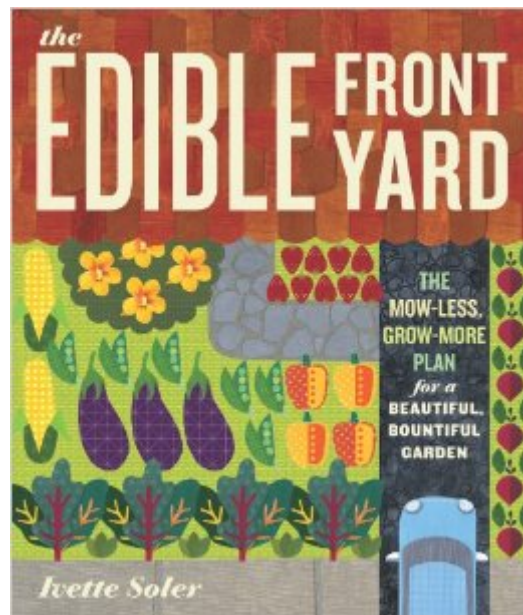


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# The Edible Front Yard: The Mow-Less, Grow-More Plan For A Beautiful, Bountiful Garden



## Synopsis

“Front lawns, beware: The Germinatrix has you in her crosshairs! Ivette Soler is a welcome voice urging us to mow less and grow some food” in her uniquely fun, infectious yet informative way. “Garden Rant People everywhere are turning patches of soil into bountiful vegetable gardens, and each spring a new crop of beginners pick up trowels and plant seeds for the first time. They’re planting tomatoes in raised beds, runner beans in small plots, and strawberries in containers. But there is one place that has, until now, been woefully neglected” the front yard. And there’s good reason. The typical veggie garden, with its raised beds and plots, is not the most attractive type of garden, and favorite edible plants like tomatoes and cucumbers have a tendency to look a scraggly, even in their prime. But *The Edible Front Yard* isn’t about the typical veggie garden, and author Ivette Soler is passionate about putting edibles up front and creating edible gardens with curb appeal. Soler offers step-by-step instructions for converting all or part of a lawn into an edible paradise; specific guidelines for selecting and planting the most attractive edible plants; and design advice and plans for the best placement and for combining edibles with ornamentals in pleasing ways. Inspiring and accessible, *The Edible Front Yard* is a one-stop resource for a front-and-center edible garden that is both beautiful and bountiful year-round.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gardening books of this kind are often (a) less than entertaining to read; (b) impractical; or (c) in favor of making your yard look like a junkyard. I took this one along on an extremely boring business

trip and the attendant flight delays and enjoyed it thoroughly. It covers both ornamental edibles and complimentary pure ornamentals; talks about practical issues like where to find hardscape materials at a bargain and why choosing regionally suitable plants is important; and the illustrations (even when built by one of the 3 garden owners featured) don't generally look like a pile of rubbish with plants growing over them, as these DIY-focused books so often do. I was a little disappointed that the author spent a lot of photo space on 3 favored gardens since all 3 gardeners live in the southwest/California area; I would have preferred something more relatable to my area. The principles were good though and I am definitely hanging onto this for reference. The chapter that covered ornamental edibles was great, and included plants suitable to all parts of the country. For future issues or an author's blog (if she has one), it would be great to cross-reference plants by the various categories she provides, such as season, type of edible, soil- and sun requirements and so on, but that's a want, not a need. This is a helpful, informative, easy-to-follow and entertaining book.

I was disappointed in the content of this book, as was hoping for more practical design ideas/suggestions. Book was more about discussion of why removal of non edible landscape is desirable. I know that or wouldn't be interested in ripping it all out & replacing all with edible landscaping! LOL! Was just hoping for more concrete ideas on the design of an edible garden. In all fairness however, I was a professional landscaper so this book may be of use to the novice who is not familiar with plants & trees, etc...

This is a visually pleasing book with lots of VERY close up pictures of ornamental veggies in beds. However, there is little practical advice. It will make a nice coffee table book. Descriptions of plants were very vague. There was little to no effort to discuss plantings in areas other than Southern California. Too much of the book was occupied by plant descriptions that are non-edible. There was also little discussion of best varieties of each vegetable for aesthetic and culinary use.

Because the book's subtitle refers to a "Plan" for a garden, I expected something a wee bit more practical. But that's just me . . . . I'm an engineer, not an artist. But what gardener wouldn't love to gaze at the gorgeous photographs in this book and imagine "what if"? I enjoyed using the book's photographs to dream about what my edible front yard might look like if I had buckets of money, plus more tillable land than my modest urban property provides. In my neighborhood, an edible front yard might consist of Swiss chard and an eggplant growing in place of the grass normally found in a 2-foot wide boulevard between the sidewalk and the street. The landscaping photos are beautiful,

showing me what I could have if only I lived on a larger lot (suburbs, maybe?) and had the wealth to hire a landscape architect and a good contractor. But heck, there's no harm in dreaming, is there? This book makes the dreaming even more beautiful.

I agree with the reviewers who say that this is a "coffee table" book; but its only positive characteristic is its beauty. If you are interested in looking at many gorgeous, sexy, and lovingly shot -- but only slightly different -- photos of the same few edible gardens then you will enjoy this book. If you are looking for practical information, however, you will be frustrated. The same succulents and herbs in the author's garden -- admittedly beautiful and inspiring -- are shown on pages 34, 94, 101, 110, 119, and 155. Each slightly different view of the same agave, escheveria, basil and sage illustrate different points: one emphasizes the use of red basil; one suggests using basil and sage in odd multiple numbers (3, 5, 7); one points out that color and contrast are important considerations in design; etc. One picture on one page could have been used to illustrate all these points. Or photos of different plant combinations could have been used. Instead, we see essentially the same agave, escheveria, basil and sage repeatedly. (Oh, and for the record, agave and escheveria are not "edible" -- turns out that your edible front garden needs ornamental structure to be truly decorative!) The book features great gardens, graciously offered to public view. However, it suffers from paucity of number and variation in the gardens featured. The text is likewise long on sex appeal; "There is something alluring about the burnished stems, elongated leaves, and purple, lacquered fruit of this slightly spooky member of the nightshade family." (Eggplant.) Possibly this book would inspire the casual reader to consider agave and artichoke as reasonable alternatives to lawn. For people who are already gardening and/or considering edible planting, even the most novice among them, there is not enough practical information to justify purchasing the book.

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