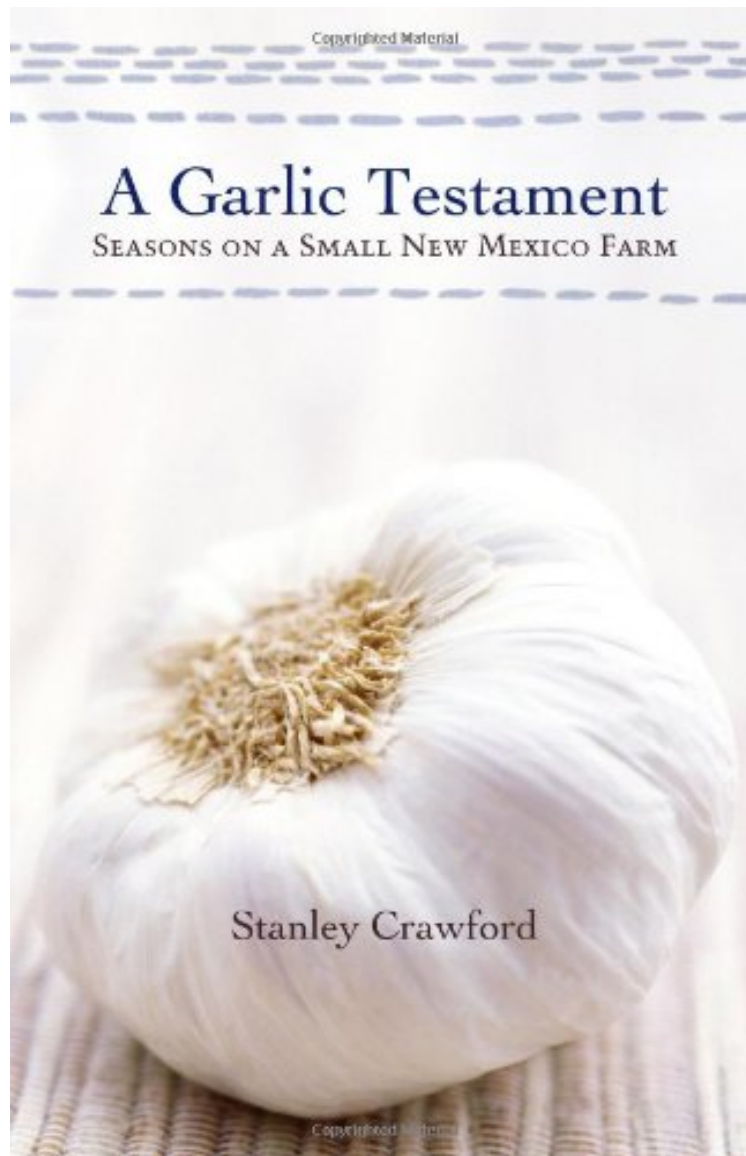


(Free and download) A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm

A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm

Stanley Crawford

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Stanley Crawford : A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. We have chosen to make a living, not endure one. By John P. Jones III Thanks to a fellow reviewer, who has purchased some garlic from Stanley Crawford at the Farmers Market in Santa

Fe, I was introduced to his work. At a lovely second-hand bookstore in Santa Fe, I purchased, and would go on to read and review *Mayordomo: Chronicle of an Acequia in Northern New Mexico*, concerning Crawford's time as the ditch boss, maintaining the acequia in a small northern New Mexico valley. But that reading was over five years ago. As I have grown increasingly obsessed with eating garlic even raw garlic which Crawford eschews I felt the read of his testimony on same long overdue. Crawford grew up in southern California before the endless housing tracts took it over, would graduate from the University of Chicago, find the love of his life, an Australian, Rose Mary, while writing a novel on Crete and decided, like a few other people, to seek refuge from the turmoil of the 60s, and its aftermath, including the Vietnam War, in one of the remote valleys of Northern New Mexico in the early 1970s. Unlike so many others who flitted into these valleys, for the taste of another side of America, the Crawfords stuck, and made a home, literally with their own hands, as well as a passable living, all with the help of others. Their home is in Dixon, NM, which is roughly half way between Taos and Santa Fe, and is 6,500 ft. above sea level. About a third of the book simply concerns the natural world in which the earth is worked and re-worked, changed, transformed, and renewed throughout the seasons. In terms of nature writing, I would place Crawford alongside Joseph Wood Krutch who would also write of the American Southwest in *The Desert Year* (Sightline Books). Of course, Crawford spent many more than a single year here, coming up with observations such as: Last of all return the nighthawks, who several stories above the bats will sieve the higher atmosphere of its fine spray of insect protein, an airborne plankton tumbled up from the ground by slow breakers of cool air rolling down each evening from the higher mountains. He also devotes an entire chapter to a magpie. Another third of the book is about the cultivation and selling of garlic (along with onions and flowers, in the honorable mention category.) If one thinks peeling a garlic bulb is a bit of work, Crawford chronicles where the real work is. Often, as one of the chapter titles states, third world backbreaking work, particularly for someone who is 63, as he is. Garlic is planted in the fall. There are several different types. Unlike most crops, 10-12% of the crop must be held back as seed for the next harvest. In several ways, garlic is countercyclical to other crops, growing when they do not. Crawford is quite forthright about a key aspect of his venture: one might have fantasies about a life of independence and self-sufficiency when retreating to a remote NM valley, but the successful cultivation of garlic requires numerous other people helping along. One of the best things I think he does is provide some ever-so-elusive meaningful summer jobs, often the first they will ever have, to young teenagers. And his parents, in their 80s, a fit father, a mother blinded by a stroke, find additional meaning to their lives by assisting him. The final third concerns his wonderful ruminations about a life along a path less traveled. He claims membership, along with one other, in the alt-alumni club of the University of Chicago. No Nobel Prizes in Physics et al. Rather a life that involves walking through the fields in winter, contemplating the real meaning of wealth. Probably a much more important consideration than finding God's particle, the Higgs boson. Consider: This is wealth that has not yet been driven through the filters of abstraction and stripped of its sensual and material qualities. Or, on the nature of his work: an invitation to usefulness that nothing else so forthrightly poses. Or, I do by choice what much of the rest of the world must do by dire, brutal necessity. And where the story all began, at least one history changing story, Los Alamos, that very Anglo town, where people go up to, as opposed to the other towns that people go to is also a weekly market destination for the Crawfords. Most of the farmers who sell in Los Alamos are Hispanic. Most of the customers are Anglo women. As an Anglo male with a university education, I'm on the wrong side of the wooden planks and apple boxes that make up my stand. But my customers have decided I'm all right. In fact, I'm not. Crawford's all right by me, particularly the not part. 6-stars. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Garlic keeps on giving By Colin McPhillamy What might you do for a day job if you write novels? Grow garlic of course. If there is poetry in garlic the author discovers it here. His responses and explorations of the soil the sunlight, the air and the irrigated water, and the way that garlic likes to grow, make this account a compelling read. The book takes us through the planting, growing, harvesting, and to-market cycle, also telling the story of years and how the author's understanding has developed and matured. Stanley Crawford simultaneously intrigues us with an almost transcendent appreciation of the natural processes, and challenges us with perceptive commentary on the bigger agribusiness-political complex. A delightful book, detailing a huge achievement. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Easy reading By GBI live in the busy world of a large city and work 40 hrs/wk. So, one of the things I look for in a book is its ability to take me to another time and place, gently and seamlessly. And I got that in this book. I got blue skies, sunny days and cool evenings in a laid back farming community in NM, got to meet locals, characters, and learned a lot about garlic. I've always loved garlic (doesn't everyone?) and, even if you know quite a bit about its properties, folklore, and growing it, I'd be very surprised if you didn't still learn something new about it. A very good read.

From his New Mexico mountain home, award-winning author Stanley Crawford writes about growing garlic and selling it. "To dream a garden and then to plant it is an act of independence and even defiance to the greater world." -- Stan Crawford

.com Unless you're a vampire, you know that garlic is a critical element in good eating. For most people, this knowledge comes from happy experience with garlic-laced cuisines (and what notable culinary tradition is without

it?), not book learning, and not working the fields to produce the aromatic bulb. For Stanley Crawford, the love of garlic comes from both scientific study and three decades of labor in the field to produce the exquisite bulbs, knowing full well that "if you grow good garlic people will love you for it." Crawford deserves similar affection for *Garlic Testament*, a lyrical memoir of his work as a farmer in northern New Mexico, one that combines autobiography, gardening hints, and a quiet philosophy of life. "Farming and writing are both labors ... conducted on flat planes in relative solitude," he writes, but in this fine book--which compares well with the work of fellow farmer-writer Wendell Berry--Crawford opens his gate and invites our company. --Gregory McNamee *From Publishers Weekly* More than 20 years ago, Crawford (*Mayordomo*) and his wife Rosemary settled in a mountain valley an hour outside of Santa Fe. They made the adobe bricks with which they built a house and started both to raise a family and to work what is now a four-acre farm. While the author writes that they "were a little too old to be hippies, though we tried," the couple's turning to the land was a thoughtful, considered move. This elegant and unsentimental account of how Crawford learned to grow his principal crop, garlic, and what that process has revealed about himself and his place in the world is probing. An eloquent paean to physical effort and to the land he cares for and depends on, his chronicle is a treasure trove of planting lore, from the autumn planting of garlic cloves to the winter-long "hibernation," the sighting of first shoots in spring, the formation of seed stalks in early summer, the harvesting soon after, and the less satisfying process, to him, of selling his produce, including statice and squash, at farmers' markets in Santa Fe and Los Alamos. Crawford's keen observations, penned in well-hewn prose, are as reflectively nurtured and pungently powerful as his crop of choice. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. *From The New Yorker* Superb, quiet. . . . a plainspoken wisdom.