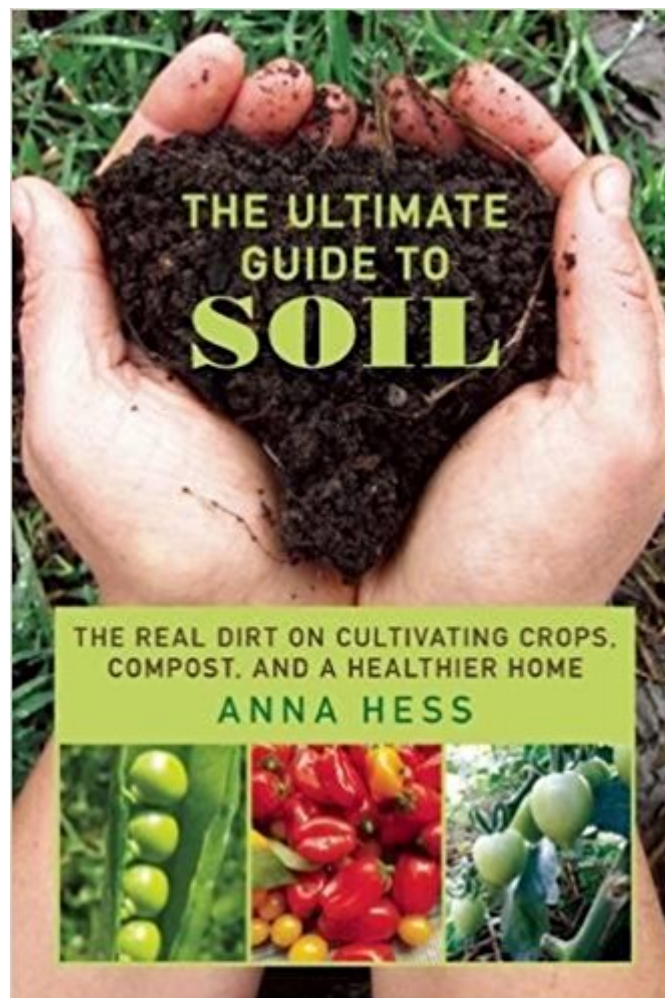




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# The Ultimate Guide To Soil: The Real Dirt On Cultivating Crops, Compost, And A Healthier Home



## Synopsis

Grow twice the fruits and vegetables in half the space on the farm, in the backyard, or in your window! Have you noticed the extraordinary flavors and yields emanating from even a small garden when the soil is just right? If you've ever been envious of your neighbor's dirt or just curious about homesteading, then *The Ultimate Guide to Soil* is perfect for you. The book begins with a personality test for your soil, then uses that information to plan a course of action for revitalizing poor soil and turning good dirt into great earth. Next, you'll learn to start and maintain a no-till garden, to balance nutrients with remineralization, and to boost organic matter with easy cover crops. Don't forget the encyclopedic overview of organic soil amendments at the end. Old standbys like manures and mulches are explained in depth along with less common additions such as bokashi compost and castings from worms and black soldier fly larvae. Learn when hugelkultur, biochar, paper, and cardboard do and don't match your garden needs, then read about when and how to safely use urine and humanure around edible plantings. With an emphasis on simple techniques suitable for the backyard gardener, *The Ultimate Guide to Soil* gives you the real dirt on good soil. Maybe next year your neighbor will be envious of you!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anna Hess enjoys writing about her adventures both on her blog at [WaldenEffect.org](http://WaldenEffect.org) and in her books. Her first paperback, *The Weekend Homesteader*, helped thousands of homesteaders-to-be find ways to fit their dreams into the hours leftover from a full-time job. She lives with her husband in

the mountains of southwest Virginia.

Even though I read most of this in installments, I am glad to have it all in one hard copy, not only for future reference, but to loan out to family and friends who ask about getting started with gardening. The author draws on her background as an ecologist, as well as a decade's worth of gardening experience on her own homestead, to put together this clear and practical guide to building good soil. Her garden speaks for itself (just check out the pictures on her blog if you're still on the fence!) Highly recommended.

I liked this a lot. Practical experience of one gardener. May not apply to your area of the country, but was very interesting. A very well illustrated book.

I found a lot of useful information here on biochar, remineralization and other topics. The author also pointed out some facts about compost that I'd learned but rarely see in other gardening books, namely that the value of compost is dependent on what went into it and that you'll never generate as much compost as you need. You'll find plenty here on different kinds of organic mulches and the pitfalls to expect with them (weed seeds in straw, wood chips draining the soil of nitrogen and so on). There is also a section on building raised beds with a base layer of rotting wood, a practice I'd only recently heard of and see real potential in. Some of the advice is definitely going to be confined to rural areas due to smell issues. By this I mean the author's use of human manure and urine. The section on using black fly larva to compost food waste is another part that might cause trouble. I don't question their effectiveness so much as I feel it would offend the neighbors and risk bringing you a visit from your local police. Still, any gardening book will have suggestions you can't use for one reason or another, so this isn't a deal breaker for me. I enjoyed the book and plan on keeping it.

Ms. Hess' firsthand knowledge and love of experimentation on her own soil is infectious. Already started some hugelkulture of my own.

Outstanding! Anna really takes the time to bestow a lot of experience in a fairly short book. If you don't understand how the soil works then you will be fighting yourself in my experience. The best book I've read on gardening yet (out of maybe 15). Worth paying full price!

I have a lot of books from Anna Hess and all of them are great. As is this one I loved the book

I found lots of good info in the book. Passed it on to a friend who needs help with her soil also.

Great book with abundant and valuable information to build healthy soil in your home garden.

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