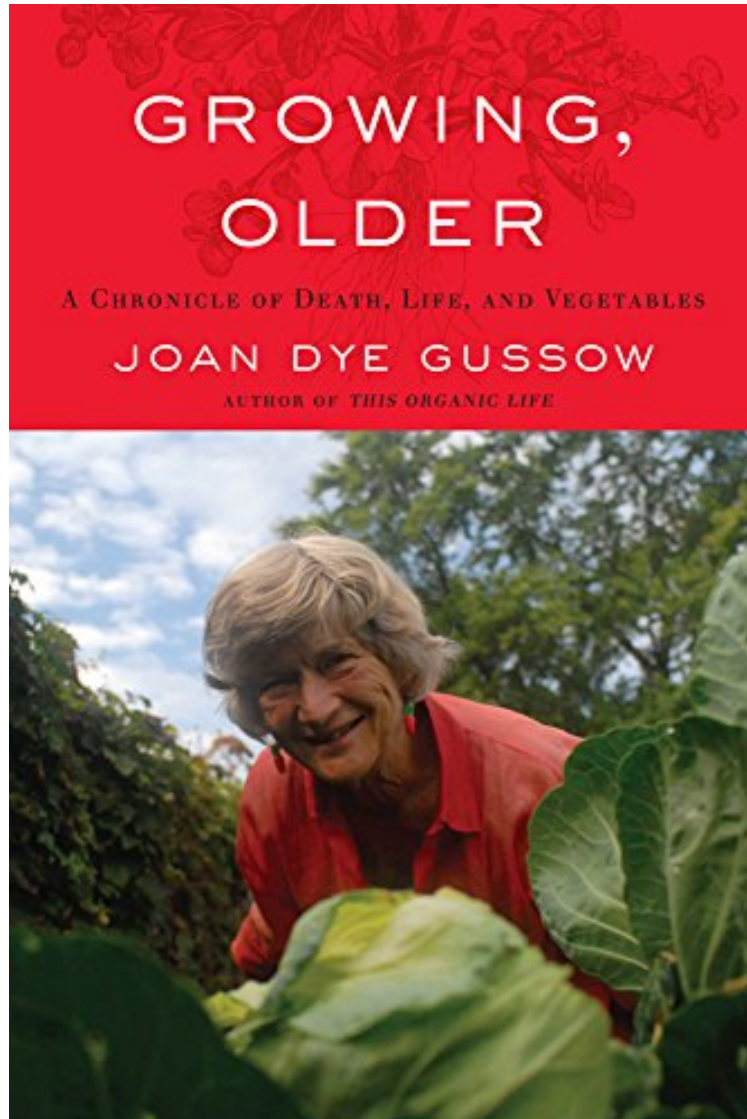


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## Growing, Older: A Chronicle of Death, Life, and Vegetables

*Joan Dye Gussow*

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**Joan Dye Gussow : Growing, Older: A Chronicle of Death, Life, and Vegetables** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Growing, Older: A Chronicle of Death, Life, and Vegetables:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Growing, OlderBy L. McIntoshJoan Gussow is a model for anyone facing the "third trimester of life", as she calls her expected final 30 years. As outlined in her previous book This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader (it helps to have read it first, but is not necessary), she

continues to eat fruits and vegetables that only she has grown in her home garden, despite continued assaults from the Hudson River and climate change. Her persistence is admirable, although it does occur to the reader that perhaps her homesite was not well-chosen. There is less nuts-and-bolts discussion of how she accomplishes her feat of self-sufficiency in this 9th decade of her life, and a bit more philosophical musing on the current state of the world. She continues to express frustration and dread at what western agricultural technology is doing to food and climate, is angered at the focus of American medicine on cosmetic surgery and its neglect of devastating diseases because they are less profitable, and seems frankly to be glad she probably won't be around to experience the worst of it. This is a sobering book, but the parts detailing how Gussow continues to overcome the obstacles thrown in her way by nature are uplifting; as a gardener I was inspired by her determination and joy in her successes with vegetables old and new each year. As a recent convert to mostly local foods myself, I definitely enjoy what I eat more than before, but Joan's book makes me aware that the Slow Food movement and other attempts to mitigate the effects of Big Ag may be too little, too late. After putting the book down, I felt a mixture of inspiration and sadness which after a week or so has evolved into increased determination to promote local, sustainable agriculture and fight the spread of mono-cropping and GE/GM food.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful book  
By April Hughes  
I really enjoyed this book from cover to cover. Joan was open and honest about her feelings and her life and I highly admire that. I know a lot of women who are "surprised" when their husbands pass away that they aren't devastated. It's not a slam against their marriage or against the man, it's just that they have a full life of their own and life goes on. Joan does say she misses her husband, but she was just surprised that she was ok by herself. I think I will be also if and when that day comes. I enjoyed the journal like aspect of the book. I also journal. I LOVE gardening and she talks of her challenges but how despite that, it is her passion. I felt a strong connection with Joan. I am totally glad that I bought this book and I recommend it to anyone who loves gardening and living a eco-conscious life.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Carol Wilmot  
Enjoyed the book

Michael Pollan calls her one of his food heroes. Barbara Kingsolver credits her with shaping the history and politics of food in the United States. And countless others who have vied for a food revolution, pushed organics, and reawakened Americans to growing their own food and eating locally consider her both teacher and muse. Joan Gussow has influenced thousands through her books, *This Organic Life* and *The Feeding Web*, her lectures, and the simple fact that she lives what she preaches. Now in her eighties, she stops once more to pass along some wisdom-surprising, inspiring, and controversial-via the pen. Gussow's memoir *Growing, Older* begins when she loses her husband of 40 years to cancer and, two weeks later, finds herself skipping down the street-much to her alarm. Why wasn't she grieving in all the normal ways? With humor and wit, she explains how she stopped worrying about why she was smiling and went on worrying, instead, and as she always has, about the possibility that the world around her was headed off a cliff. But hers is not a tale, or message, of gloom. Rather it is an affirmation of a life's work-and work in general. Lacking a partner's assistance, Gussow continued the hard labor of growing her own year-round diet. She dealt single-handedly with a rising tidal river that regularly drowned her garden, with muskrat interlopers, broken appliances, bodily decay, and river trash-all the while bucking popular notions of how "an elderly widowed woman" ought to behave. Scattered throughout are urgent suggestions about what growing older on a changing planet will call on all of us to do: learn self-reliance and self-restraint, yield graciously if not always happily to necessity, and-since there is no other choice-come to terms with the insistentencies of the natural world. Gussow delivers another literary gem-one that women curious about aging, gardeners curious about contending with increasingly intense weather, or environmentalists curious about the future will embrace.

From Booklist  
Gussow has written and taught extensively on food and politics (*This Organic Life*, 2001), but here she turns to a more personal subject, the period following the death of her husband of 40 years. She assumed (as did others) that she would be grief-stricken, yet she found herself able to move into the next period of life with grace and anticipation. This is due in no small part to long-term differences the two experienced (although they seem minor), and to her rededication to gardening. It would be incorrect to classify this as a guide to plant care or landscape design, however, as Gussow's view on life and living is far too broad. She writes about removing pests from the yard and then shifts gears to discuss national food policy, share recipes for zucchini, and reminisce about her son and butterflies. She rails against humanity's interest only in itself, yet expresses pride in her ability to still heft bags of soil and rocks. Gussow is an octogenarian who will not go gently in any direction, and certainly won't be ignored.

--Colleen Mondor  
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against humanity's interest only in itself, yet expresses pride in her ability to still heft bags of soil and rocks. Gussow is an octogenarian who will not go gently in any direction, and certainly won't be ignored. Library Journal- Gussow (Mary Swartz Rose Professor Emerita former chair, nutrition dept., Columbia Univ. Teachers Coll.; This Organic Life invites readers into her life as a widow through journal entries spanning almost ten years. What's fascinating is that she found herself not lonely but content and fulfilled through her extensive garden and the animals that visited. She shares lessons of self-reliance and self-control in potatoes' tendency to stay put, bees' role in the food chain, and her own tenacity to cherish nature. Her compilation of life experiences would primarily interest gardeners or environmentalists. Gussow (Mary Swartz Rose Professor Emerita former chair, nutrition dept., Columbia Univ. Teachers Coll.; "This Organic Life" invites readers into her life as a widow through journal entries spanning almost ten years. What's fascinating is that she found herself not lonely but content and fulfilled through her extensive garden and the animals that visited. She shares lessons of self-reliance and self-control in potatoes' tendency to stay put, bees' role in the food chain, and her own tenacity to cherish nature. Her compilation of life experiences would primarily interest gardeners or environmentalists. Copyright 2010 Reed Business Information. - See more at: [http://www.chelseagreen.com/bookstore/item/growing\\_older:paperback/reviews#sthash.DWr7ABY7.dpuf](http://www.chelseagreen.com/bookstore/item/growing_older:paperback/reviews#sthash.DWr7ABY7.dpuf)