some, which the author points out, but she provides a couple of resources to explore for ideas as well as the thought process for how to make your selections. A thought provoking read.

If you love to garden with good soil and no chemicals, then you'll want to read this book. I've already reserved an area of my son's small farm to try the buckwheat method of improving the soil. Also planning on growing the sweet potatoes to see how that works out as well. Lots of info packed in this little gem!!

I've been, up to reading this, hesitant to try cover crops. This brief intro gives enough information and instruction to convert a gardener brought up on tilling. I had no idea how to go about no-till gardening or soil amendment in a simple and no-fuss way and that has been holding me back. I have been assuming using a cover crop would mean I lost the use of some garden space for a full growing season. Not so!! highly recommend this book for anyone wanting to grow food in a more naturally sustainable way!

Good information. Simple to follow. We are new to the cover crop concept, our established garden will benefit from what we have learned in Anna's book. As a matter of fact, we intend to start tomorrow.

This short and to the point book shall save me lots of time and probably money in building my soil this year and in the future. The thing that I liked best is that the info is there and I don't have to suffer with extra wordiness. I shall keep it around as a reference book for when I forget too!

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