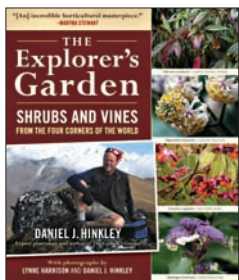


Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

The Explorer's Garden: Shrubs and Vines from the Four Corners of the World

Daniel J. Hinkley. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2009. 352 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$39.95.

IN THIS second installment of *The Explorer's Garden* (a long-awaited sequel to his earlier book, *The Explorer's Garden: Rare and Unusual Perennials*, Timber Press, 1999), plantsman Daniel J. Hinkley takes an in-depth look at some of the newest and most desirable shrubs and vines available for North American gardens. This carefully crafted book provides detailed information about the author's international plant exploration trips and the wonderful species of plants that have been brought back and introduced into



American horticulture. Hinkley gives the text a personal touch by including excerpts from his daily travel logs. Stunning photos Hinkley took on his journeys help add context to the plants. Additional plant photographs are provided by Lynne Harrison.

Shrubs and vines are presented either by genus, or in groups by families with chapter titles such as “Glorybowerers and Beautiful Berries: *Clerodendrum* and other Verbenaceae.” Within each genus or plant group, detailed plant descriptions that include plant origin and ornamental virtues are followed by practical information on cold hardiness, care and culture, and propagation tips. Overall, the plant descriptions—and especially the depictions of the native habitat in which these plants grow—offer an enlightening background for each plant group.

Many other garden books focus on new and improved cultivars of common, tried-and-true species, but this volume goes a step further. In addition to covering unusual and beautiful species from well-known genera such as *Buddleia*, *Callicarpa*, *Euonymus*, *Hydrangea*, and *Viburnum*, Hinkley includes enticing descriptions of plants from new, exotic, and little known genera such as *Azara*, *Rostrinucula*, and *Helwingia*.

Through his poetic writing, Hinkley's passion for discovering great garden plants and facilitating their introduction to mainstream horticulture is evident on each page. *The Explorer's Garden* is an ideal book for any serious gardener who enjoys learning about and acquiring select, rare, and unusual woody plants. It is a must-have for plant collectors who seek the newest horticultural treasures to enhance their gardens.

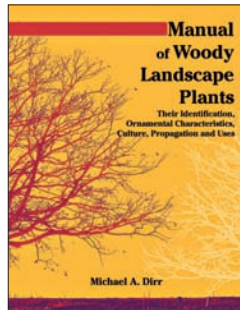
—Vincent A. Simeone

Vincent A. Simeone is director of Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, New York. He has written four gardening books, including *Great Landscape Evergreens* (Ball Publishing, 2007).

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants (6th Edition)

Michael A. Dirr. Stipes Publishing, Champaign, Illinois, 2009. 1325 pages. Publisher's price, softcover: \$76.80; hardcover: \$96.80.

A STAPLE FOR academics, nursery professionals, and avid gardeners alike, Michael Dirr's well-known *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* is now in its 6th edition, arriving 11 years after the previous edition. Reviewing a book that needs no introduction presents quite the challenge. Thus, because too often new editions are scantily revised, I approached this one with a crucial question in mind: Should a person who already owns the 5th edition also purchase the 6th?



In answer to that question, I recommend the new edition because of the substantive amount of new information in the tome.

Much of this was acquired during the author's six-month residency at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum in the United Kingdom in 1999 and visits to more than 100 public and private gardens and nurseries. When the observations are not his own, Dirr diligently cites the work of others. The introduction includes updated content, and there are many new species (the rare *Corylus fargesii*, for instance) added—not to mention countless new cultivars that have proliferated over the previous decade. This makes the book as comprehensive as possible—to the point that it has practically become the “Yellow Pages” of trees and shrubs. Without going online, no other single reference comes close.

Nearly all of the descriptions have been reworked to include new information, such as cultural requirements, noteworthy specimens, and occasional notes on potential for becoming invasive. Revisions in taxonomy and nomenclature are included throughout the book, although, with more research, cultivar names could have been included for a few of the plant marketed solely by their trademarks.

Of course, this edition still contains the colorful commentary we have grown to expect from Dirr. Despite their subjective nature, these remarks are among the most salient and idiosyncratic elements of this book. While at times we may quibble over his verdicts, it is important to remember that the author provides his expert opinion based upon decades of growing and observing plants. These accounts are invaluable as we strive to learn about—and love—these woody plants as much as Dirr does.

—Michael S. Dosmann

Michael S. Dosmann is curator of living collections at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

Books in Brief

What moves us to create gardens? In the new edition of her book, *Hidcote: The Making of a Garden* (W.W. Norton, 2009,



\$45), Ethne Clarke explores the influences that led Lawrence Johnston to create Hidcote, one of the most influential Arts and Crafts landscapes of the 20th century. American expatriates Johnston and his mother moved to the Cotwolds village of Hidcote Bartrim in England in 1907, and Johnston (at first with his mother) began what he would not finish

until 1948. That was the year he signed a deed of gift that handed over Hidcote to the National Trust—the first garden it acquired and which it still maintains today.

Recently unearthed information led to Clarke's new edition, which delves more deeply into Johnston's life and times than did the original addition, published in 1989. It's an enjoyable read, sort of a gossipy tell-all but factual, and with a good bit of garden design history thrown in, including the battle at the time between formal and naturalistic design.

—Marty Wingate

Marty Wingate is a garden book author and garden columnist for the Seattle-Post Intelligencer.

For more than 40 years, the Gossler family has been making new, exciting trees and shrubs from around the world available



to gardeners through their retail, mail-order nursery based in Springfield, Oregon. Now Roger and Marjory Gossler, along with their son, Eric, bring their garden, nursery, and four-plus decades of experience growing these plants to the pages of *The Gossler Guide to the Best Hardy Shrubs* (Timber Press, 2009, \$34.95).

This book profiles more than 350 trees and shrubs, many uncommon, that the Gosslers feel “represent the best of each genus.” Though the selections, understandably, represent a regional bias for the Northwest, many of the plants could be considered marginally hardy in USDA Zone 4 regions of the country. This is especially true for an era in which winter low temperatures in most regions are trending higher than historical averages. For example, *Magnolia sieboldii*, described in the book as a Zone 6 tree, actually grows and thrives in several locations in Zone 4 Minnesota! Many other gems described in this book should serve to stimulate adventuresome gardeners everywhere to experiment with new and seldom-seen plants.

—Stan Hokanson

Stan Hokanson is director of the woody landscape plant breeding and genetics program at the University of Minnesota.



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Problem-Solving Plants

I HAVE YET TO meet a gardener whose landscape is without at least a few problem areas—the hot spot, the wet swale, or the steep slope, for example. I myself struggle with the space in one corner of my yard beneath some large red maples whose fibrous roots choke out all but the most stalwart interlopers. Or you might be trying to find just the right plant for a particular purpose—say, to create a hedge or squeeze into a limited amount of space. The good news is that for just about every situation, there are plants that are perfectly suited to them. Here are some recently published books that can help you find appropriate plants for your needs.

One strategy for dealing with less-than-ideal growing conditions is to choose plants that are indigenous to your region. In



Great Natives for Tough Places (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 2009, \$12.95) editor Niall Dunne points out that native plants have “evolved over thousands of years to handle soils and seasonal variations in temperature and rainfall of your local climate.” The book describes more than 120 trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials from the continental United States and Canada that are adaptable without being invasive, not to mention they are low-maintenance and beautiful, to

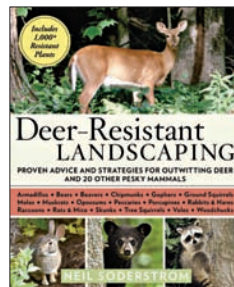
boot. This concise handbook also discusses eight common challenging conditions, such as compacted soils and shady, dry locations, and provides design ideas for transforming these types of sites into harmonious gardens.

A desert may seem like one of the most inhospitable places to attempt to garden, but **Cool Plants for Hot Gardens** by Greg Starr (Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2009, \$24.95) makes it clear that it’s really all about making wise plant choices. This book focuses on species that thrive in the arid conditions of the southwestern United States and neighboring areas of Mexico. Most are southwestern natives, some come from areas with similar soils and climate, but all “will grow happily in this region without huge amounts of extra water,” explains Starr. For each of the 200

plants the author includes—listed by botanical name—he provides notes about the conditions of the plant’s natural habitat, a brief description, maintenance tips, landscape uses, and a color photograph (most of which were taken by Starr).

For many suburban and country gardeners, a prerequisite for choosing plants for their gardens is resistance to deer. A helpful resource in this arena is **Deer-Resistant Landscaping** by Neil Soderstrom (Rodale, 2009, \$23.95). Along with some general in-

formation about deer and tactics to use if they become a nuisance in your garden, this book devotes several chapters to more than



1,000 plants these animals find unpalatable. Though Soderstrom bases these recommendations on “a consensus of regional authorities,” he notes that these “resistant” plants should not be “considered ‘deer-proof’ in all stages of growth or all growing conditions.”

The book provides both a simple list of the plants categorized by type (herbs, shrubs, etc.) and an encyclopedic listing alphabetized by botanical name, with color photos and a brief description of attributes. Strategies for dealing with several other mammalian garden pests are also covered in this book.

In **Right Rose, Right Place** (Storey Publishing, 2009, \$29.95), author Peter Schneider asks, “What other genus offers examples



that can grow tidily in a pot on your deck, provide months of nonstop color in the perennial border, form an impenetrable hedge, or send a cascade of bloom down from the tree it has been trained to climb?” For these and other gardening situations, Schneider asserts that “roses provide colorful, fragrant solutions.” His book could well change

any notions you might have of these plants being fussy and frail. Schneider highlights more than 350 roses—organized by garden uses—that have proven reliable for him over more than 30 years of growing them in his Ohio garden. Chapters on caring for roses, such as pruning and controlling pests, round out the book.

Sometimes space itself is a limiting factor, but even small gardens need good “bones.” **400 Trees and Shrubs for Small Spaces**



by Diana M. Miller (Timber Press, 2008, \$29.95) provides lots of ideas for selecting woody plants that will lend structure without being overpowering. Some of the included plants are naturally smaller, some need pruning or training to keep them in bounds, and others are newer cultivars bred to be more compact than the species. Each useful genus is discussed in a brief paragraph, followed by succinct descriptions of recommended species and cultivars. At the end of the book, charts of plants listed by characteristics such as flower color or attractive fruits make it even easier to find the right tree or shrub for your needs.

—Viveka Neveln, Associate Editor