



# Home Grown: Adventures in Parenting off the Beaten Path, Unschooling, and Reconnecting with the Natural World

*Ben Hewitt*

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When Ben Hewitt and his wife bought a sprawling acreage of field and forest in northern Vermont, the landscape easily allowed them to envision the self-sustaining family farm they were eager to start. But over the years, the land became so much more than a building site; it became the birthplace of their two sons, the main source of family income and food, and ultimately, both classroom and home for their children.

Having opted out of formal education, Hewitt's sons learn through self-directed play, exploration, and experimentation on their farm, in the woods, and (reluctantly) indoors. This approach has allowed the boys to develop confidence, resourcefulness, and creativity. They learn, they play, they read, they test boundaries, they challenge themselves, they fail, they recover. And these freedoms allow their innate personalities to flourish, further fueling growth and exploration.

Living in tune with the natural world teaches us to reclaim our passion, curiosity, and connectivity. Hewitt shows us how small, mindful decisions about day-to-day life can lead to greater awareness of the world in your backyard and beyond. We are inspired to ask: What is the true meaning of "home" when the place a family lives is school, school system, and curriculum? When the parent is also the teacher, how do parenting decisions affect a child's learning? (And exactly how much trouble can a couple of curious boys gallivanting in the wild woods all day get into?) *Home Grown* reminds us that learning at any age is a lifelong process, and the best "education" is never confined to a classroom. These essays on nature, parenting, and education show us that big change can come from making small changes in how you live on the land, while building a life you love.

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