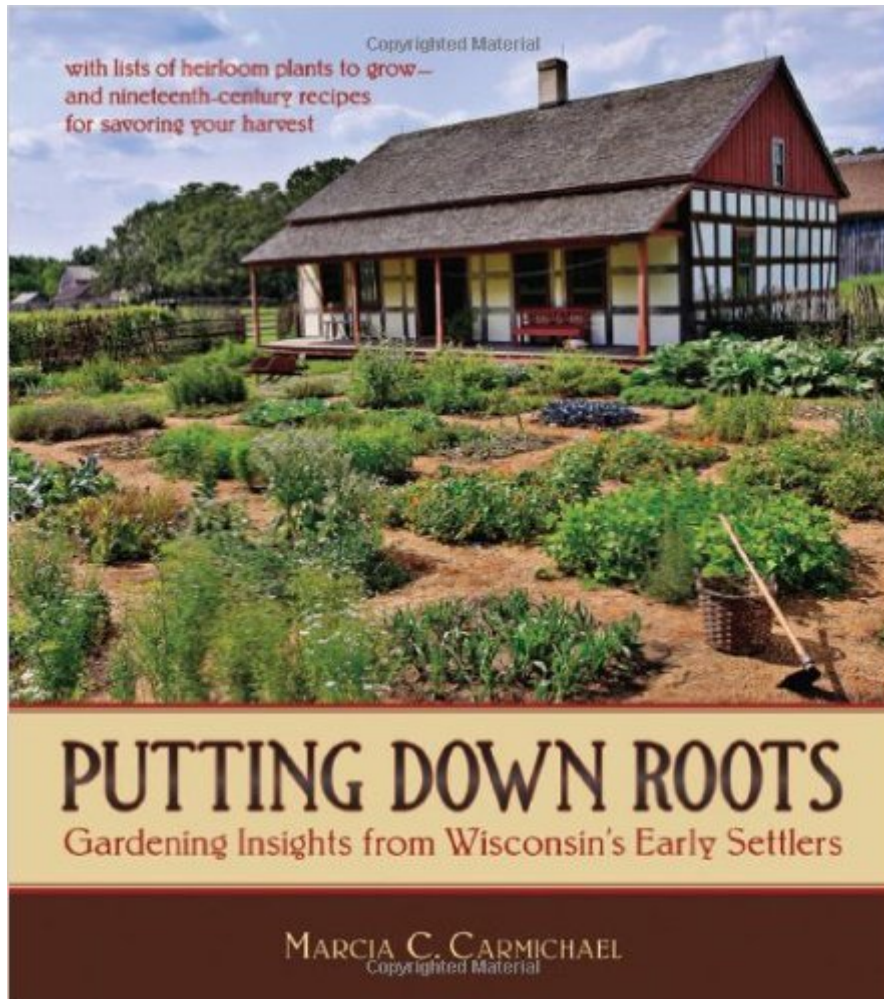


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# Putting Down Roots: Gardening Insights From Wisconsin's Early Settlers



## Synopsis

Culture and history can be passed from one generation to the next through the food we eat, the vegetables and fruits we plant and harvest, and the fragrant flowers and herbs that enliven our gardens. The plants our ancestors grew tell stories about their way of life. Wisconsin's nineteenth-century settlers arrived in the New World in search of new opportunities and the chance to create a new life. These European immigrants and Yankee settlers brought their traditional foodways with them—their family recipes and the seeds, roots, and slips of cherished plants—to serve as comfort food, in the truest sense. This part of our collective history comes alive at Old World Wisconsin's re-created nineteenth-century heirloom gardens. In *Putting Down Roots*, historical gardener Marcia C. Carmichael guides us through these gardens, sharing insights on why the owners of the original houses—be they Yankee settlers, German, Norwegian, Irish, Danish, Polish, or Finnish immigrants—planted and harvested what they did. She shares timeless lessons with today's gardeners and cooks about planting trends and practices, garden tools used by early settlers, popular plant varieties, and favorite flavors of Wisconsin's early settlers, including recipes for such classics as Irish soda bread, pierogi, and Norwegian rhubarb custard. *Putting Down Roots* celebrates the diversity and rich ethnic settlement of Wisconsin. It's also a story of holding fast to one's traditions and adapting to new ways that nourished one's family so they could flourish in their new surroundings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an astoundingly good book. Anyone who is a gardener or cook in the middle of America (and anyone else with an appropriate climate or memories to match) will be engaged with this lively, deeply researched study of 19th century immigration to Wisconsin. The author looks at this immigration process through the lenses of the immigrants' gardening practices, the tools and plants they used, and the food they prepared with the crops they grew. The book is lavishly and beautifully illustrated. It is historical, but it is history with life breathed into it. I've read a lot of cultural and social history and this book is near the top of any list that I would create. The appeal of this book spreads far beyond Wisconsin -- anyone who loves plants or is descended from European immigrants or who cooks in an American style will be enchanted. So far, I've purchased three copies for gifts!!!

Marcia Carmichael's book is well worth your time to read it. To accompany the text she includes many stunning images, most in color, from the gardens of Old World Wisconsin located in Eagle, Wisconsin, a living museum of nineteenth century houses and gardens. Carmichael is the Historic Gardens Coordinator at the 576-acre Old World Wisconsin so she writes from her extensive research and gardening experience. With clear writing the book provides the reader an opportunity to see how ethnic gardening developed in the nineteenth century with various groups that came to live and farm in Wisconsin, including Yankees, Germans, Irish, Finnish, and Polish. They each came with seeds and plants from their home area, but by 1880 they were gardening with the standards of mainstream America, like planting vegetables in neat rows, rather than in beds. Like the rest of the country, mass advertising of goods and services impacted gardening as it did everything else for the home. The kitchen garden was moved to the back of the house, and the home grounds featured a lawn that you could cut with the popular new lawnmower. The recipes Carmichael includes at the end of each chapter are an extra feature in the book. Each ethnic group used the herbs and vegetables from the garden to cook a favorite salad, meat, or dessert. The recipes look like fun because she has written them so simply with few ingredients and clear instructions. Soon I will be sure to try one that I caught my attention, the Danish sugar-browned potatoes. The book makes me want to visit Old World Wisconsin the next time I am back home. *Putting Down Roots* is a book that would make a fabulous Christmas gift for any gardener.

Wow! Marcia really makes the settlers come alive. *Putting Down Roots* is an amazing accomplishment: a pictorial presentation of realistic life in Wisconsin in the 1800s; a most readable and entertaining description of the circumstances of ethnic groups along with their recipes; an extensive bibliography.

Love history? Love cooking? This book has it all. You learn what our early immigrants to Wisconsin planted and ate. There are wonderful photographs of the ethnic areas at Old World Wisconsin. The staff there does an excellent job of keeping things "real" and true to the time period. The garden on the cover is as pretty as it is functional. At the back of the book you will find a number of original pioneer recipes you can try.

Read this book from cover to cover. Then after reading it, I had go to old world to photograph the gardens myself. Each nationality in the book includes recipes. I so far have tried those from my own background. The vegetable soup in the Finnish section was very good and the Onion pie from the German section was also tasty, as well as blindes Huhn. Delicious. If you like history, gardening and cooking from the garden, you will enjoy this book.

Makes good reading; history helps understanding of various ancestor's gardens and recipes. Colored photos are fun. Suggest makes gifts for other gardeners and family.

Great book, interesting format. Lots of fun details. I know Old World Wisconsin and the author also!!

I found this to be interesting and very nicely laid out. Liked the inclusion of the recipes too. Wish there was some info on early Dutch gardens and life because that is my heritage but it was a great read. I also enjoyed it more because I've been to Old World Wisconsin and recognized several of the photos.

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