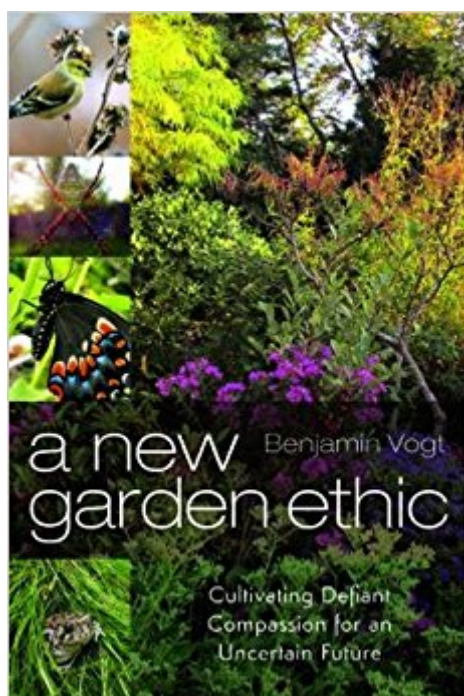


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# A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion For An Uncertain Future



## Synopsis

Our landscapes push aside wildlife and in turn diminish our genetically-programmed love for wildness. How can we get ourselves back into balance through gardens, to speak life's language and learn from other species? Plenty of books tell home gardeners and professional landscape designers how to garden sustainably, what plants to use, and what resources to explore. Yet few examine why our urban wildlife gardens matter, and not just for ourselves, but for the larger human and animal communities. Author Benjamin Vogt addresses why we need a new garden ethic, and why we urgently need wildness in our daily lives, lives sequestered in buildings surrounded by monocultures of lawn and concrete that significantly harm our physical and mental health. He examines the psychological issues around climate change and mass extinction as a way to understand how we are short circuiting our response to global crises, especially by not growing native plants in our gardens. Simply put, environmentalism is not political, it's social justice for all species marginalized today and for those facing extinction tomorrow. By thinking deeply and honestly about our built landscapes, we can create a compassionate activism that connects us more profoundly to nature and to one another. Benjamin Vogt is a writer and photographer whose work has appeared in over sixty publications. He writes a native plant garden design column at Houzz.com and speaks nationally on sustainable design and wildlife landscapes. He's the owner of Monarch Gardens, a prairie garden design firm, in Eastern Nebraska.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A New Garden Ethic is an outstanding and deeply passionate book. Benjamin Vogt makes it clear that we need to expand our notion of "garden" to include all interconnected communities of all voiceless flora and fauna. We must rewild ourselves, reconnect with all of nature, and expand our compassion footprint. As Mr. Vogt aptly puts it, "It is time for daily wildness to be our calling. It is time for defiant compassion." This book is a game changer in an epoch I like to call "the rage of inhumanity." Alienation from nature is bad for everyone involved. We all need to coexist under a broad and inclusive umbrella of compassion. (Marc Bekoff, author of *Rewilding Our Hearts* and *The Animals' Agenda: Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence in the Age of Humans*) Benjamin Vogt writes with great passion about how our increasingly urbanized societies have lost the connection with the original landscapes in which we live. Not only do our cities have a "nature deficit", but in many cases the species of plants and animals we have introduced have been imported from geographies that do not represent the original indigenous ecosystems. This should concern us deeply. Our health and well-being depend on a strong connection with the natural world, and in particular on diverse communities of plants that have adapted to local climate and soils. The call to be conscious about what we plant in our gardens, and to respect the beauty and resilience of species that have been in our communities for millennia, is clear and urgent. (Dr. Peter Robinson, CEO, David Suzuki Foundation) In *A New Garden Ethic*, Benjamin Vogt lays out a compassionate and compelling case for welcoming nature in all its messy diversity home to our yards, gardens, and domestic landscapes. This book is about so much more than gardening: Vogt shows how we can begin to heal our own wounds and those of our planet by opening ourselves to the value and beauty of the everyday wild, and the native plants that root us in place. A powerful and transformative work, written with honesty and grace. (Susan J. Tweit, plant biologist and award-winning author, speaker, teacher) Benjamin Vogt gives us more than food for thought with *A New Garden Ethic*; he offers an entire wild ecosystem for mindful action. *A New Garden Ethic* makes as persuasive a case as can be made for gardens as radical--to the roots--ways of knowing the world and reckoning with our place in it. Vogt presents gardens as troubling sanctuaries of meaning, sites of ideological conflict, political statements, expressions of faith, places of cosmic connection, and dirt-under-the-nails realities of how we co-shape our world with other species. With beautiful description and insight, he explores how gardens can create social responsibility to a more-than-human world that is constantly speaking. Even as a person who has considered and questioned my own gardening goals, prior to reading this book I never imagined gardening could be so radical. Now I know. I'll never again look at any garden, or the planet, in the same way. (Gavin Van Horn, Center for Humans and Nature and coeditor of *Wildness: Relations of People and Place*) Benjamin Vogt makes a great case

for gardening with compassion for the earth - its treasures and inhabitants. The treasure, here, are his words, and in rich prose, he reminds us that we won't find wealth and health for the future through destruction and consumption. He advises us to see our potential to be landscape stewards, to welcome wildlife, support and restore natural systems and in that way, enrich our lives as well. (Ken Druse is a garden communicator and the award-winning author/photographer of 20 books) Our landscapes push aside wildlife and in turn diminish our genetically-programmed love for wildness. How can we get ourselves back into balance through gardens, to speak life's language and learn from other species? Plenty of books tell home gardeners and professional landscape designers how to garden sustainably, what plants to use, and what resources to explore. Yet few examine why our urban wildlife gardens matter, and not just for ourselves, but for the larger human and animal communities. Author Benjamin Vogt addresses why we need a new garden ethic, and why we urgently need wildness in our daily lives - lives sequestered in buildings surrounded by monocultures of lawn and concrete that significantly harm our physical and mental health. He examines the psychological issues around climate change and mass extinction as a way to understand how we are short circuiting our response to global crises, especially by not growing native plants in our gardens. Simply put, environmentalism is not political, it's social justice for all species marginalized today and for those facing extinction tomorrow. By thinking deeply and honestly about our built landscapes, we can create a compassionate activism that connects us more profoundly to nature and to one another.

A New Garden Ethic is an outstanding and deeply passionate book. Benjamin Vogt makes it clear that we need to expand our notion of "garden" to include all interconnected communities of all voiceless flora and fauna. We must rewild ourselves, reconnect with all of nature, and expand our compassion footprint. As Mr. Vogt aptly puts it, "It is time for daily wildness to be our calling. It is time for defiant compassion." This book is a game changer in an epoch I like to call "the rage of inhumanity." Alienation from nature is bad for everyone involved. We all need to coexist under a broad and inclusive umbrella of compassion. " Marc Bekoff, author of *Rewilding Our Hearts* and *The Animals' Agenda: Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence in the Age of Humans* Benjamin Vogt writes with great passion about how our increasingly urbanized societies have lost the connection with the original landscapes in which we live. Not only do our cities have a "nature deficit", but in many cases the species of plants and animals we have introduced have been imported from geographies that do not represent the original indigenous ecosystems. This should concern us deeply. Our health and well-being depend on a strong connection with the

natural world, and in particular on diverse communities of plants that have adapted to local climate and soils. The call to be conscious about what we plant in our gardens, and to respect the beauty and resilience of species that have been in our communities for millennia, is clear and urgent. ” Dr. Peter Robinson, Chief Executive Officer, David Suzuki Foundation Our managed landscapes have forced nature out. If we garden with native plants, we can reconnect with nature providing sustenance for our souls and for wildlife. Benjamin Vogt’s thought-provoking book, *A New Garden Ethic*, examines the historical, psychological, biological, and social reasons for why we urgently need balanced and equitable gardens that respect, support, and sustain all living things. ” Heather Holm, award-winning author of *Bees and Pollinators of Native Plants* Benjamin Vogt gives us more than food for thought with *A New Garden Ethic*; he offers an entire wild ecosystem for mindful action. *A New Garden Ethic* makes as persuasive a case as can be made for gardens as radical ” to the roots ” ways of knowing the world and reckoning with our place in it. Vogt presents gardens as troubling sanctuaries of meaning, sites of ideological conflict, political statements, expressions of faith, places of cosmic connection, and dirt-under-the-nails realities of how we co-shape our world with other species. With beautiful description and insight, he explores how gardens can create social responsibility to a more-than-human world that is constantly speaking. Even as a person who has considered and questioned my own gardening goals, prior to reading this book I never imagined gardening could be so radical. Now I know. I’ll never again look at any garden, or the planet, in the same way. ” Gavin Van Horn, Center for Humans and Nature and coeditor of *Wildness: Relations of People and Place* Benjamin Vogt makes a great case for gardening with compassion for the earth ” its treasures and inhabitants. The treasure, here, are his words, and in rich prose, he reminds us that we won’t find wealth and health for the future through destruction and consumption. He advises us to see our potential to be landscape stewards, to welcome wildlife, support and restore natural systems and in that way, enrich our lives as well. ” Ken Druse is a garden communicator and the award-winning author/photographer of 20 books. Native plant gardens matter! People, pollinators, birds, soil health, air and water quality, and our future are influenced by gardens. Vogt takes readers on a thoughtful and personal journey as he explores the power of gardens. ” Jennifer Hopwood, Senior Pollinator Conservation Specialist at The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

” In *A New Garden Ethic*, Benjamin Vogt lays out a compassionate and compelling case for welcoming nature in all of its messy diversity home to our yards, gardens, and domestic landscapes. This book is about so much more than gardening: Vogt shows how we can begin to heal our own wounds and those of our planet by opening ourselves to the value and beauty of the everyday wild, and the native plants that root us in place. A

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