

## **Book Review**

*Backyard Bounty* by Linda Gilkeson, published in 2018 by New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, B.C.

## **Cultivate a green thumb.....or make yours greener**

by Mary Trainer, Master Gardener Program Participant, 2022

"Oh sure, it's easy,' they told me, the newbie vegetable gardener. "You throw some seeds in the ground, water them, and in a few weeks, voila! That seemed encouraging....but, I mused, why was I, a beginner, so frustrated trying to make it work?

I enthusiastically planted potatoes.....but didn't know when to stop watering them, or when to harvest them...I sowed carrots, but mistakenly expected them to pop up within a week. I eagerly tucked nine tomato plants into my 4 x 4' raised bed....but how was I to know they'd turn into a jungle?

With every new season, I had more questions. Signing up for the Okanagan's Master Gardeners Program would help, I reasoned. And it did! Included in our resource material was *Backyard Bounty: The Complete Guide to Year-Round Organic Gardening in the Pacific Northwest (a revised and expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)*, by well-know B.C. gardener Linda Gilkeson. This 372-page treasure was meant for people like me – and you too!

It's easy to read and understand. In each of the 11 chapters, Gilkeson 'talks' to readers like friends, sharing her vast knowledge and experience in such a way that you want to get outside this very moment.

I like her basics: how to plan for a garden, how to prune, how to start seedlings, save seeds and more. Got 'critters' in your garden? Need advice on how to grow fruit, harvest and store your produce? It's all here.

"One of my goals in writing this book is to banish 'composter's guilt,'" writes Gilkeson in the chapter "Preparing the Soil." Drawing on vast experience teaching gardeners, she divulges that most of them sheepishly admit they don't turn over their compost. Fear not, she nicely consoles: successful composting is within reach, as readers will eagerly discover.

The book includes many photos, so, for example, you can see what blossom end rot looks like, or how you might drape netting over your carrots.

The chapters *A to Z Vegetables* and *A to Z Fruit* are packed with information, and guaranteed to inspire new and experienced gardeners.

Readers will appreciate the thorough index too.

Although the book is a guide to organic gardening in the Pacific Northwest, there's plenty of well-researched information and tips for all gardeners to discover and apply, including those of us in the Okanagan.

*Backyard Bounty* was published in 2018, and while readers will appreciate Gilkeson's wisdom on gardening in a changing climate four years ago, she has since posted on her website a superb presentation *Resilient Gardens in a Changing Climate* (updated in 2022) [Slide 1 \(lindagilkeson.ca\)](https://www.lindagilkeson.ca).

Gilkeson will definitely get you going and growing. Greener thumbs and backyard bounties are your rewards!

## **Sidebar**



Gilkeson has also authored *Year-round Harvest: Winter Gardening on the Coast*, and *West Coast Gardening: Natural Insect, Weed and Disease Control*. She is a regular instructor in Master Gardener Programs.