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## THINK LIKE A FARMER

In our experience, the most successful growers have a positive way of thinking about their gardens. Although intensive food production is challenging, these growers understand that they are most successful when they find joy in the process itself. They do not allow the inevitable struggles to tarnish their experiences. After all, intensive food production is hard work. It is at times exhausting and frustrating, and at times exhilarating and joyful. Crops will fail, seasons will be unexpectedly hot or cold, and more insects than you imagined possible will eventually cross your path.

To be successful and to improve their growing systems year after year, high-yield gardeners relish the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Likewise, they actively study the vagaries of nature. Like farmers, they understand that learning how their crops grow and how the plants respond to their care is vital to the success of their livelihood and well-being. It is embracing this interaction and the give-and-take with nature that makes food production so captivating and so rewarding. A successful grower recognizes that highs and lows are part of the agreement to work with nature.

While most everyone would prefer to spend less time weeding and more time harvesting crops that are free from insect damage, it's essential to seek creative ways of overcoming the challenges that weeds, pests, and weather present, and to find joy in the simple pleasure of doing a little better each season.

## The Art of High-Yield Gardening

You might say that production gardeners are a bit like artists; the soil is their canvas, plants are their medium, and each onion, apple, and head of lettuce is a work of art. Their work is a constant presence in everything they do.

Like artists, many growers find that their passion increases over time. As you become intimately familiar with your crops and your soil, your techniques will become second nature and you will truly get lost in your work. The most successful growers are those who continue to find new inspiration in their crops and systems. For some, experimenting with new varieties every year helps keep them engaged and motivated. For others, achieving a continual harvest of salad greens or breeding their own variety of winter squash feeds the passion.

Anyone can become an artist in their garden. No matter the size of your plot, you'll find that as your knowledge and experience grow, so will your yields and your passion for food production.

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