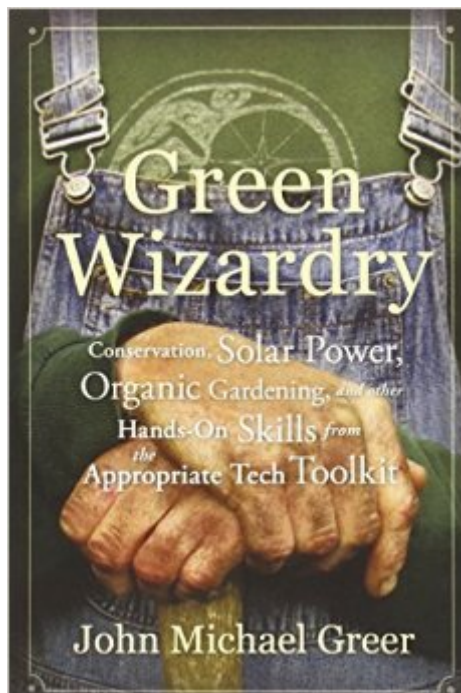


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Green Wizardry: Conservation, Solar Power, Organic Gardening, And Other Hands-On Skills From The Appropriate Tech Toolkit



Synopsis

Merlin, Gandalf, Voldemort; these well-known sorcerers from popular culture are famed for their amazing spells and spectacular magical powers. In ancient times, however, a wizard was actually a freelance intellectual whose main stock in trade was good advice, supported by a thorough education in agriculture, navigation, political and military science, languages, commerce, mathematics, medicine, and the natural sciences; in essence, the true Renaissance man. John Michael Greer proposes a modern mage for uncertain times; one who possesses a startling array of practical skills gleaned from the appropriate tech and organic gardening movements forged in the energy crisis of the 1970s. From the basic concepts of ecology to a plethora of practical techniques such as composting, green manure, low-tech food preservation and storage, small-scale chicken and rabbit raising, solar water heating, alternative energy sources, and more, *Green Wizardry* is a comprehensive manual for today's wizard-in-training. Providing a solid practical introduction to the entire appropriate tech toolkit, this book is a must-read for anyone concerned about decreasing our dependence on an overloaded industrial system and, in a world of serious energy shortages and economic troubles, making life a great deal less traumatic and more livable. John Michael Greer is a scholar of ecological history and an internationally renowned Peak Oil theorist whose blog *The Archdruid Report* has become one of the most widely cited online resources dealing with the future of industrial society. He is the author of more than thirty books, including *The Wealth of Nature* and *The Long Descent*.

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Customer Reviews

John Michael Greer is a prolific author, blogger and independent scholar whose interests span a large number of subjects. He has authored books on everything from ritual magic to peak oil, and also edited science fiction collections. Greer's latest book "Green Wizardry" isn't really a book about magic, however, the wizard moniker being mostly a way to make the work stand out in the crowd. Nor is it a "hands-on" guide to sustainable living, although it does contain some general advice on the matter. Rather, "Green Wizardry" is an introduction to the philosophy behind the Appropriate Technology and organic gardening movements of the 1970's. As modern civilization stumbles towards its inevitable fall, Greer believes that a return to the ideas and practices of the "small is beautiful" experimenters of that idealist decade is our last and best hope for survival. I'm old enough to remember an obscure Swedish book on similar matters, published around 1978. Even as a child, I found it extreme. It actually mentioned peak oil and similar stuff. Could the oil really run out? Naaah. Greer drew the opposite conclusions, and here we are today, with cheap oil actually running out. Oops. One of the main points of "Green Wizardry" is to drive home the point that our civilization is unsustainable, and that we passed the point of no return. Entropy, the difference between efficiency and resilience, the concepts of flows and funds, and the general idea of peak oil are some of the theoretical (or "theoretical") topics dealt with in the book. Other terms the reader will meet are "dissensus", "retro-fitting" and "the down home funk option". Woven throughout the narrative, are Greer's ideas about how the collapse of civilization will unfold.

Since I first heard that this book was in development, I've been impatiently imitating children in the back of the car. Are we there yet... are we there yet... Finally, destination arrived at. In no way disappointed. GW is what I'd call a 'template book'. Its purpose is to make the reader aware of the issues of the subject and to cut down on the wasted time that so often occurs when someone gets sidetracked by following spurious signs, advertising and misinformation while travelling a desired path. A thorough enough exploration of the ways in which individuals can set out to be an asset to themselves, their families and their communities; looks at trajectory of current civilisation, systems analysis, clarifying terms, options with regard practical skills (especially around food and energy needs), past attempts by people in the 70's and how the lessons they learned might be of use to you. The chapters end with list of books that the author has personally found useful in fleshing out the details if you wish to do so. No book can be all things to all people. This skeleton is for those who wish to build their own inner wizard, and make no mistake, wizard in this context has nothing to do with popular teen literary characters. It doesn't address the violence in retracting societies (looters,

rioters, home invasions, etc), or other things that may rear their ugly heads. But then again, it doesn't claim to. I'm pointing that out because it's a common criticism from those who create elaborate scenarios, that some authors ignore certain apparently evident truths re the future. This book isn't a novel about TEOTWAWKI. It's a foundation for a building rather than the whole burning rioting neighbourhood.

Do they even have civics classes these days? If they do, this ought to be on the reading list. It's not a conventional civics, but as the modern world is being battered by declining Energy Return on Energy Investment of its energy supplies, people will be stressing. Peak Oil is essentially here, oil prices have quadrupled in the last decade, but production is up, oh depending on how one does the math, some odd fraction of a percent per year, and that by unconventional oil. Cheap coal, good coal, cheap gas are all gone. The Hirsch report and plenty other warnings were/are ignored, so we're headed to a future of less energy, and that means a smaller economy. And that means people stressing. One of the factors in stress is the sense of control one has. Without a sufficient sense of control, based in reality, people are prone to blame, scapegoat and otherwise engage in non-productive or counterproductive behaviors. Effective actions are only possible with sufficiently truthful understanding of the situation, AND sufficient competence and skill to decide on effective solutions and to implement them. Without effective solutions, more pain and stress will occur, and that could - and probably will to some degree - lead to some unpleasantness in the civic sphere. So that's what this book is about: effective thinking and development of skill to mitigate the stress of powerdown. Each of the 36 lessons is meaningful enough to demand serious thought, yet not overwhelming. One is led through these lessons, starting with some basic principles, then some lessons on food, then energy, then tying things together.

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