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Breaking Through Concrete: Building An Urban Farm Revival



Synopsis

People have always grown food in urban spaces—on windowsills and sidewalks, and in backyards and neighborhood parks—but today, urban farmers are leading an environmental and social movement that transforms our national food system. To explore this agricultural renaissance, brothers David and Michael Hanson and urban farmer Edwin Marty document twelve successful urban farm programs, from an alternative school for girls in Detroit, to a backyard food swap in New Orleans, to a restaurant supply garden on a rooftop in Brooklyn. Each beautifully illustrated essay offers practical advice for budding farmers, such as composting and keeping livestock in the city, decontaminating toxic soil, even changing zoning laws.

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Customer Reviews

"There's a conviction among many sustainable agriculture advocates that the best way to move agriculture forward is to look back. The hope is to return to an exalted era in agriculture, to the kind of rural scene fit for a Rockwell painting or a Shaker Village—to food grown the old fashioned way. *Breaking Through Concrete* is not that, which is exactly the point. This ode to urban farming is not nostalgic (those are skyscrapers in the background, not silos), but instructive. It's a beautiful, gritty and very real portrait of the possibilities for the future of food." —Dan Barber, Executive Chef & Co-owner of Blue Hill
"A road map to the future of America. A blueprint of possibilities. A book full of remarkable stories of neighborhood visionaries, stories of people who grow community in their gardens. Where others see trouble, they see food and hope." —NPR's

Kitchen Sisters"Finally, a book on the full continuum of urban agriculture in America, replete with inspiring images of the people and places behind today's city-grown food. Hanson and Marty tell these stories with such admiration for their subjects you'll want to bestow hero status to city farmers." —Darrin Nordahl, author of Public Produce: The New Urban Agriculture“Breaking Through Concrete will satisfy readers hungry for a broad perspective on urban agriculture. The beautiful stories and photographs of successful programs throughout North America, combined with practical ‘how to’ guides, provides a valued resource for practitioners, advocates, scholars, and gardeners.—Laura Lawson, author of City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America

David Hanson is a freelance writer and photographer. Edwin Marty is founder of Jones Valley Urban Farm in Birmingham, Alabama. Michael Hanson is an award-winning travel photographer. Mark Winne is the author of Food Rebels, Guerrilla Gardeners and Smart-Cookin’ Mamas: Fighting Back in an Age of Industrial Agriculture.

This is a very informative book. I was not aware of what was going on in urban farming and definitely see a future for this type of food production. It won't feed the masses but does give a healthy alternative to those who want it. The various projects are all different and use local resources very well. I liked the "how tos" at the end of each chapter. Several friends who are into organic food more than I am were excited about the potential this book has to change thinking.

This is a thrilling walk through of 12 U.S urban farms, how they operate, what their goals are, and how more can imitate things that they are doing in their own city. Coupled with beautiful imagery of the grit and life that surround the noble endeavors of the North American city farmer.

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