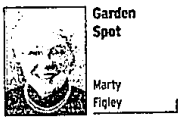


Books offer beauty tips for landscapes

Spring is here! Can you believe it? Lots of things are going on in the garden, and there are several new books that will help to make your landscape more beautiful.

An Encyclopedia of Shade Perennials, by W. George Schmid (Timber Press, \$49.95), is a book that you will treasure for many years.

Schmid's story begins with his fascination of shade at an early age and its friendly environment, and progresses



Garden Spot
Marty Fligley

through his belief that "gardens made following designs by nature will be less demanding than those conceived along classic lines." I found myself thinking, "Right plant, right

place," a credo we should all remember.

Schmid describes hundreds of shade-loving plants in (as he says) "plain English," listing height, flower, fruit, family and more. Take time to savor this down-to-earth advice; you may be encouraged to find a shady nook in your own back yard.

The Encyclopedia of Planting in Combination, by Tony Lord, photos by Andrew Lawson (Firefly, \$59.95), contains 4,000 color and planting schemes and 1,000 plant descriptions with full-color photos.

Lord advises readers to establish the overall effect desired; trees, major shrubs and hedges should be decided on first. You should include evergreens. Be aware of form and texture; harmonious colors are lasting; and for borders, carefully make a planting plan. Each entry includes height and spread, typical flowering season, a color bar showing full range of light levels, a raindrop symbol to show a plant's preferred soil water content, colored symbols to show preferred soil conditions, and zone and pH ranges.

NATURAL DECOR

Plan ahead and grow things that can be dried for indoor beauty when summer is just a memory. **Natural Decor: The Arranger's Garden and Project Book from Seed to Centerpiece**, Norma Coney (The Lyons Press, \$19.95), will set you on the right track.

Coney shares information about gathering in the wild, plant identification, proper tools and other tricks of the trade. Each project contains a "list of ingredients."

Grow Wild! Low-Maintenance, Sure-Success, Distinctive Gardening with Native Plants, by Lorraine Johnson (Fulcrum \$32.95), is organized by regions (we are in the Northeast Region).

"There are many different approaches to the use of native plants and no one right way," the author says. "Just a single wild bergamot plant, tentatively purchased by a curious soul and added to a bed of cowslips, will offer nectar to butterflies, bees and hummingbirds and seeds to birds and will perhaps inspire that curious soul to try other natives."

Johnson describes appropriate plants for the regions and takes us through some successful gardens. She shares the low-down on how to correctly create natural gardens, and suggests looking at local native plant communities in the wild.

Excellent advice.

The Perfect Michigan Lawn: Attaining and Maintaining the Lawn You Want, by Melinda Myers (Cool Springs Press, \$12.99), is now available, just in time for our growing season.

Myers is an award-winning horticulturist and gives good advice. She discusses the best grass varieties and suggests a maintenance schedule, and explains various methods of planting a new lawn or renovating an existing one.

In addition, she provides recommendations on how to address those inevitable lawn problems, such as weeds, diseases and insect pests, while still being kind to Mother Nature.

Myers rounds out the book with information about how to fertilize, water and mow to promote a healthy lawn, and be a happy lawn owner.

AUTHOR TO VISIT

In **Around the House and in the Garden: A Memoir of Heartbreak, Healing and Home Improvement** (Scribner, \$24 hard, \$12 soft) the author, Dominique Browning, shares her feelings about everyday things after a divorce.

Each essay concerns how she heals and settles into a new home and life. Along the way she gives tips about home decorating, gardening, and "nesting" with her sons. You will have a chance to meet Browning, editor-in-chief of **House & Garden** magazine, at 1 p.m. Friday, May 2, when she appears at Goldner Walsh Nursery, 559 Orchard Lake Road in Pontiac.

After lunch, Browning will share thoughts about her book, and sign your copy, available for purchase at the nursery. Admission is \$24. Reservations are required; call (248) 332-6430, Ext. 233. Seating is limited.

Marty Fligley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone.

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