

GABRIEL ALONSO DE HERRERA, considered the father of modern-day Spanish agriculture, lived in central Spain from the time of his birth, in the 1470s, until his death, around 1540. He learned about agriculture from working in the fields of Talavera de la Reina with his father, in Granada with the Moors, studying Spanish Arabic and classical Roman texts on the subject, and traveling extensively throughout Europe.

JUAN ESTEVAN ARELLANO, a journalist and farmer native to northern New Mexico, has roots reaching back to the 1725 settlement of the Embudo Valley. A poet and novelist as well, he is the 1994 recipient of Mexico's Premio Nacional de Literatura José Fuentes Mares prize.

Back cover painting by Ed Sandoval

Old-world techniques for new-world gardeners and farmers who are intent on achieving agricultural sustainability.



GARDENING

Ancient City Press

AN IMPRINT OF GIBBS SMITH, PUBLISHER

WWW.GIBBS-SMITH.COM

GABRIEL ALONSO DE HERRERA



ANCIENT AGRICULTURE
ROOTS AND APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE FARMING



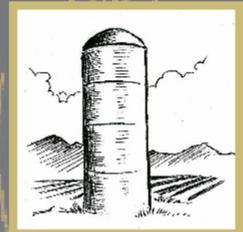
\$29.95 U.S.

Ancient Agriculture is the first English translation of the book that carried traditional farming techniques from the Old World of Europe to the New World of the Americas. The original book, *Obra de Agricultura* by Gabriel Alonso de Herrera, was first published in 1513 as an instruction manual for the farmers of Alcala de Henares, in central Spain. It was revised several times as the author learned increasingly more about land use and sophisticated irrigation techniques beyond the Iberian Peninsula, which Moorish farmers of the day had blanketed in exotic fruits and vegetables.

Historically, Herrera's agricultural classic has been especially relevant in arid regions of the world, where crops are irrigated by means of ditches such as acequias, *sangrías*, and arroyos, which also crisscrossed the landscape of Spain at the start of the sixteenth century. Many of Herrera's planting, harvesting, and seed-saving tips have, in fact, been successfully integrated into Indo-hispanic farming practices in the southwestern United States, where drought conditions and the need for water conservation typically prevail.

The present edition, *Ancient Agriculture*, has been meticulously translated, illustrated, and compiled for contemporary use. Areas of focus include working the land in harmony with nature and producing more food through soil improvement, cultivation of vineyards, and awareness of astrological influences. The interweave of ancient farming traditions and modern realities of global warming makes this treasure trove of the past a seedbed for a whole new generation of farmers and gardeners intent on achieving agricultural sustainability.

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Introduction by JUAN ESTEVAN ARELLANO Illustrated by BRYAN ROMERO