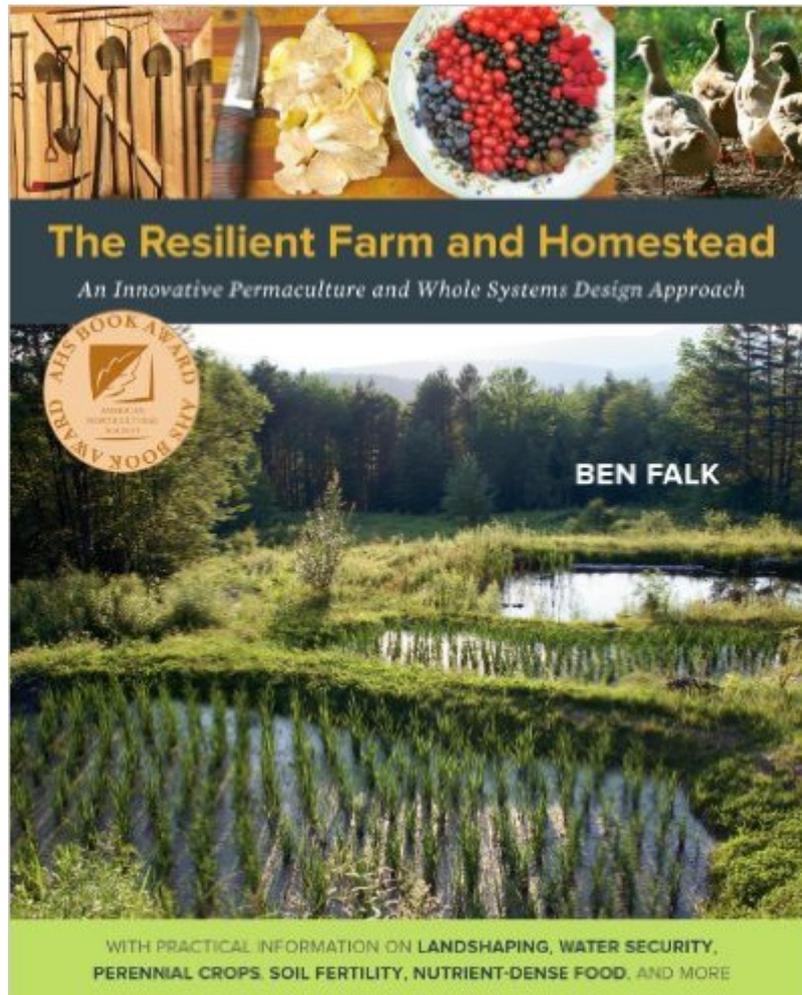


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The Resilient Farm And Homestead: An Innovative Permaculture And Whole Systems Design Approach



Synopsis

The Resilient Farm and Homestead is a manual for developing durable, beautiful, and highly functional human habitat systems fit to handle an age of rapid transition. Ben Falk is a land designer and site developer whose permaculture-research farm has drawn national attention. The site is a terraced paradise on a hillside in Vermont that would otherwise be overlooked by conventional farmers as unworthy farmland. Falk's wide array of fruit trees, rice paddies (relatively unheard of in the Northeast), ducks, nuts, and earth-inspired buildings is a hopeful image for the future of regenerative agriculture and modern homesteading. The book covers nearly every strategy Falk and his team have been testing at the Whole Systems Research Farm over the past decade, as well as experiments from other sites Falk has designed through his off-farm consulting business. The book includes detailed information on earthworks; gravity-fed water systems; species composition; the site-design process; site management; fuelwood hedge production and processing; human health and nutrient-dense production strategies; rapid topsoil formation and remineralization; agroforestry/silvopasture/grazing; ecosystem services, especially regarding flood mitigation; fertility management; human labor and social-systems aspects; tools/equipment/appropriate technology; and much more, complete with gorgeous photography and detailed design drawings. The Resilient Farm and Homestead is more than just a book of tricks and techniques for regenerative site development, but offers actual working results in living within complex farm-ecosystems based on research from the "great thinkers" in permaculture, and presents a viable home-scale model for an intentional food-producing ecosystem in cold climates, and beyond. Inspiring to would-be homesteaders everywhere, but especially for those who find themselves with "unlikely" farming land, Falk is an inspiration in what can be done by imitating natural systems, and making the most of what we have by re-imagining what's possible. A gorgeous case study for the homestead of the future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The title really says it all. For those unfamiliar with the concept, permaculture, as defined in this work, is "applied disturbance ecology". The fundamental idea being that working with the land allows an optimized native ecosystem which is productive, supports life, and requires minimal maintenance. The term was first proposed by Bill Mollison and Dave Holmgren and first published in book form in *Permaculture One: A Perennial Agricultural System for Human Settlements*, and more extensively fleshed out in *Permaculture: A Designers' Manual*, but these are the kinds of works which beg for explanation. They are full of practical advice, plans and drawings for homestead design, water usage, and crop selection, but for all their visionary qualities, Mollison and Holmgren are not as organized or easy to follow as many would like. Additionally, the practical examples, with before and after pictures, and case studies demonstrating effectiveness are minimal in those works. This, I think, is the reason for the explosion of works like Shephard's *Restoration Agriculture*, and Hemmenway's *Gaia's Garden*.

I've been gardening, homesteading, medium scale farming/ranching in three states (MO, northern CA & NM) and five properties in the past nearly 50 years, have an extensive library, subscribe to several excellent relevant publications, am constantly learning and expanding my skills & horizons. This is, hands down, one of the best, most comprehensive and HELPFUL books of which I am aware. Yes, I have and love resources from John Seymour, Gene Logsdon, Sepp Holzer, Joel Salatin, a HUGE amount of permaculture texts, gardening, homesteading, grass farming, sustainability, etc., WHICH ARE IMMEASURABLY VALUABLE, but this is right up there with the best. I enthusiastically echo several other excellent reviews, but cannot understand the scathingly negative ones. For my purposes, Ben has written a wonderfully refreshing blend of PRACTICAL and possible permaculture homesteading book from his PERSONAL experience. I've plenty of books gathering dust telling me what to do and what should work...but not many willing to admit when it doesn't (particularly the permaculture books). It is concise despite covering an impressive array of material. Not everything that "experienced" old-timers do works equally well in all situations and I

appreciate the author's honest reporting of what is or is not working historically and currently on his particular property at various stages of its development/reclamation. It often takes several years of working with a property to get a feel for what it wants and needs in terms of plants, animals, water, amendments...especially if one's experience is with vastly divergent enterprises and climatic challenges. Regardless of what we know (or think we know), one can always learn from others' successes, mistakes, ideas, experience.

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