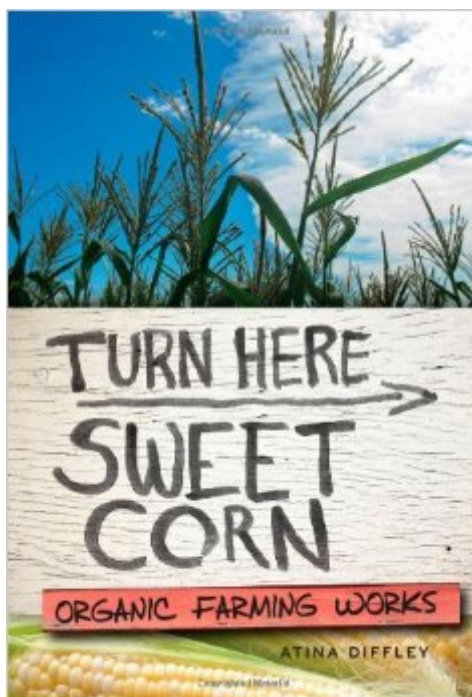


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Turn Here Sweet Corn: Organic Farming Works



Synopsis

When the hail starts to fall, Atina Diffley doesn't compare it to golf balls. She's a farmer. It's as big as a B-size potato. As her bombarded land turns white, she and her husband Martin huddle under a blanket and reminisce: the one-hundred-mile-per-hour winds; the eleven-inch rainfall (that broccoli turned out gorgeous); the hail disaster of 1977. The romance of farming washed away a long time ago, but the love? Never. In telling her story of working the land, coaxing good food from the fertile soil, Atina Diffley reminds us of an ultimate truth: we live in relationships with the earth, plants and animals, families and communities. A memoir of making these essential relationships work in the face of challenges as natural as weather and as unnatural as corporate politics, her book is a firsthand history of getting in at the ground level of organic farming. One of the first certified organic produce farms in the Midwest, the Diffleys' Gardens of Eagan helped to usher in a new kind of green revolution in the heart of America's farmland, supplying their roadside stand and a growing number of local food co-ops. This is a story of a world transformed and reclaimed one square acre at a time. And yet, after surviving punishing storms and the devastating loss of fifth-generation Diffley family land to suburban development, the Diffleys faced the ultimate challenge: the threat of eminent domain for a crude oil pipeline proposed by one of the largest privately owned companies in the world, notorious polluters Koch Industries. As Atina Diffley tells her David-versus-Goliath tale, she gives readers everything from expert instruction in organic farming to an entrepreneur's manual on how to grow a business to a legal thriller about battling corporate arrogance to a love story about a single mother falling for a good, big-hearted man.

Book Information

Hardcover: 344 pages

Publisher: Univ Of Minnesota Press; First Edition edition (April 4, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0816677719

ISBN-13: 978-0816677719

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (40 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,000,109 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #111 in Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Humor > Rural Life #535 in Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences >

Customer Reviews

The depth and breadth of Atina Diffley's memoir lays bare a dynamic, multi-dimensional landscape of life on the Diffley family farm. But this organic farm is not all peace and tranquility, and this story has cultural tentacles that stretch far beyond the Diffley's personal story. The family is swept into the trajectory and momentum of nature's supplantation by burgeoning development from the city. Education for the Diffley's is not about pontificating the destruction of ecosystems or the cultural phenomenon of displacement. Rather, they are living in the middle of it, reverent to the inter-dependent communities of eco-systems, soil compositions, and multi-generational farm families. This story is a first person account of intimate relationships with fellow creatures that are literally bulldozed away. The telling is not sentimental or resentful. Rather Atina's voice is matter-of-fact and hopeful, speaking with a compassionate tone that becomes increasingly clear and powerful. Atina Diffley's memoir is a weave of raw and wholesome truth-telling at it's best. There is always a rumbling under foot that makes this book hard to put down. Atina has discovered a rare and soulful voice of witnessing and foreshadowing our collective survival. She reclaims power and place for our natural world--honoring trillions of species, including humans--as she compassionately speaks and educates toward conscious, mutually sustainable development. "Turn Here Sweet Corn" is a personal story that masterfully articulates the grief inherent in forcible transplantation, and the uprooting of our deep soul connection with the earth. But you don't have to be an organic farmer or consumer (or even sympathetic to the cause) to laugh and cry your way through Atina's story.

Author Diffley isn't just an author or an organic farmer; she certainly isn't just a community-wired advocate for farmer's rights and she sure isn't just a grandma--she's all of these things and a whole bushel-full more. I think perhaps the best way to describe Turn Here Sweet Corn is to consider it in terms of a wind--a wind with all the power to knock you over and, at the same time, caress you with warmth. Everyone should experience this book; the writing will blow you away. Atina, changed her name after caring for an amazing woman who played a crucial role in the force that's Atina Diffley. Though now past away, Atina learned from her aged companion how to find strength in even the toughest times. Author Diffley struggled through a difficult marriage but evolved into a loving partnership with one of the first people to actually see her; Martin Diffley. Through their relationship with not only the land, but all that it can provide, they created a world around a single belief; grow it

and they will come. Welcome to Garden's of Eagan. Like all gardens there are weeds--weeds with clever roots that can take over in a single season. But if you create a plan and embrace the weeds, anything is possible. Everything. Turn Here Sweet Corn is not just a memoir, it's a thriller, it's a romance and boy is it packed with mystery. And near the end (which is really the beginning) there's a twist that will give you something we all yearn for; hope. "In the morning, when I awake, my first thought is: You can soar. Always remember this." One of the many messages woven throughout Turn Here Sweet Corn is that organic farming is work. Endless, exhausting, consuming, work.

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