

# Garden books share inspiring information

Although we're anxious to get in the garden, we did have some time to read about gardening. Perhaps you're looking for a book to inspire. Here are some suggestions:

Brent and Becky Heath, operators of a successful bulb farm in Gloucester, Va., have written two books that will guide gardeners in their quest for beauty with bulbs. Both books (\$24.95 each) are published by bright sky press.

*Daffodils for North American Gardens* is an essential book, filled with clearly written information, from a description of a daffodil, planting tips, care, companion plants, miniatures, forcing, hybridizing, arranging for flower shows — the list goes on and on. I like their "down-home" straight-from-the-heart writing.

The second book, *Tulips for North American Gardens*, follows the same format as the first and also is excellent. Information and ideas galore will encourage you to try new ways with these bulbs. You'll find a bonus of superb photographs of commercial as well as home sites, and an encyclopedia of recommended daffodils/tulips in each book.

"Our aim has been to describe and picture only the cultivars that will be commercially available well into the future so that our information will remain current and helpful to you for a long time to come," Becky writes.

"Our mutual vision is to help others see the brightest side of the world we live in, through gardening," they say.

I am proud to call these gentle people "friends."

## Other visions

*Bulbs of North America*, a North American Rock Garden Society publication (Timber Press, \$34.95), is a comprehensive guide to all kinds of bulbous plants that grow in alpine settings and rock gardens, in home gardens and in the wild.

The authors have extensive experience observing the plants in the wild. A mixture of field botany and horticulture makes a good balance of information.

A perfect book to take on a field trip to help with identification, the descriptions are clear. Few pictures, but those that are included are in color and show the plants very distinctly.

NARGS invites new members. Visit its Web site, <http://www.nargs.org>, or write to NARGS, P.O. Box 67, Millwood, NY 10546.

If you like intense color, surprises, wit, serenity and magic, *Bold Visions for the Garden*, Richard Hartlage (Fulcrum, \$29.95, soft), will inspire you to create a memorable scene.

His approach is unusual as he discusses color, scale, time, light and architecture as we visit the featured gardens. This book will probably change the way you look at plants and design.

Hartlage, currently curator and director of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Gardens in Seattle, Wash., shares many private and public gardens that he has admired and carefully designed, and explains how they evolved. I was intrigued with the garden that contained 1,800 bowling balls!

The ideas are indeed bold and dramatic, while the bright photographs shout at you and encourage the use of something different, all the while following good principles of garden design.

Did you know that when Thomas Edison needed a suitable material for a light bulb filament, he used carbon?

bonized bamboo? This, and many other uses for the plant, are included in *Bamboo for Gardens*, Ted Jordan Meredith (Timber Press, \$39.95), the complete guide for growing one of the more than 364 varieties that grow in this country, in the garden or as houseplants.

Meredith tells how to choose, grow, buy, propagate, harvest, control and dispose of this versatile plant. He began to study and grow bamboo because he wanted a privacy fence. From that small beginning, this informative book resulted.

## Informative series

I never cease to be amazed at the amount of information packed in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's 21st Century Gardening Series.

The books (\$9.95 each) generally follow the same outline with guest writers sharing their expertise. A collection of these handbooks makes an excellent library without too much expense.

*Essential Tools* gives the lowdown on what tools do, which are the most necessary, and those that are helpful even though they aren't used often. Equipment for seed starting, to irrigation, to lighting rounds out this book. Look for my friend Kip Smith's comments about her favorite tools.

*Summer-Blooming Bulbs* features information about growing bulbs in specific sites and conditions and the care of them. Descriptions and color photos of a plethora of these beauties help greatly with selection.

*Gourmet Vegetables*, the encyclopedia of tasty vegetables, includes mouth-watering recipes. Why not try something new this year? The information to do so is here.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.



By design: Yves St. Laurent's garden in Morocco is striking in color. This was taken at the Chelsea flower show in England. It is similar to those featured in the book *Bold Visions for the Garden*. MARY FIGLEY

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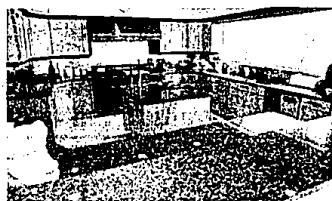
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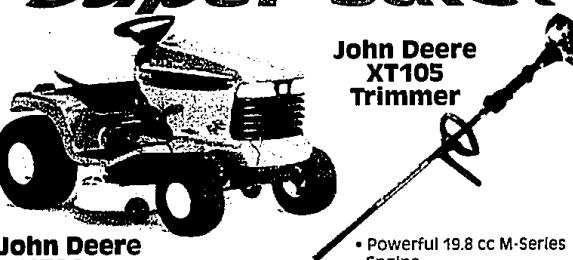
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