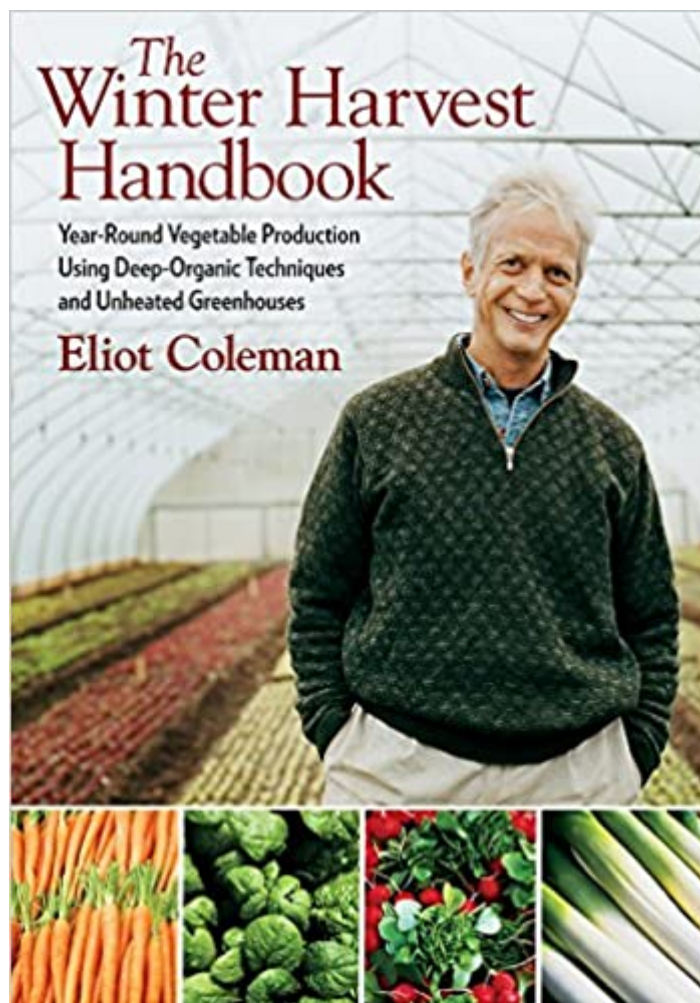




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# The Winter Harvest Handbook: Year Round Vegetable Production Using Deep-Organic Techniques And Unheated Greenhouses



## Synopsis

Choosing locally grown organic food is a sustainable living trend that's taken hold throughout North America. Celebrated farming expert Eliot Coleman helped start this movement with *The New Organic Grower* published 20 years ago. He continues to lead the way, pushing the limits of the harvest season while working his world-renowned organic farm in Harborside, Maine. Now, with his long-awaited new book, *The Winter Harvest Handbook*, anyone can have access to his hard-won experience. Gardeners and farmers can use the innovative, highly successful methods Coleman describes in this comprehensive handbook to raise crops throughout the coldest of winters. Building on the techniques that hundreds of thousands of farmers and gardeners adopted from *The New Organic Grower* and *Four-Season Harvest*, this new book focuses on growing produce of unparalleled freshness and quality in customized unheated or, in some cases, minimally heated, movable plastic greenhouses. Coleman offers clear, concise details on greenhouse construction and maintenance, planting schedules, crop management, harvesting practices, and even marketing methods in this complete, meticulous, and illustrated guide. Readers have access to all the techniques that have proven to produce higher-quality crops on Coleman's own farm. His painstaking research and experimentation with more than 30 different crops will be valuable to small farmers, homesteaders, and experienced home gardeners who seek to expand their production seasons. A passionate advocate for the revival of small-scale sustainable farming, Coleman provides a practical model for supplying fresh, locally grown produce during the winter season, even in climates where conventional wisdom says it "just can't be done."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"When does gardening become farming? When are you no longer having dinner parties and running a restaurant instead? For those who are ready to graduate beyond coffee-can retail, the incomparable Eliot Coleman is back with *THE WINTER HARVEST HANDBOOK: Year-Round Vegetable Production Using Deep-Organic Techniques and Unheated Greenhouses* (Chelsea Green, paper, \$29.95). I'm not one to quibble over the details of a "T-post anchor and homemade attaching bracket for securing the corners of a new rolling greenhouse design." Suffice it to say that this serious, meticulous, inspiring farmer and writer solves the problem of growing lettuce in Maine -- in January. Anyone living near Coleman's Four Season Farm is thrice blessed -- 1) to live in intense denial of the back-breaking effort he or she is 2) being spared in order to acquire what is surely 3) the tastiest, most wholesome and pure food available. Coleman's opus is as much a call to action for town planners to embrace local farms as it is a bible for small farmers. This book is for people who know what they're doing."-- *The New York Times Book Review*

"I just finished picking my first carrots, beets, and radishes from my new 'cold house' in Bedford, New York. It is so rewarding to harvest fresh vegetables and salads in the middle of winter and I grow them following the techniques of Eliot Coleman. I have been a devotee of Eliot's for years, fully agreeing with his methods for growing in winter, spring, summer, and fall, tasty, nutritious produce with a minimum consumption of fossil fuels. Congratulations on another volume of useful, practical, sensible, and enlightening information for the home gardener."--*Martha Stewart*

Eliot Coleman's books have been called Bibles for small farmers and home gardeners. I suspect that's because he writes about not just gardening but about everything that connects to good food and pleasure; a Renaissance man for a new generation, he'll quote Goethe in the same breath as Ghandi, and as a result, you'll dig, weed, eat, think, and live more fully."--*Dan Barber, Chef, Blue Hill and Blue Hill Stone Barns*

"Attention to detail is the major secret to success in any endeavor,' writes Eliot Coleman on page 156 of this absorbing and happily detailed report on his ongoing efforts to grow flawless vegetables without hothouses on the frozen 'back side' of the year. In chapters covering everything from The Yearly Schedule and Greenhouse Design to Weed Control and Marketing, Coleman tracks his own constant search for perfection, a quality that has led more than one young farmer to exclaim 'I'd follow him anywhere.' Well worth reading even if you don't grow vegetables, just to watch a master's mind at work."--*Joan Dye Gussow, author of This Organic Life*

"The Winter Harvest Handbook is

a treasure trove of practical, proven techniques for producing crops on a year-round basis in any climate. Based on decades of on-farm research, this book is packed with useful ideas, tips and practices that anyone can use in pursuing the increasingly vital dream of local, organic food production using a minimum of precious resources. A masterful book from a master organic farmer. I wish I had had a copy 35 years ago!"--Amigo Bob Cantisano, President, Organic Ag Advisors

"How do you produce first-rate food all year-round in northern places? This is the big question facing the local food movement, and Eliot Coleman, one of America's most innovative farmers, has come up with excellent answers. Brimming with ingenuity, hope, and eminently practical advice, *The Winter Harvest Handbook* is an indispensable contribution."--Michael Pollan

"If we are going to create a good, clean, fair food system, we've got to learn how to grow affordable, local food year-round and make a living at it. Eliot Coleman knows more about this than anyone I've met. Here he gives the detailed information needed to make it work. The only way to learn it better would be to follow him around for a few seasons. And he won't let you."--Josh Viertel, President, Slow Food USA

"Eliot Coleman is widely recognized as the 'master' of the master gardeners. His new book, *The Winter Harvest Handbook*--which tells us how to produce local food even in winter in cold climates like Maine, without a lot of energy--now joins his other delightful books as another lovely read, packed with powerful and practical ideas that every gardener will treasure."--Frederick Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and President of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture

Eliot Coleman has over thirty years' experience in all aspects of organic farming, including field vegetables, greenhouse vegetables, rotational grazing of cattle and sheep, and range poultry. He is the author of *The New Organic Grower*, *Four-Season Harvest*, and *The Winter Harvest Handbook*, as well as the instructional workshop DVD *Year-Round Vegetable Production with Eliot Coleman*. Coleman and his wife, Barbara Damrosch, presently operate a commercial year-round market garden, in addition to horticultural research projects, at Four Season Farm in Harborside, Maine.

Got a little land? Love a lot of vegetables? Then build yourself a Winter Wonderfarm. You may not be able to enjoy fresh garden tomatoes in the dead of winter, but there are more than 30 green and root vegetables that you can enjoy. From carrots to onions, celery to kohlrabi, and almost every vegetable in between, your Winter Wonderfarm will become the envy of your neighborhood. Perhaps that's where the expression "green with envy" came from . . . a better, greener farm. The three components to a successful winter harvest, according to Mr. Coleman are: 1) Cold-hardy

vegetables2) Succession planting3) Protected cultivationAs it turns out, if we can protect our vegetables from the winter winds, we can grow many vegetables successfully, even in the snow. Some vegetables, such as spinach, lettuce and matpe, are actually even sweeter and more tender in cooler temperatures. Think you surely have to provide supplementary lighting? Nope . . . not needed when grown in one of Mr. Coleman's "cold houses". He uses these cold houses even in the Maine winters of Zone 5. You'll also learn about vertical production of tomatoes and how to create your own cold frame with quick hoops made of electrical conduit and 10-foot-wide spun-bonded row cover held down by sandbags. These hoops can cover the same area as a 22 by 48 foot greenhouse at 5% of the cost. Speaking of cost, a recent article in the AARP Magazine indicated that we can save \$1,000.00 a year growing our own vegetables in a small garden. Now add your winter crop savings, and imagine what you'd save. Your Winter Wonderfarm will yield delicious, organic vegetables, improving your diet and fattening your wallet. Forget putting out the Christmas lights . . . just grow vegetables. Lynette Fleming, Coauthor of Lunch Buddies: Buddy Up for a Better Diet

I thought this book was incredible, but unfortunately it was not exactly what I was looking for. Eliot Coleman is extremely knowledgeable when it comes to deep organic farming and winter farming. I was impressed by how well researched the book is, and how much practical experience the author has. It gets into a great deal of detail on the history of winter farming techniques, as well as what the author has learned on his own farm. There is information on crop rotation, planting/harvest schedules, etc. The book actually left me feeling more inspired to garden in the winter. I was looking for a basic instructional book aimed at the home gardener. Just as one example, I would have liked more specific information on how to build and use Dutch lights or hoop houses to protect my plants, as opposed to information on how to build tracks to move large greenhouses around a farm. I'm not nearly competent enough to make real use of this book!

I found that this book appealed to the engineer in me greatly, as Eliot shares not only his joy in gardening but also his rather brilliant engineering mind in seeking good, simple solutions to complex issues while avoiding white elephants. This presentation of his data and experiments is head and shoulders above any gardening book I've read, and has helped me think about how to cope with the very different climate issues I have here at 5600 feet elevation in AZ, where high winds, single digit humidity, and temps over 95F are common in June, while sub zero winter temps are common as well. An outstanding author and a very enjoyable book which makes you appreciate the thinking behind year round gardening.

In 2006 I planted my first fall garden. The first week of September I sowed one of my grow beds in Indian Summer Spinach and a few other recommendations from an article I read about fall gardens. I was amazed at the productivity from this late planting. The quality and quantity was wonderful, and the absence of pests and weeds was noteworthy. To my astonishment I kept harvesting and enjoying spinach first to Thanksgiving, and then into December. When the first snow fall blanketed the foothills where I live the day before Christmas I thought it was all over. New Years was a clear sunny winter day and so I slipping on my snow boots and wondered out to the garden. There I noticed a little dark green peeking out from the edge of the grow bed in which I had planted the fall spinach. Gently I lifted away the crusty layer of snow and was astounded to find the spinach still flourishing. Reaching down I sampled the crunchiest, sweetest spinach I had ever tasted, before returning to the house for a large bowl. The salad that day from our own garden was divine. I picked almost daily until, with a little melancholy, I harvested the last of it on January 20, 2007. That experience led me to wonder what else might be grown in the fall and winter months, and how it could best be accomplished. If you have ever put together a jigsaw puzzle only to find a piece or two missing just as you were completing it, that's how I felt in reverse. I had the missing piece or two, but didn't know where the rest of the puzzle was until just last month when I discovered Eliot Coleman's extraordinary book *The Winter Harvest Handbook*. Now I have the whole puzzle. But in his humble way I can almost hear Eliot say, "There are still lots of things we need to learn about the winter garden." If you are passionate about growing quality vegetables for your own table or for the market, and want to extend your efforts into the wonderful world of the Winter Harvest I hardly recommend this gift from the master of that season. My only comments for the 3rd edition would be to add more information about watering/irrigation in winter and specific information about seed varieties and their sources. I was so impressed with this book that I am now "plowing" through Coleman's *The New Organic Grower*.

I have his first one, which I really enjoyed. This one is better-with color photos that will really excite any gardener. There are lists of specific seeds he has found will grow under winter conditions in the greenhouse, and how to help them best make it through the freeze. He lists helpful items and where to get them. An easy read, for the person who wants to grow for their family or to sell. A helpful fun book. Eliot is a good teacher.

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*The Winter Harvest Handbook: Year Round Vegetable Production Using Deep-Organic Techniques*

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