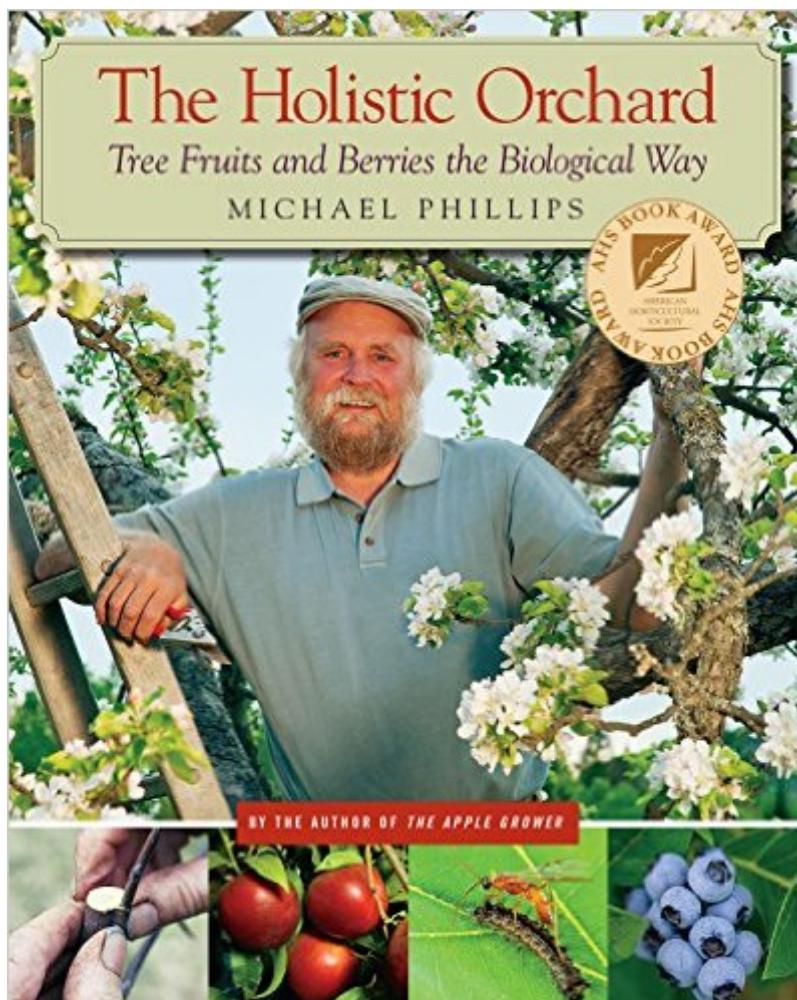


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# The Holistic Orchard: Tree Fruits And Berries The Biological Way



## Synopsis

Many people want to grow fruit on a small scale but lack the insight to be successful orchardists. Growing tree fruits and berries is something virtually anyone with space and passionate desire can do - given wise guidance and a personal commitment to observe the teachings of the trees. A holistic grower knows that producing fruit is not about manipulating nature but more importantly, fostering nature. Orcharding then becomes a fascinating adventure sure to provide your family with all sorts of mouth-watering fruit. The Holistic Orchard demystifies the basic skills everybody should know about the inner-workings of the orchard ecosystem, as well as orchard design, soil biology, and organic health management. Detailed insights on grafting, planting, pruning, and choosing the right varieties for your climate are also included, along with a step-by-step instructional calendar to guide growers through the entire orchard year. The extensive profiles of pome fruits (apples, pears, asian pears, quinces), stone fruits (cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums), and berries (raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, gooseberries, currants, and elderberries) will quickly have you savoring the prospects. Phillips completely changed the conversation about healthy orcharding with his first bestselling book, *The Apple Grower*, and now he takes that dialogue even further, drawing connections between home orcharding and permaculture; the importance of native pollinators; the world of understory plantings with shade-tolerant berry bushes and other insectary plants; detailed information on cover crops and biodiversity; and the newest research on safe, homegrown solutions to pest and disease challenges. All along the way, Phillips' expertise and enthusiasm for healthy growing shines through, as does his ability to put the usual horticultural facts into an integrated ecology perspective. This book will inspire beginners as well as provide deeper answers for experienced fruit growers looking for scientific organic approaches. Exciting times lie ahead for those who now have every reason in the world to confidently plant that very first fruit tree!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Southern California is three thousand miles and six climate zones from Northern New Hampshire, but I found Michael's book more relevant to growing apples in my area than all the garden books I've seen written for Southern California. He explains the mechanics of what constitutes soil health and plant vigor and how to build it. Of course the particulars and strategy will vary from region to region, but to quote Liberty Hyde Baily, "If a grower knows why, he or she will teach themselves how". As such it is relevant to growers outside of New England, even to my apple growing friends in Equatorial Africa, as many of the spray mixes and culture methods are available there; this is opposed to the latest pesticides which are expensive and hard to get for them. The book has the best section on pruning I've ever seen; especially how to train shoots into fruiting buds, and also how to invigorate an old tree. He reviews the whole orchard operation, from tools and ladders to picking bags and fruit storage. I would have never figured out how to get neem oil to spray otherwise and would have ended up with a real mess. The photographs and illustrations are excellent, many taken at his beautiful farm. He presents a myriad of operations and sprays for pest and disease control, and thankfully summarizes them with a calendar to help organize your year. The review of fruit culture for other stonefruits and berries is also helpful, using many of the methods utilized in the apple orchard. Commercial growers may sniff at it and grumble that these methods will never produce marketable fruit on an efficient, competitive scale to stave off foreign imports. On the other hand home and small specialty orchards may be wondering if there's any way to get apples besides spraying with expensive and potentially harmful chemicals 12 to 20 times a year. This book presents a way to do it in a much gentler fashion and is a fascinating read.

If I could give this book 10 stars, I would. This is the BEST book on holistic orcharding out there. While it's accessible, Phillips isn't afraid to get down in the dirt and go for technical biological details. A huge amount of information, but this didn't leave me wondering where to begin- he takes care of that by stepping you through the timeline and process. As soon as I'd finished reading, I started over and read it again. We all have areas that are more difficult for us than others, and some chapters will require me to study them carefully before I master the detail. I know I'll be referring to it

frequently, and as my knowledge and understanding builds, I'm certain that I'll continue to gain insights from it through the years to come. This book has heft and value! Apples are listed as one of the dirtiest conventionally produced crops. When I started researching how to care for fruit trees it was a tough slog. I respect organic farmers deeply, but for many the basic bias is the same as conventional ag, just using less toxic chemicals. The problem is that if it were as simple as substituting less toxic chemicals EVERYONE would be doing it - no farmer really wants that crap around his home and family. Spraying isn't only a chore, but a hated one. When you need to wear protective clothing it's hard to feel good about you're doing, instead it encourages a war zone mentality. We war against insects, we war against disease. After studying organic, permaculture and biodynamic farming for 5 years, I finally stumbled across Elaine Ingham's work on soil microbiology, and became convinced that the key is maximizing the health of the biological critters in the soil, and finding ways to support them correctly so that they can support my apple trees. But this is all pretty new, cutting edge science, and figuring out how to progress from that understanding to an actual maintenance and treatment program was beyond me. I had bits and pieces of the puzzle. I renamed my sprayer the "Lunch Wagon" and began spraying enhanced compost teas and raw milk, preferentially feeding the "good guys" to allow them to get the upper hand. This book goes way beyond that. Michael Phillips pulls all of the disciplines together in a comprehensive approach. He's a real farmer who needs results, not an academic or an acolyte limited by a biased preference for one system or the other. An organic farmer for many years, he's willing and able to pull from biodynamic and permaculture principals to promote the biological content of the soil. Best, he does it with an orchardists' wisdom and understanding. Most of the materials/articles/books I've seen are focused on row crops, and the needs of an orchard are very different. We all want to understand our trees, the essential understory and the microflora and fauna that make up the ecology of the orchard; but practical advice for dealing with real life problems is critical. Phillips supplies both the understanding and the practical steps to take to achieve results. If you're committed to farming sustainably or if you just want a few fruit trees without poisoning your kids and pets with spray residues, take time to give this a thoughtful read!

The best fruit growing book that I have EVER read. Even though I have a degree in Botany with a minor in Horticulture, I still learned much more from reading this book. It is also very accessible, interesting, and well organized.

This is the book I have been looking for! I have been trying to find a book about growing fruit

organically for years, but I've never been able to find just what I was looking for. I needed someone to break it all down in terms a novice can understand, explain the hows and whys, and give explicit advice. This book achieves all that plus it is entertaining to read. Incredibly inspirational AND doable. Thanks, Michael!

Absolutely loved this book, great insights, well written with beautiful photography. It immediately made me understand what had gone wrong with one of my apple trees. The information in this book helped me save the poor thing from going to the woodpile. Great activity to share and teach to growing children.

Came to this tome from "The Apple Grower". Which i found very good. Also find this book a Five Star. It is informative, education, resourceful. Good images and drawings. Appreciate artful drawings in this age of electronics. The sidebars are good and "fun" additions for me. Book travels with me from bed side to orchard. Appreciate the organic solutions to problems. Regards and good gardening.

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