

Book Review

The Organic Medicinal Herb Farmer: The Ultimate Guide to Producing High-Quality Herbs on a Market Scale

By Jeff and Melanie Carpenter

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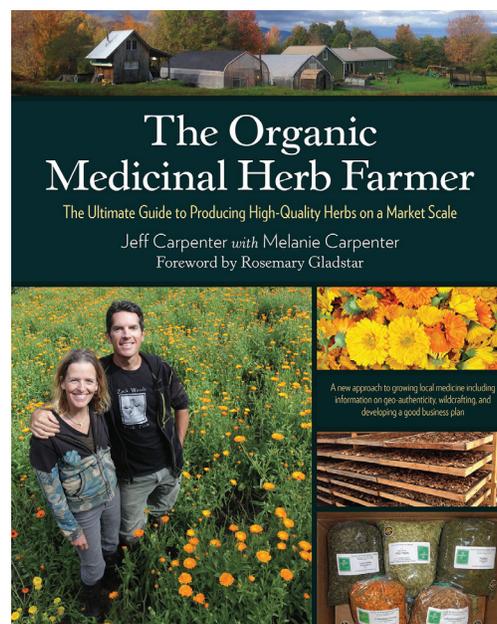
Full color throughout

Reviewed by Katheryn Langelier

Jeff and Melanie Carpenter's book, *The Organic Medicinal Herb Farmer*, has filled a void on my bookshelf. Their book consists of two parts: Part One focuses on the growing and processing of herbs to sell for market; Part Two provides a guide of herbs to consider growing for market. The appendix includes a list of "at risk" and "to watch" herbs from United Plant Savers. As a grower myself who is currently scaling up my growing production I find myself regularly referencing this book.

The book begins by discussing what to consider while searching for land and establishing a farm. The Carpenters take you through the pros and cons of leasing versus buying, acreage and production size considerations, and infrastructure layout. I think it's easy for passionate and creative business owners, myself included, to sometimes overlook the necessary aspects of running a business. Jeff and Melanie do a great job of addressing this throughout the book, stressing the importance of thinking like a business including discussions on business plans, record keeping, product marketability, managing employees, and marketing.

When scaling up from growing on less than an acre of land to 3-5 acres or more, the way you sow seeds and harvest your plants will change. The authors walk you through various issues that come with growing on



a larger scale, including re-evaluation of implements and tools, pest management, and harvesting and processing techniques.

Part Two of the book focuses on individual plants. Every plant discussed includes information on life cycle, plant description, best growing conditions, propagation, medicinal uses, harvesting specifications, potential pests and diseases, expected yields, pricing and common import sources. This important information can help you decide what you want to grow.

The Carpenters' dedication to sustainability, education on "at risk plants" and the ecological well-being of the plants they grow comes through clearly throughout the book. There is no doubt that both Melanie and Jeff have dedicated themselves to caring for the land and the plants they raise in the most conscious and respectful way they possibly can.

The Organic Medicinal Herb Farmer is a testament to the hard work and trial and error that Jeff and Melanie have experienced through their years of farming. This book offers solid skills, tools and advice that could help set any gardening novice well on the way to at least being a green thumb in their backyard. But those who are serious about farming will find this book to be invaluable. I recommend this book for anyone looking to start farming herbs or who is already a seasoned farmer looking to add herbs into their rotations. Even people who don't intend to farm but who work with medicinal plants would benefit from this book's information about the work that goes into making these plants available for use. ■