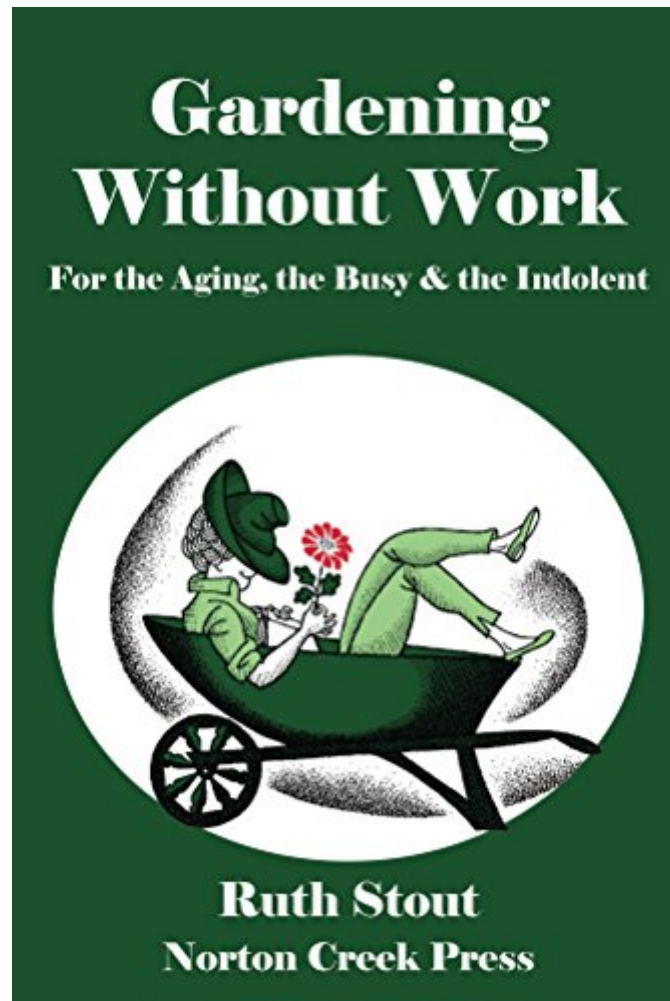


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# Gardening Without Work: For The Aging, The Busy & The Indolent (Ruth Stout Book 1)



## Synopsis

Garden expert and lovable eccentric Ruth Stout once said: "At the age of 87 I grow vegetables for two people the year-round, doing all the work myself and freezing the surplus. I tend several flower beds, write a column every week, answer an awful lot of mail, do the housework and cooking-and never do any of these things after 11 o'clock in the morning!" Her first book about her no-work gardening system, *How to Have a Green Thumb Without an Aching Back*, was the kind of book people can't bear to return. She reports, "A dentist in Pennsylvania and a doctor in Oregon have both written me that they keep a copy of my garden book in their waiting rooms. Or try to; the dentist has had twenty-three copies stolen, the doctor, sixteen." *Gardening Without Work* is her second gardening book and is even more entertaining and instructional than the first, so hide it from your friends! How does it work? "And now let's get down to business. The labor-saving part of my system is that I never plow, spade, sow a cover crop, harrow, hoe, cultivate, weed, water or irrigate, or spray. I use just one fertilizer (cottonseed or soybean meal), and I don't go through the tortuous business of building a compost pile. Just yesterday, under the "Questions and Answers" in a big reputable farm paper, someone asked how to make a compost pile and the editor explained the arduous performance. After I read this I lay there on the couch and suffered because the victim's address wasn't given; there was no way I could reach him." My way is simply to keep a thick mulch of any vegetable matter that rots on both my vegetable and flower garden all year round. As it decays and enriches the soil, I add more." Regardless of topic, Ruth Stout's writing is always about living a joyous and independent life, and *Gardening Without Work* is no exception! This book is a treasure for the gardener and a delight even to the non-gardener. First published in 1961, this Norton Creek Press version is an exact reproduction of the original edition. Ruth Stout, who, in her teens helped temperance activist Carrie Nation smash saloon windows, could turn any aspect of life into an adventure. She may have been the only woman who both gardened in the nude, wrote a book on happiness (*If You Would Be Happy*) and one about the quirky people who came to visit (*Company Coming: Six Decades of Hospitality*). (Both are available from Norton Creek Press.) Ruth died in 1980 at the age of 96.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've seen some of the Ruth Stout videos on YouTube and I ADORE her (R.I.P. Ruth). The writing style is very much like her videos would suggest, you can hear her voice in every word. However, on the practical side, the primary thing you will learn from the book is PUT STRAW OR HAY MULCH ON EVERYTHING IN YOUR GARDEN AND YOU WILL HAVE VERY LITTLE WORK TO DO WHILE ENRICHING YOUR SOIL. There, I just saved you some money. It's still rather sweet, I'm just not sure that beyond the primary tip I just revealed, you'll gain much else here that you can't gain from any other source on gardening. Ruth still rocks though!

I wanted to garden, without killing myself, and I got that, and much more from this book. Indeed, the book is not new, however, I know you will find the information in it, as wonderful as I did, and if you want to save your back, knees, sweat, and tears, then purchase the book. It turned out to be so much more than I ever expected. Not just in the reading, but in the doing. For the first time in a long time, I know that I will be able to garden for many years to come, and for those who are young, it will not wear you down like old gardening does. Trust me, I know both, and THIS METHOD IS OUTSTANDING! I intend to grow all of my produce myself, and this is the ONLY way I will be able to do that for so many in my family. I may be old, (64) but I can do it with Ruth's method. She gardened until she was 90 yrs. old! How's that for proof of her method! She was before her time, follow it, you won't be let down.

Ruth is pretty much a one-note song (mulch, Mulch, MULCH) but it's nice to know that I'm not alone in using tons of hay to mulch my gardens. This isn't literature and Ruth is, at times, a bit too folksy but given that my method of gardening isn't much different, I would probably write a lot like her. It turns out I've been a Ruth devotee for a while without even knowing it. If you are not using mulch in your garden/landscape and are tired of weeding and looking at hard, baked dirt, you owe it to yourself to give Ruth a shot. Though written in 1960, the book is still relevant and useful (except the parts about parsnips and turnips :-).

One of my favorite books on gardening. Humorous and folksy. Her methods work extremely well. Save yourself lots of sweat in the garden. Read this book.

I LOVE Ruth Stout. I only wish she were still alive so I could tell her so. This woman is the patron saint of folks like me who are physically limited. I have arthritis in most all of my connective tissue and I really thought I would have to give up vegetable gardening as I got older. Her methods have taken so much of the strain and aches out of gardening that I am sure I will be able to enjoy it for many more years. She has wonderful, experience-based tips and methods that you most likely wouldn't think of if you have been raised in the traditional mindset of growing your own food. The only thing I find to be a drawback is that come harvest time, you will probably want to invite a few friends over! LOL LOL. The bounty is plentiful and there is work to do on that end. When you get such satisfaction from planting something and watching it grow, how can that be a drawback? Her dry sense of humor makes the reading a delight as well. I would, and have, recommended her books to anyone that has ever engaged me in a conversation about gardening. I hope you will give her a try. It is worth triple the price!!!

I read this book long ago and have had 3 gardens on horrific soil using this method. No weeds, no watering, great soil in 3 years or less. What's not to like? It works! the only problem is slugs, but my trusty salt cellar by the light of evening does them in. And the evil meanie in me is richly satisfied to see them shrivel. Planting and harvesting potatoes? Put them on top of the ground under the hay and then scoop them out later, you'll only need to dig a very few. Need to blanch your celery? Shove the hay close to them. I'm a Master Gardener and tho the advice and language and humor may seem old hat, the method is tried and true.

The only time we actually had a successful gardening experience with plentiful harvest and hardly

any weeds was when we took the advice in this book. It may be a tad bit misleading as to the amount of work involvedâ ”there is some, of courseâ ”but the back-breaking chore of dealing with weeds is so much less! I would say that after the first season using Ms. Stout’s methods, the gardening would just keep getting better and better. This is a reprint of the original and well worth getting your hands on!

Ruth Stout is one of my favorite authors. It saddens me to know she is deceased. Her writings are very practical, and read more like a slightly rambling talk with a friend over a cup of warm tea than a bound volume!. Delightful! Ruth Stout is one of the modern pioneers substituting extensive mulching for back breaking spade and pitchfork work. I don’t believe she developed her gardening techniques through scientific research, but rather by doing what she thought made sense, and then astutely observing the results. She developed her gardening practices by extensive and continuous mulching. Whether you want to understand her techniques or you want a delightful curl-up-in-thr-armchir read for a cold wintery (or rainy summer) night, I think you will find Ms Stout’s books easy to read and a constructive delight, as well.

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