



## The Hop Grower's Handbook: The Essential Guide for Sustainable, Small-Scale Production for Home and Market

By Laura Ten Eyck, Dietrich Gehring

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**The Hop Grower's Handbook: The Essential Guide for Sustainable, Small-Scale Production for Home and Market** By Laura Ten Eyck, Dietrich Gehring

**With information on siting, planting, tending, harvesting, processing, and brewing**

It's hard to think about beer these days without thinking about hops.

The runaway craft beer market's convergence with the ever-expanding local foods movement is helping to spur a local-hops renaissance. The demand from craft brewers for local ingredients to make beer—such as hops and barley—is robust and growing. That's good news for farmers looking to diversify, but the catch is that hops have not been grown commercially in the eastern United States for nearly a century.

Today, farmers from Maine to North Carolina are working hard to respond to the craft brewers' desperate call for locally grown hops. But questions arise: How best to create hop yards—virtual forests of 18-foot poles that can be expensive to build? How to select hop varieties, and plant and tend the vines, which often take up to three years to reach full production? How to best pick, process, and price them for market? And, how best to manage the fungal diseases and insects that wiped out the eastern hop industry 100 years ago, and which are thriving in the hotter and more humid states thanks to climate change? Answers to these questions can be found in *The Hop Grower's Handbook*—the only book on the market about raising hops sustainably, on a small scale, for the commercial craft beer market in the Northeast.

Written by hop farmers and craft brewery owners Laura Ten Eyck and Dietrich Gehring, *The Hop Grower's Handbook* is a beautifully photographed and illustrated book that weaves the story of their Helderberg Hop Farm with the colorful history of New York and New England hop farming, relays horticultural information about the unusual hop plant and the mysterious resins it produces that give beer a distinctively bitter flavor, and includes an overview of the numerous native, heirloom, and modern varieties of hops and their purposes. The

authors also provide an easy-to-understand explanation of the beer-brewing process?critical for hop growers to understand in order be able to provide the high-quality product brewers want to buy?along with recipes from a few of their favorite home and micro-brewers.

The book also provides readers with detailed information on:

- Selecting, preparing, and designing a hop yard site, including irrigation;
- Tending to the hops, with details on best practices to manage weeds, insects, and diseases; and,
- Harvesting, drying, analyzing, processing, and pricing hops for market.

The overwhelming majority of books and resources devoted to hop production currently available are geared toward the Pacific Northwest's large-scale commercial growers, who use synthetic pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and fertilizers and deal with regionally specific climate, soils, weeds, and insect populations. Ten Eyck and Gehring, however, focus on farming hops sustainably. While they relay their experience about growing in a new Northeastern climate subject to the higher temperatures and volatile cycles of drought and deluge brought about by global warming, this book will be an essential resource for home-scale and small-scale commercial hops growers in all regions.

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### *Publishers Weekly-*

"Hops is a powerful medicinal plant that has been used for millennia for a variety of ailments (it is a member of the Cannabaceae family?the same family as cannabis). Recently, hops has become the go-to plant for brewing beer, according to authors Ten Eyck and Gehring, home brewing enthusiasts and owners of the Helderberg Hop Farm in upstate New York. As the authors explain, hops provides the botanical element in beer that offsets the sweet sugars and malts with that hint of bitterness, or bite, that really makes the beer. It also helps head retention and acts as a preserving agent. This book provides a great deal of information about this botanical prize, including tips for selecting the best site to grow it, optimal trellising, controlling insects, harvesting, and drying. The authors also guide would-be brewers through the pricing, packaging, and sale of hops, and include some recipes. This is an indispensable resource for the prospective microbrewer and a great study of the wonders of this little-known plant."

"While driving on rural roads in the northeastern United States, if you look carefully you may notice wild hop vines twining their way up utility poles and signposts, feral reminders of a once-thriving hop industry and a time when brewing and the production of the raw materials used in beermaking were both local endeavors. And while craft brewers helped launch the local food movement over three decades ago, the local production of brewing ingredients has lagged behind. *The Hop Grower's Handbook*, packed with research and practical advice, is an invaluable tool for reuniting regional brewers with regional growers. This delightful and useful book should be part of any brewer's or small-scale farmer's essential library."--**Peter Egelston, founder and president, Smuttynose Brewing Company**

"Hop to it?but not so fast! It's best to learn from the trials and travails of the pioneers who have somehow busted through what recent generations have considered an impasse: growing the hops for truly local beer and reviving a commercial hop industry in parts of the United States that a century ago caved to the success of growers in other, far-flung regions. A how-to guide without a narrative of successes, failures, and subsequent innovations is a recipe for disaster, not to mention boredom. Laura Ten Eyck and Dietrich Gehring lived and share the compelling story of the recent resurgence of hop production in the Northeast?a high-flying grassroots movement bringing together hopophiles, dusted-off texts of a bygone era, terroir aficionados, cutting-edge farmers, and creative extension agents. Their book elevates hops knowledge to a new level while making even the most far-reaching possibilities tenable. *Prost* to the plant ready to take over and offer yet another convivial contribution to our local food?and drink?renaissance! *Hop, hop, hoorah!*"--**Philip Ackerman-Leist, author of *Rebuilding the Foodshed***

“*The Hop Grower’s Handbook* is a fantastic source of information that will absolutely help revive the small-scale hop-growing industry of New York and other eastern states. Ten Eyck and Gehring give experienced and novice farmers alike a structured plan to efficiently start and maintain a hop yard at the most ideal scale for today’s local hop markets. Farm brewers and microbreweries should be excited, as this book will surely help make locally grown hops more readily available in the coming years. The authors and their Indian Ladder Farmstead Brewery and Cidery have continued to stay ahead of the curve on hop growing, harvesting, and processing. The hard work and time put into this book benefits all of us in the small-scale brewing industry. As a Brooklyn-based brewer, I’m eager to watch the regrowth of a product with such heritage in the state of New York, and I look forward to making more great beers brewed with more quality, locally grown hops.”--**Matt Monahan, co-founder and co-owner, Other Half Brewing Company**

“How exciting to begin to see the principles of healthy growing brought to the hop yard! This handbook richly shares wisdom on hop horticulture as well as trellising, harvesting, and drying methods. But Ten Eyck and Gehring properly take the discussion further—weaving in biodiversity, disease acumen, and compost-based nutrition. Local brews deserve local hops, creating yet another quintessential niche for a savvy grower.”--**Michael Phillips, author of *The Holistic Orchard* and coauthor of *The Herbalist’s Way***

“Beer from here! In their quest to re-establish hop growing in the Northeast, Laura Ten Eyck and Dietrich Gehring have compiled a holistic and adventuresome volume. We all benefit from their curiosity and action-research tactics. The local beer and brewery scene is heating up fast, and demand for local ingredients will continue to grow. I urge young farmers to study up and get in on the action!”--**Severine von Tscharner Fleming, director, Greenhorns**

“Given the recent explosion of hop production in the Northeast, new growers are frantically looking for information. So, welcome to *The Hop Grower’s Handbook*—the only book covering practical hops production in the region. A timely and highly valuable resource for growers!”--**Heather Darby, agronomy specialist, University of Vermont**

“If you want to grow hops, read this book through, then put it on your nightstand and read it every night to remind yourself of what’s coming next. It’s a seriously informative and surprisingly engaging book, full of resources and wise advice about all phases of growing, harvesting, and selling the buds that flavor the brew.”--**Joan Dye Gussow, author of *Growing, Older and This Organic Life***

“I have spent the last several years working with an eclectic group of new hop growers, including Ten Eyck and Gehring, in New York and other eastern states. Up until now I have had to tell them that there is no ‘cookbook’ for growing hops on a smaller, but commercial, scale. There is much information on the

Internet?but most is anecdotal, unproven, and geared toward backyard home-brew enthusiasts. Now I can point people to this well-thought-out and informative publication. This is a great step forward for the new hop industry!"--**Steve Miller, hops specialist, Cornell University**

#### About the Author

Laura Ten Eyck owns and operates Helderberg Hop Farm and Indian Ladder Farmstead Brewery and Cidery with her husband, Dietrich Gehring. The two have been growing hops and brewing beer at home for more than twenty-five years and have been working to restore local hop production in the northeast. Helderberg Hop Farm is located on 60 acres of Indian Ladder Farms, an extensive pick-your-own orchard with a local foods grocery, bakery, café, and retail gift shop in upstate New York that Ten Eyck previously managed. The orchard has been in Ten Eyck's family for four generations, and she and Gehring have lived there for more than twenty-five years, growing fruits and vegetables for sale to restaurants, gardening extensively, and raising sheep for meat and wool, dairy goats for milk, and chickens for eggs and meat. Ten Eyck is also senior manager of New York Outreach and Projects at American Farmland Trust, a nonprofit where she advocates for national and regional farmland conservation, and was previously a freelance journalist.

Laura lives on the Helderberg Hop Farm in Altamont, New York.

Dietrich Gehring is a small-scale commercial hop grower, professional photographer, home brewer, and co-owner, with Laura Ten Eyck, of Helderberg Hop Farm and Indian Ladder Farmstead Brewery and Cidery. Helderberg Hop Farm, located outside the City of Albany in upstate New York, is a 60-acre farm growing barley, hops, apples, pumpkins, and blueberries. Gehring grew up working on his grandparents' dairy farm, attended the New England School of Art and Design, and went on to pursue a career in photography while working as a photo editor for *Animals* magazine and Workman Publishing, editing the Audubon and Greenpeace photo calendar series, among others. He is a photographer of agricultural and natural landscapes, selling his work through galleries and to individuals. He has photographed all manner of farms ranging from apple orchards and vegetable and sunflower farms to cattle, sheep, goat, pig, and poultry farms. His work has been published in numerous magazines and can be viewed online at [www.dietrichgehring.com](http://www.dietrichgehring.com). Gehring's long love of hops and brewing began decades ago, when he was sales manager for Newman's Albany Brewing Company, one of the first craft breweries in the United States. It was here that he learned how to brew beer and market it locally. He has worked in Boston, Massachusetts, and New York's Capital Region selling high-end imported and domestic beers, as well as in specialty stores in the Boston area offering a wide selection of craft beer.

Dietrich lives on the Helderberg Hop Farm in Altamont, New York.

#### Users Review

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##### Catherine Rubio:

The book *The Hop Grower's Handbook: The Essential Guide for Sustainable, Small-Scale Production for Home and Market* gives you the sense of being enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable considerably more increase. Book can being your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big

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