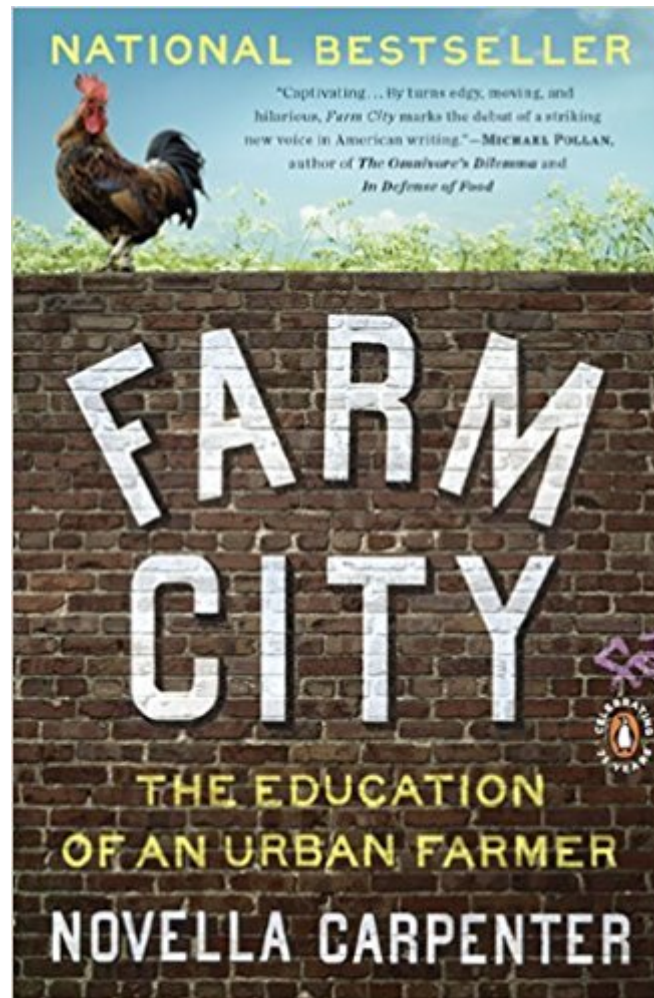




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# Farm City: The Education Of An Urban Farmer



## Synopsis

• (Dwight Garner)"Captivating... By turns edgy, moving, and hilarious, *Farm City* marks the debut of a striking new voice in American writing."  
--Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Food Rules*  
When Novella Carpenter--captivated by the idea of backyard self-sufficiency as the daughter of two back-to-the-earth hippies--moves to a ramshackle house in inner-city Oakland and discovers a weed-choked, garbage-strewn abandoned lot next door, she closes her eyes and pictures heirloom tomatoes, a beehive, and a chicken coop. What starts out as a few egg-laying chickens leads to turkeys, geese, and ducks. And not long after, along came two 300-pound pigs. And no, these charming and eccentric animals aren't pets. Novella is raising these animals for dinner. An unforgettably charming memoir, full of hilarious moments, fascinating farmer's tips, and a great deal of heart, *Farm City* offers a beautiful meditation on what we give up to live the way we do today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this utterly enchanting book, food writer Carpenter chronicles with grace and generosity her experiences as an urban farmer. With her boyfriend Bill's help, her squatter's vegetable garden in one of the worst parts of the Bay Area evolved into further adventures in bee and poultry keeping in the desire for such staples as home-harvested honey, eggs and home-raised meat. The built-in difficulties also required dealing with the expected noise and mess as well as interference both human and animal. When one turkey survived to see, so to speak, its way to the

Thanksgiving table, the success spurred Carpenter to rabbitry and a monthlong plan to eat from her own garden. Consistently drawing on her Idaho ranch roots and determined even in the face of bodily danger, her ambitions led to ownership and care of a brace of pigs straight out of E.B. White. She chronicles the animals—slaughter with grace and sensitivity, their cooking and consumption with a gastronome's passion, and elegantly folds in riches like urban farming history. Her way with narrative and details, like the oddly poetic names of chicken and watermelon breeds, gives her memoir an Annie Dillard lyricism, but it's the juxtaposition of the farming life with inner-city grit that elevates it to the realm of the magical. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Easily the funniest, weirdest, most perversely provocative gardening book I've ever read. I couldn't put it down... The writing soars." --The New York Times Book Review "Captivating... By turns edgy, moving, and hilarious, *Farm City* marks the debut of a striking new voice in American writing." --Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Food Rules* "Fresh, fearless, and jagged around the edges, Ms. Carpenter's book... puts me in mind of Julie Powell's *Julie & Julia* and Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love*." --The New York Times "Carpenter, with [her] humor and step-by-step clarity, make[s] it seem utterly possible to grow the kind of food you want to eat, wherever you live." --Los Angeles Times

Best read of the year for me. I rarely read a book more than once, but the storytelling and passion of this author-urban-farmer are just brilliant. I laughed out loud enough times that my husband wants to read the book next. My own inner-urban-farmer is inspired to expand her tomato horizons. Ms. Carpenter: Thank you for having the heart - and courage - to forge your farm. And, thank you for sharing your odyssey with the rest of us. Love it!!!!!!!!!!!!

This is not your typical plot, raising action, climax, falling action, and resolution kind of novel. Reading *Farm City* is more like catching up with an old friend who tells you about her passion for farming. Throughout the novel you grow and explore Novella's adventures. I enjoyed reading this book because every chapter was a new experience. I'm not big on gardening nor farming, yet I still managed to enjoy reading. I would recommend this book to anyone looking to read something different and willing to take visual adventures to a farm in Oakland. The message I got from Novella Carpenter is that you can start anything from nothing. She wasn't living in the best neighborhood

and had zero experience in farming. Yet, she mastered the technique by trial and error. Once again, this is another reason why this novella is a good read for anyone. Hope you enjoy the novel as much as I did.

This book has really opened my mind into trying new stuff. For example now I try to eat more healthy and I personally grow some vegetables at my house. Also it made me be more thankful with my older family members because they are exactly how the author is. Overall this book is really great. It does not follow a pattern and is easy to read. I enjoy the a lot of emotion out into it and the way of making us wonder what will be Novella next action or emotional response. I do recommend this book.

I live in Oakland, so this was a great book, as I am driving past the locations in the book several times. I am an avid gardener, so thoroughly enjoyed many of the stories and misadventures.

This book tells two stories: Novella Carpenter's education in urban farming and what it's like living in an Oakland ghetto. The gardening focus is on raising animals, not vegetable gardening. Carpenter and her boyfriend Bill move from Seattle to California and rent an apartment in the Oakland inner city amongst the homeless, the eccentric, the drug addicts, the poor. They choose their location because it is next to an abandoned lot they intend to turn into an urban garden. The story opens with the arrival of some baby chickens, geese and ducks and ends with Carpenter receiving expert instruction by a local chef on the making of salumi from a pig she raised. On this journey Carpenter writes about acquiring bees, harvesting honey, caring for rabbits, turkey temperament, and killing these animals for dinner. We share the sadness over the senseless loss of livestock from marauding dogs, the threatened loss of her garden to development, and the ultimate betrayal by a lousy butcher. The characters that inhabit her neighborhood are fascinating and varied, and we come to enjoy the ghetto culture that sometimes threatens but demands compassion and courage from her as she ventures into this milieu in search of food for her charges. Carpenter's passion for more escalates to her acquisition of two pigs. She and her boyfriend find themselves exhausted after nightly raids of restaurant and grocery store dumpsters, and her neighbors aren't too keen on the stench. But the payoff is exceptionally rewarding as she and her friends celebrate in feast the exquisite taste of the lives that were in her care. This is a great book for all those frustrated city dwellers (like me) who dream of making their own salumi, eating fresh eggs or having fresh turkey raised with compassion for Thanksgiving. It is also eye opening on how much work and dedication it

takes to be an urban farmer of livestock.

This book is ok the author portrays a likely senario--albeit in the slums of Oakland--having been brought up in the area I could sympahize and understand most of the various plots--Fortunately the author did not have children--

I loved this book!!!! It was recommended by a friend who is an avid reader of many genre's as am I. Of course living in Idaho like the author did had a bit of an influence on my reading Farm City. I highly recommend this book to all.

I started this book at a rental house we were staying at in Yosemite; it was so great I had to buy it even though I was only about 20 pages from the end. I'm going to buy more copies for Christmas presents. It was that funny and interesting. I live on a hobby farm in Southern CA - I am amazed at her perseverance in the Oakland hood. She is my hero!

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