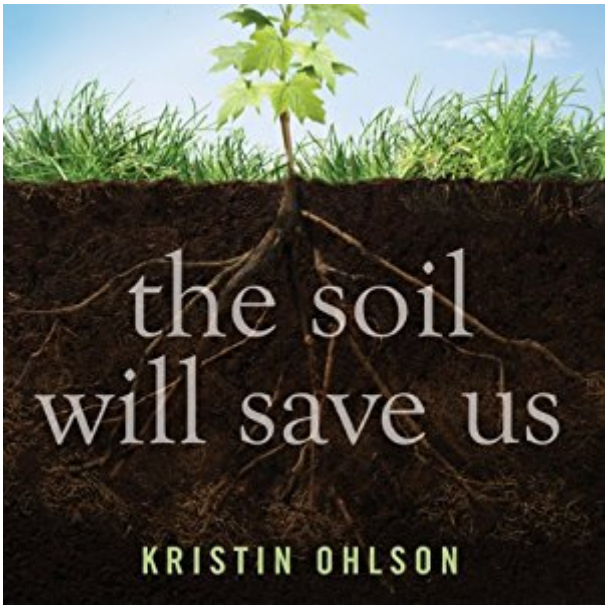
The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers, And Ranchers Are Tending The Soil To Reverse Global Warming



Synopsis

Thousands of years of poor farming and ranching practices-and, especially, modern industrial agriculture-have led to the loss of up to 80 percent of carbon from the world’s soils. That carbon is now floating in the atmosphere, and even if we stopped using fossil fuels today, it would continue warming the planet. In The Soil Will Save Us, journalist and bestselling author Kristin Ohlson makes an elegantly argued, passionate case for "our great green hope"-a way in which we can not only heal the land but also turn atmospheric carbon into beneficial soil carbon-and potentially reverse global warming. As the granddaughter of farmers and the daughter of avid gardeners, Ohlson has long had an appreciation for the soil. A chance conversation with a local chef led her to the crossroads of science, farming, food, and environmentalism and the discovery of the only significant way to remove carbon dioxide from the air-an ecological approach that tends not only to plants and animals but also to the vast population of underground microorganisms that fix carbon in the soil. Ohlson introduces the visionaries-scientists, farmers, ranchers, and landscapers-who are figuring out in the lab and on the ground how to build healthy soil, which solves myriad problems: Drought, erosion, air and water pollution, and food quality, as well as climate change. Her discoveries and vivid storytelling will revolutionize the way we think about our food, our landscapes, our plants, and our relationship to Earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I haven’t met a soil scientist that I didn’t like. They are always quirky, hopeful, and passionate about

what they study. It’s probably that childlike connection to playing in the dirt... and the realization that is plays such a significant role in life. Although Ohlson is not a soil scientist, she is not stranger to digging deep into topics.I knew that this would be a good book to read when I picked it up, and as I read on, my conviction was supported. It is a quick read that will reach a mainstream audience, beyond those familiar with Ruth Stout (Gardening Without Work) and William Bryant Logan (Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth).If you are looking to learn about "new" carbon sequestering techniques, this book is a great introduction to composting, cover crops, no-till farming, and other very modern agro-ecological science. You’ll be fascinated to learn how Gabe Brown of North Dakota (who I saw present at the 2012 Quivira Conference!) created 4-feet deep topsoil over his land by going back to the basics!This is a great book - read and pass along!

Gardening magazines have told the same story for decades: someone buys a piece of land that is mostly sand orgravel, and then the gardener brings it back to life by mixing in manure, compost and cover crops. And one day,the worms appear, a signal that the soil has become a rich and fertile, water-retaining, bed of nourishment forhealthy and robust crops, whether flowers or food.On our own small plots of land, this is an act of healing and renewal. And Kristin Ohlson’s book tells thesame story, that the vast expanses of grassland exploited for centuries, and now turned or turning into desert, can alsobe healed and renewed the same way. But to accept the stories of the heroes she shares, is a monumental paradigm shift.We have to let go of the entrenched thinking that humans know best and return to a partnership with nature.A central figure in this book is Allan Savory, who understood decades ago that grasslands do not renew themselves, but thatthe fertility that was so prized by pioneers was the result of the massive migrations of the buffalo, who crossed the prairies,stirring and fertilizing the earth where they grazed, and then moving on. Hot sun and low rainfall in the dry seasons did notmatter, because the earth had become a big sponge, retaining water through drought, renewing the water table, able to sustain life.Ohlson provides a great introduction to Savory’s work, which has now become a practice amongst enlightened farmersand ranchers around the globe. I knew about Savory, but I did not know of the other heroes--soil scientists and farmerswho have been also walking a similar path.How will the soil save us? Ohlson’s book explains why healing the soil is the number one way to sequester carbon and remove itfrom our atmosphere.Monsanto claims to hold the key to survival in the years to come, but its science could not be more wrong. Read this book andfind out why healing the soil is the only true choice for the future, because by healing the soil, there is the greatest chance thatwe can reverse climate change in our children’s lifetimes.

As a member of a small community environmental group, I found this book so very helpful in bringing others into the loop of caring for my community, which is where it starts, and helping to branch their enthusiasm for the earth's health beyond the gates of just my neighborhood. Kristin shows how it is never too late to begin to care about the integrity of our land, and gives perspective to the fact that the land has been there for us, even when we neglected it. We must consider the actions our neglect will have on our own future, and the time to do it is now.Anyone who enjoys the air they breathe and the earth beneath their feet, should pick this one up! I didn't just read it, I enjoyed it!

This is an important and very readable book. This is a HUGE component in reversing climate change, and not enough people are talking about it.ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS: PLEASE TAKE THIS NEXT, PLANET-SAVING STEP! You'll save water, as well.Read Gaia's Garden to learn how - another wonderful book.I've been an organic garden forever, but I learned a lot that I wish CSA farmers would learn about the damage tilling does, in terms of climate change and each consumer's carbon footprint.I now practice no-till gardening, an expansion of Ruth Stout's approach 50 years ago - mulch the bejeezus out of your soil, feed worms and germs. Only dig where you need to (I use a triangular hand-hoe - Ken Ho, I think it's called, which also slices weeds off paths and elsewhere, just below the surface), chop up any yard waste on the spot and add to the mulch along with any weeds, which pull easily out of the loose mulch and soil underneath.Also, Hugelkulture, where you put a log at the base of a raised be, cover it with yard waste, leaves, and soil, and plant over the whole works, or next to it. You DON'T HAVE TO WATER IT, according to many testimonies. I'm just starting to use this - I live where we have hot, dry summers and have already cut back markedly on watering with mulching and making swales of various sizes downhill from all my plantings, which I fill with leaves, bark, twigs, etc. They serve as paths and also as long-term water storage.Tilled soil, on the other hand, releases carbon into the atmosphere (which is why the soil eventually gets depleted and "less-black"), destroys mycorrhyzae, worms, and other soil life, and lets water evaporate instead of return to the aquifers and hydrate plants.

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