



From the Ground Up: A Food Grower's Education in Life, Love, and the Movement That's Changing the Nation

Jeanne Nolan

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An inspiring story for everyone who's ever dreamed of growing the food they eat

When Jeanne Nolan, a teenager in search of a less materialistic, more authentic existence, left Chicago in 1987 to join a communal farm, she had no idea that her decades-long journey would lead her to the heart of a movement that is currently changing our nation's relationship to food. Now a leader in the sustainable food movement, Nolan shares her story in *From the Ground Up*, helping us understand the benefits of organic gardening—for the environment, our health, our wallets, our families, and our communities. The great news, as Nolan shows us, is that it has never been easier to grow the vegetables we eat, whether on our rooftops, in our backyards, in our school yards, or on our fire escapes.

From the Ground Up chronicles Nolan's journey as she returned seventeen years later, disillusioned with communal life, to her parents' suburban home on the North Shore as a single mother with few marketable skills. Her mother suggested she plant a vegetable garden in their yard, and it grew so abundantly that she established a small business planting organic gardens in suburban yards. She was then asked to create an organic farm for children at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, and she soon began installing gardens around the city—on a restaurant's rooftop, in school yards, and for nonprofit organizations. Not only did she realize that practically anyone anywhere could grow vegetables on a small scale but she learned a greater lesson as well: rather than turn her back on mainstream society, she could make a difference in the world. The answer she was searching for was no further than her own backyard.

In this moving and inspiring account, which combines her fascinating personal journey with the knowledge she gained along the way, Nolan helps us understand the importance of planting and eating organically—both for our health and for the environment—and provides practical tips for growing our food. With the message that we can create utopias in our very own backyards and rooftops, *From the Ground Up* can inspire each of us to reassess our relationship to the food we eat.

Praise for *From the Ground Up*

“One of the most intelligent, surprising and impressive garden memoirs I’ve read in a long time . . . radiant with hope and love.”—***The New York Times Book Review***

“The joy of *From the Ground Up* is not Nolan’s own happy ending but rather the illuminating way she applies her vision to practical problems. . . . The hardest memoir to write is the one that is honest but not self-obsessed; Nolan accomplishes this with clarity and poise.”—**Jane Smiley, *Harper’s***

“[A] rare and improbable thing: a gripping gardening memoir . . . [Nolan’s] voice is an honest and reassuring one.”—***Chicago Reader***

“[A] refreshing narrative . . . *From the Ground Up* triumphs the backyard micro-garden as it imparts lessons from Nolan’s life about family. . . . The book is a good read for foodies and lovers of a good story alike, and an inspiration to garden wherever you can find space.”—***Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star***

“*From the Ground Up* resonates powerfully with me, as a gardener, and inspires me to ‘double dig’ my garden bed. But even readers who keep their fingernails clean will benefit from this beautiful story and powerful message.”—**Sophia Siskel, president and CEO of the Chicago Botanic Garden**

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