

SURVIVING SUBURBIA



You don't need all that chemical stuff to keep the toilet bowl clean. You can use white vinegar to remove stains.
—The Organic Suburbanite



THE ORGANIC SUBURBANITE

This Organic Life Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader

Joan Dye Gussow
2001; 273 pp. \$22.95
Chelsea Green

This romp through the tribulations and joys of creating sustainable living in the suburbs of New York—the antithesis of the traditional image of sustainability as rural and agricultural—is a delight.

Joan Gussow, a leading nutritionist, writes of her “decades-long journey to vegetable self-sufficiency.” Excerpts from her garden journal, her recipes, and the tale of her life’s struggles and joys are beautifully interwoven with her political perspective: local is best, grow your own food, eat in season. This story is alternately humorous and powerful, as she invites the reader into an intimate portrait of her family’s life, their adventures remodeling various homes, and ultimately her husband’s death.

This book is a beacon for anyone—urban, suburban, or rural—who is looking for deeper connections to our Earth and our own place caring for it.

—David Guyer-Stevens

“Forty years of marriage to an artist, too much of whose work remained, alas, in our collection, did nothing to stimulate my latent consumerism....

Despite my admitted parsimony, however, I’m not really cheap. I simply internalized the lesson that everything counts because everything is connected.

“I realize today as I wash the last of the just-dug carrots in the sink—cleaning up even the littlest ones because the crop was so bad this year—that what this is really about is using up, making do, cutting down, even more than it’s about eating locally. It’s about fighting to model self-restraint in a society built upon encouraging lack of it....Who but me would clean these tiny carrots? Who would try to salvage every last one against the winter that is coming and will come, and will require me to buy food in order to get through it? Does it make sense? If meditation makes sense, I suppose. If reflecting on the meaning of things makes sense. It is my meditation, my learning, my caring for each thing the earth has produced as if my life depended on it, because, of course, in a larger sense, it does.

The Organic Suburbanite An Environmentally Friendly Way to Live the American Dream

Warren Schultz
2001; 158 pp. \$16.95
Rodale Press

The Organic Suburbanite bridges the information gap between organic land management and maintaining an organic household. As an organic farmer, I am challenged to live my domestic life as principled as I must in my professional work. I have a huge library of references on many aspects of Earth stewardship. I know where to find references for nontoxic ant management and organic rose bush care. But until now I didn’t have a one-volume resource that covers solvent safety, less-toxic paint choices, and swimming pool hazards, not to mention less cancerous ways to barbeque.

Warren Schultz covers traditional and often self-polluting household management practices, and presents safe, natural, and easy alternatives, such as clearing bathroom drains with vinegar and baking soda, finding a safer antifreeze, and evaluating the pros and cons of redwood decking versus composite plastic lumber.

Taking on the myriad aspects of mundane daily life, this is a highly useful, important book. It shouldn’t be skipped over by those who think they are already familiar with organic practices. Organic Suburbanite is also a great illustration of the new direction Rodale is taking, providing a gateway for new readers to begin to understand how to move consciously in daily life, taking care and responsibility in everyday tasks—a subject dear to many Whole Earth readers.

—DGS

“ How To Polish That Throne and Tidy the Tub

You don’t need all that chemical stuff to keep the toilet bowl clean. You can use white vinegar to remove stains.

Pour 1 cup of vinegar into the toilet. Let it soak, then brush and flush. If stains remain, flush, sprinkle baking soda on stains and flush again.

Use undiluted 5-percent vinegar to clean that ugly grime between shower tiles and around tub and sink fixtures. Use a sponge or cloth to wipe down shower stalls with full-strength vinegar to clean water spots and soap scum. Let the vinegar soak in for a few minutes, then rinse with clear water.