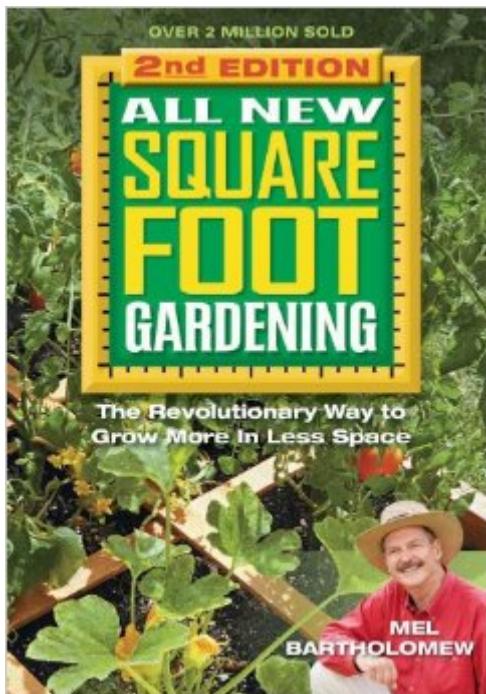


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# All New Square Foot Gardening, Second Edition: The Revolutionary Way To Grow More In Less Space



## **Synopsis**

Rapidly increasing in popularity, square foot gardening is the most practical, foolproof way to grow a home garden. That explains why author and gardening innovator Mel Bartholomew has sold more than two million books describing how to become a successful DIY square foot gardener. Now, with the publication of All New Square Foot Gardening, Second Edition, the essential guide to his unique step-by-step method has become even better. Mel developed his techniques back in the early 1980s and has been teaching them throughout the world ever since. In the process, he has made improvements and refinements and continually adapted his practices to keep pace with modern times. In this new volume, Bartholomew furthers his discussion on one of the most popular gardening trends today: vertical gardening. He also explains how you can make gardening fun for kids by teaching them the square foot method. Finally, an expanded section on pest control helps you protect your precious produce. Rich with new full-color images and updated tips for selecting materials, this beautiful new edition is perfect for brand-new gardeners as well as the millions of square foot gardeners who are already dedicated to Mel's industry-changing insights.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

I INTEND TO UPDATE THIS REVIEW FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST A YEAR... THIS WILL HOPEFULLY GIVE YOU A GOOD SNAPSHOT OF THIS ENTIRE ENDEAVOR. I'D LIKE TO WARN YOU THAT THIS REVIEW IS EXTREMELY LONG. My family and I have been wanting to plant an organic garden for years. However, we live in an area where the soil is red clay. The thought of tilling our soil was too daunting, so we put the gardening project on hold for several years. This year we decided to "go for it" and the idea of using raised garden beds made sense (due to our horrible local soil). My wife did some research and found that Mel Bartholomew's method is consistently shown to be one of the best methods around. She bought me this book to get our project off the ground. My wife had some reservations about this project. The reason being that initial set up (when done correctly) can be a bit costly. One of the key elements of this book is the innovative composition of the soil used in the garden beds. I'll quote a portion of the book that discusses the ideal soil: "There are three characteristics of a perfect growing mix. First of all, it's lightweight, so it is easy to work with and easy for plants to grow in. Next, it is nutrient rich and has all the minerals and trace elements that plants need without adding fertilizers. Finally, it holds moisture yet drains well." Mr. Bartholomew goes on to say, "After many experiments, I found three of my favorite ingredients made the perfect mix when combined in equal portions." Mr. Bartholomew's perfect soil (which he calls "Mel Mix") is made up of 1/3 vermiculite, 1/3 peat moss, and 1/3 compost that is made up of five different types of compost.

By a happy accident, I stumbled upon the 1982 copy of Square Foot Gardening. I was very pleased with his concept. However, having a full acre but not a tiller, I was even more pleased when I came across his All New Square Foot Gardening. "What an ingenious method!" thought I. No \$50 fee for a tiller and borrowing a truck and all that mess! That's until I tried to actually put it into practice. Don't get me wrong, this is a fantastic concept, and it works very well and you should get this book if you want to garden smarter not harder, but there are a few hiccups I wanted other readers to know about before they got started. For those of you who have not perused the book or are familiar with the new method, I'll sum it up for you: you build these four by four boxes--no tilling required--cover the bottom with weed blocker material, and then fill it with a particular mix that Mel says works like a dream. The boxes are easy, the method is brilliant, but the mix was a different story. 1/3 compost, 1/3 peat moss, and 1/3 vermiculite, agricultural gauge, which means chunky bits of vermiculite, not fine. Everything was going smoothly until we tried to find vermiculite. We checked all the Home Depot type megastores, the little stores, gardening supply, everything he says to do in the book, to

no avail. When we did find it at a pool supply company, we were informed we would have to pay \$125 shipping to get it here from Atlanta. Online did not prove much better because we are growing a garden to save money, not spend more. Finally, we had to settle for the fine stuff from a pool supply company which was pretty fine grade, but made the most luxurious and easy to work with soil I have ever seen.

I rarely buy books, to be honest--it's a matter of money + space - great library = few purchases. However, I have bought several copies of this book because this method is superb: it's neat, it's clean, it's extremely--and I mean extremely--easy to manage. This is--by far--the easiest, best-laid out, user-friendly books I have EVER seen, complete with charts, pictures of each step--you name it. And personally, as a frugalholic, I love a book where someone who doesn't have to worry about cost remembers that other people do--Mel writes this for the frugal at heart complete with LOTS of money-saving tips!!! This book is SO thoughtful it even carries a plan for rooftop gardening and handicap accessibility! It is well worth your money even if you choose another method like lasanga or traditional rows (but why??? My goodness--never again!!!) It calls for you to--basically--container garden in a four by four foot space and unlike the original square foot method, you do NOT have to till. Repeat: no tilling. That should cause you to one-click right there. You use a specially made soil called "Mel's Mix". Wonderful stuff. It calls for 1/3 compost, 1/3 peat moss, and 1/3 agricultural grade vermiculite in these very easy to construct 4 x 4 boxes, which are easy to cover, protect, and even make into mini-greenhouses if the need arises. The one little caution I want to give is please be aware that the vermiculite is not as easy to find as the author seems to think it is and check in your area before making any real plans. I wound up buying a fine grade from a pool supply company, and then after the fact was informed by an older gardener that I should have looked at the co-op. Start there first, and make sure you always ask if it's agricultural grade.

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