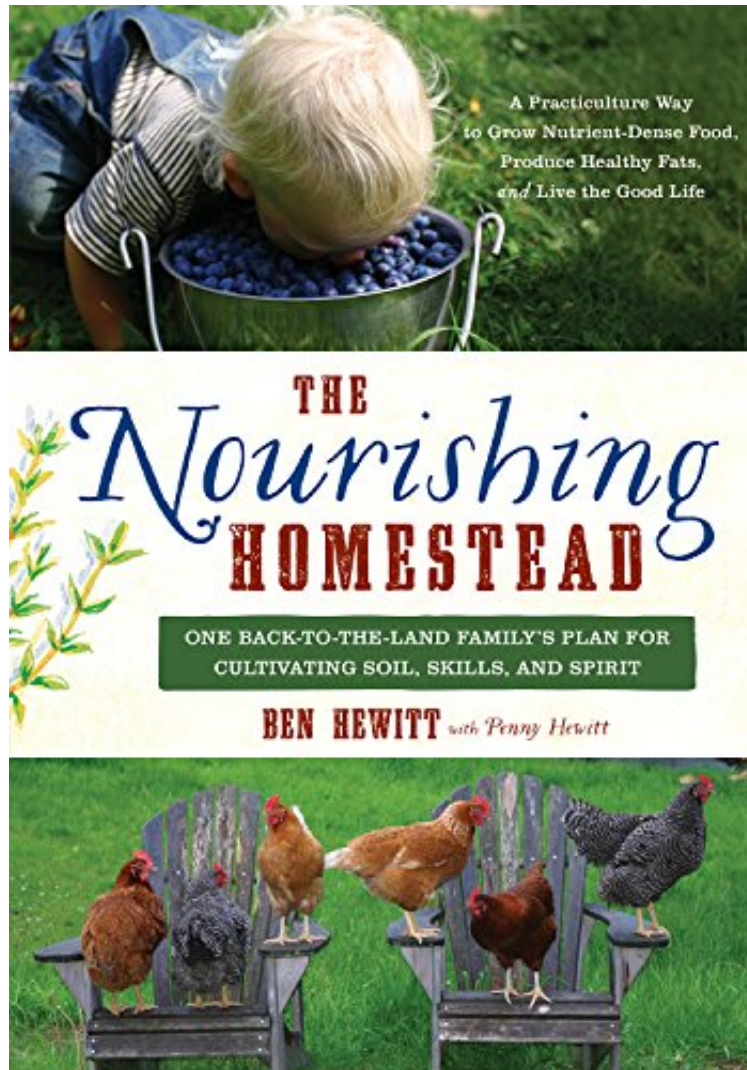


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## The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan for Cultivating Soil, Skills, and Spirit

Ben Hewitt, Penny Hewitt

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**Ben Hewitt, Penny Hewitt : The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan for Cultivating Soil, Skills, and Spirit** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Nourishing Homestead: One Back-to-the-Land Family's Plan for Cultivating Soil, Skills, and Spirit:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book for those just getting started in Homesteading.By JoeAs others have noted, there is an emphasis on Meat production. For most people, that's the tipping point between "Hobbyist Gardener" and "Self-Sufficient". It's the last step before you can cut out the grocery store all together.This is

the book I wish I had 10 years ago. It could have saved me many of the common mistakes, and associated labor and cost of trying to figure out what really works, and what makes economic sense. I would not characterize the book as a "reference", though there is information in it I can see myself coming back to regularly. It's better suited for those who are getting started in homesteading. What to expect, what lifestyle changes occur as a consequence (many of which may be unexpected for some people). For most, homesteading starts as a vague idea with one motivating factor in mind. Perhaps lowering costs of living or improving the quality of food. Some are drawn to it from an ecology perspective. Some just want the idyllic agrarian lifestyle. But this is a lifestyle. All of those goals are closely interconnected. The pursuit of one of those goals will lead you to others. That can be overwhelming. This book chronicles how one family adapts to a wide array of new experiences, what works, what doesn't and why. When I first picked up the book, I was honestly disappointed. I'm accustomed to a more "Technical Manual" approach. But after the first chapter, I couldn't put it down. I purchased it after hearing the author interviewed on the Survival Podcast, which is what initially sparked my interest in it. That June 17 (2015) interview is still up on their site, and is a great preview of the content of the book.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Like a Conversation with Good (and More Knowledgeable) Friends! By ncfarmchick My family and I live on a small homestead and are committed to not only providing as much food for our family as possible but to improving the health and vitality of our land as much as we are able. As independent as we are, we recognize the fallacy of being "self-sufficient" and look for ways that our lifestyle can help us create community and connection with others. This book puts all those concepts and more together in a way that is like a conversation with good (and more knowledgeable) friends. That fact alone makes this book priceless as many of us are simply not fortunate enough to have access to such conversations first hand. Like Hewitt's other books and his blog, this book flows in the author's easy-going and self-deprecating manner while imparting an immense amount of information and wisdom, the kind that takes years to develop. He is quick to cite other sources for further information and never once makes the reader feel as if his family's way is the only way, a rarity in farming/homesteading books which tend to be either all technical/textbook-oriented or straight memoir (inspiring but limited in its potential to help people ready to get down to work.) This book is a carefully thought out blend of practical information that one can implement today as well as the stories behind the advice. Penny Hewitt's photos are beautiful and plentiful and add to the personal feel of the book as if you were on a first-hand tour of their property. As a mother of two small children, I particularly appreciate the inclusion of the Hewitt's boys in the book (perhaps they deserve author's credit, too!) It is abundantly clear that the Hewitt's life is focused on family. Not only does the book include an entire chapter devoted to children on the homestead (something I have never found in another book on the topic), but the boys' stories are woven throughout the entire book underscoring the value this way of life has toward building healthy and mutually-dependent relationships with one's own family and the surrounding community. I rarely purchase books but gladly did this one (as well as his others.) It has already become a bit dog-eared from repeated reference and has inspired many thoughtful conversations within our family as to our path on our own "nourishing homestead." I cannot recommend it highly enough.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Worth more than \$20 By T. Johnson I love this book for many reasons...it's got practical information anyone can use (not needing extreme wealth), explains the importance of growing nutrient rich food (which I hope will become more mainstream in the future), tells what it's like to live such a lifestyle, gives helpful tips from decades of their own experience, as well as the advantages/disadvantages of various animals one might use to add to their homestead. The pictures are beautiful and inspiring. Ben Hewitt has a very truthful way of addressing topics, and a bold sense of humor which I appreciate. For people interested in seeking real nutrition from food, homesteading and doing so in an effective way with trying to conserve use of fossil fuels, this book gives great examples of how to do that. The book also gives perspective on our current food system, as well as other social systems without being pushy or preachy, weaved into the how's and why's of the Hewitt's lifestyle and the way they run their homestead. It just makes sense. I know I'll be putting to use many of the ideas I've got from this book, and look forward to better health and nutrition. Thanks Ben and Penny Hewitt!

A practiculture way to grow nutrient-dense food, produce healthy fats, and live the good life The Nourishing Homestead tells the story of how we can create truly satisfying, permanent, nourished relationships to the land, nature, and one another. The Hewitts offer practical ways to grow nutrient-dense food on a small plot of land, and think about your farm, homestead, or home as an ecosystem. Much of what the Hewitts have come to understand and embrace about their lives of deep nourishment is informed by their particular piece of land and local community in northern Vermont, but what they have gleaned is readily transferable to any place whether you live on 4 acres, 40 acres, or in a 400-square-foot studio apartment. Ben and Penny (and their two sons) maintain copious gardens, dozens of fruit and nut trees and other perennial plantings, as well as a pick-your-own blueberry patch. In addition to these cultivated food crops, they also forage for wild edibles, process their own meat, make their own butter, and ferment, dry, and can their own vegetables. Their focus is to produce nutrient-dense foods from vibrant, mineralized soils for themselves and their immediate community. They are also committed to sharing the traditional skills that support their family, helping them be self-sufficient and thrive in these uncertain times. Much of what the Hewitts are attempting on their homestead is to

close the gaps that economic separation has created in our health, spirit, and skills. Ben uses the term *practiculture* to describe his family's work with the land—a term that encompasses the many practical life skills and philosophies they embody to create a thriving homestead, including raw-milk production, soil remediation, wildcrafting, Weston A. Price principles, bio-nutrient-dense farming, permaculture, agroforestry, traditional Vermont hill farming, and more. The *Nourishing Homestead* also includes information on deep nutrition, the importance of good fats, and integrating children into the work of a homestead. The Hewitts' story is reminiscent of *The Good Life*, by Helen and Scott Nearing, and is sure to inspire a new generation of homesteaders, or anyone seeking a simpler way of life and a deeper connection to the world.

Library Journal— "Ben and Penny Hewitt have resided on a 40-acre farm in Cabot, VT, for more than 15 years and are motivated by a desire to live their lives aligned with nature and provide most of their own food, creating from the ground up a sustainable and traditional homestead. The Hewitts chronicle the development of their sanctuary in this informative title, from the initial design of their hand-built house and revitalizing the soil for crops to foraging for wild edibles, processing their own meat, and preserving produce. The belief in nourishment in all aspects Ben calls it 'practiculture' of their lives, including dealing with modern-day stuff and raising children (two sons), creates a running thread throughout the book. Photographs and recipes all support this personal reference to dwelling closer to the land. VERDICT While it is information-dense, a conversational tone and practical tips make this text a terrific resource for homesteaders at all levels. Publishers Weekly— "This book is both the story of their bucolic life and an introductory guide to homesteading skills they've gleaned along the way. A comparison to Scott and Helen Nearings' *Living the Good Life* is inevitable, and the books are strikingly similar in their combination of personal narrative, practical advice from house-building to soil-building, and sermon-y philosophizing on the ills of contemporary mainstream culture. Unlike the Nearings, the Hewitts benefit from 21st-century developments like permaculture, rotational grazing, and nutrient-dense farming, and they incorporate livestock as an essential and beloved element of their farmstead—almost a third of the book is devoted to animal husbandry. Best of all, adorable photos of the Hewitts' two young sons lounging on cows, curing hides, and harvesting garlic leaven the earnest prose. "If *Walden* were a how-to book and updated for the twenty-first century, *The Nourishing Homestead* would be it. Whether you have land or not, are a hardcore homesteader or a suburban gardener, you'll find this book packed with countless how-to gems for personal and family liberty. The practical usefulness of this book is hard to overstate; the Hewitts have written a manual girded by direct experience alone, not ideology—a true rarity."—Ben Falk, author of *The Resilient Farm and Homestead* "A wise, poetic, and eminently practical manifesto, *The Nourishing Homestead* provides all the ingredients for a nutrient-dense life. Ben and Penny Hewitt teach us how to farm, but more importantly, why to farm. In so doing, they have seeded nothing short of an agrarian revolution."—Rowan Jacobsen, author of *American Terroir* and *Apples of Uncommon Character* "Inspiring and informative. A brilliant union of theory and practice."—Shannon Hayes, *The Radical Homemaker* "Nesting deeply into a farmstead requires skill, patience, and the right mindset. Sharing his insights after nearly two decades of this life, Ben Hewitt's success beckons others to follow. Are you intimidated by a non-corporate farmstead life? *The Nourishing Homestead* empowers anyone aspiring to such a life: yes, you can."—Joel Salatin, *Farmer and Author* *The Nourishing Homestead* is just perfect for young families embarking on a homestead way of life. Ben Hewitt's approach to (and philosophy of) homestead economics is alone worth reading the book. His views on what he defines as "real food" and "deep nutrition" might rattle the reader's brain occasionally, but all for the good. Beyond that, the rich detail of information on how to make small-scale farming work successfully rings with genuine know-how and conviction."—Gene Logsdon, author of *Gene Everlasting* About the Author Ben Hewitt lives in Cabot, Vermont with his wife, Penny, and sons Fin and Rye. Over the past 17 years, the Hewitt family has transformed an over-grazed pasture and neglected woodlot into a thriving homestead, producing an abundance of nutrient-dense food in biologically active soils. Utilizing a combination of permaculture design, wildcrafting, and small-scale regenerative agriculture they call *practiculture*, the Hewitt family raises and forages better than 90% of their calories, with a focus on pastured meats, healthy fats, and fermented vegetables. They also produce all of their lumber and firewood, and practice traditional land skills such as hide tanning and basket making. The Hewitts consult frequently on homestead-scale production and processing of nutrient-dense foods, as well as homestead planning, design, and implementation. They also run *Lazy Mill Living Arts* ([www.lazymilllivingarts.com](http://www.lazymilllivingarts.com)), which offers workshops in a wide variety of traditional land skills. Ben is the author of four other books, including *The Town That Food Saved* and *Home Grown*. He blogs at [www.benhewitt.net](http://www.benhewitt.net).