

# Compare how you grow with what books show

Books contain so much information that we need to set aside some time to study them. Take one or two to the garden and you may find inspiration from them. By comparing what we grow with those plants in a book, we may learn a new way to care for our garden treasures.

**The Big Book of Herbs: A Comprehensive Illustrated Reference to Herbs of Flavor and Fragrance**, Arthur O. Tucker, Ph.D., and Thomas DeBaggio (\$39.95, Intervale Press), is a good example.

These authors have years of experience in growing and studying herbs, and it shows. They have updated gardening practices of the past and replaced them with current horticultural practices from around the world, presented so it is clear for the inexperienced gardener. They share information about growing herbs in the best possible manner, how to get the best flavor, harvesting and much more.

Most of the book is devoted to herbs that are most often grown in home gardens. Plant names are given in several languages; a plant's chemistry and landscape, craft, and culinary uses are detailed. I recommend this book to all herb gardeners.

## GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

see the beauty and artistic possibilities in them. Instructions for creating each piece are very clear — from a bench, jewelry or to simply drawing on stones. This may become a new hobby.

**Sakuteiki: Visions of the Japanese Garden**, Jiro Takeki and Marc P. Keane (\$27.95, Tuttle), is the first complete English translation of this classic work. Entitled *shiki uo taten koto* ("The art of setting stones"), this is probably the oldest garden-making treatise in Japan (and probably the world).

In the first section the authors explain the principles of Japanese gardening and how people lived in the Heian period. The actual translation presents the concepts of Japanese

gardens while using religious tradition, nature and spirituality in the arrangement of water, stones and plants. Annotations by the authors provide insight.

## Congratulations

Timber Press publishes the following books:

We congratulate this fine publisher for being awarded the Wilfred Jung Award by the Garden Writers Association of America. That award is given to a company that has demonstrated its support over time for the garden writing profession and dedication to the promotion of gardening and horticulture in North America.

**The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Clematis**, Mary Toomey and Everett Leeds (\$59.95, in association with the British Clematis Society), has left no stone unturned.

The history of clematis, from the Greek word *klima*, meaning a "vine branch," has been traced back to about the 16th century. The book explains the history and botany of the plants, as well as how to classify them.

Color photographs show them in garden settings; information about proper care, insects, diseases and propagation techniques is included. Line draw-

ings are most helpful. A good three-fourths of the book contains photos, descriptions, origin, parentage, habit, size, pruning group, flowering period, cultivation and recommended use. Charles Chesshire is the photography editor.

**Armitage's Manual of Annuals, Biennials and Half-Hardy Perennials** (\$39.95) is a reader-friendly book that all gardeners will understand.

Armitage holds a Ph.D. in horticulture from Michigan State University and now lives in Georgia, where he is a professor of horticulture and is also in charge of the University of Georgia Test Gardens. For this book he has gathered a formidable number of plants — in fact, 246 genera of them from *Abelmoschus* to *Zinnia* — and details their habits and needs.

The most up-to-date information on the subject can be found here. The line drawings, color photos and personal observations ensure that this will become a standard textbook on the subject.

**Insects and Gardens**, Eric Grissell, photographs by Carl Goodpasture (\$29.95), is most interesting. When you study this you will come to understand the relationship of these critters in the garden and the



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## Bounty of Information: Gardening books provide a wealth of information.

reason for their being.

Grissell has made this subject into a fascinating account. He dedicates the book to Rachel Carson, who wrote, "The balance of nature is ... a complex, precise, and highly integrated system of relationships between living things which cannot safely be ignored any more than the law of gravity can be defied with impunity by

a man perched on the edges of a cliff."

That says it all. Share this with your children.

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.

# Enlist help of family when planning meals

**Q:** Every day I face the same dilemma: what to fix for dinner. It is hard to cook creatively seven days a week. I need help.

**A:** It is difficult to face the daily challenge of what to fix for dinner. Enlist the help of your family so you do not have to be the daily creative meal planner. After all, they are the ones you are feeding and trying to please.

Plan ahead and you will not dread the daily chore of deciding what to fix for dinner. Create a monthly sign-up chart to hang in the kitchen. Assign specific days each week for your children and husband to plan the meal. This has a two-fold purpose. Each

## DOMESTIC PLANNER



DIANA KOENIG

tious meal. Use a book with pictures illustrating the food groups. Keep a food chart in the

family member can enjoy their favorite meals and it saves you time deciding what to fix.

You may need to give a short lesson, teaching the basic food groups that are necessary to have a nutritious meal. Use a book with pictures illustrating the food groups. Keep a food chart in the

kitchen accessible to everyone. When my children were young, I asked them to help me plan dinner one night. Our menu consisted of the following: Ice cream, French fries, candy, and spaghetti without sauce. I realized then just how important it is that everyone understands the ingredients to a well-balanced meal.

Let your family browse through your cookbooks. This will give them ideas for the meals that they plan. As your family plans meals, allow them to prepare some of the meals that they plan. This will also give you a break from cooking. Make sure you have cookbooks with easy recipes. You can also buy your

kids their own kid's cookbook.

Make sure you coordinate sports practice, meetings, and social engagements with your meal schedule. You would not want your teenage son to miss the meal he planned because he was at football practice. On the nights when your family is going in several directions, plan a simple stove-top meal, like sloppy Joe's, macaroni and cheese, canned veggies, and fruit salad.

Choose four to six nights a month where you do not cook or plan meals. Look for coupons in the newspaper to help cover cost.

1. Schedule a once a month

family night out to a nice restaurant for dinner.

2. Go to a fast-food restaurant.

3. Dine-in, but have food delivered, such as pizza.

4. Purchase prepared food at your supermarket. You can buy an entire meal ready to serve.

Exchange menu ideas with family, friends, and neighbors. This will also be a way to try some new recipes. You will not feel like you are preparing the same meals all the time.

Serving daily meals to your family not only requires creativity, but also time. It involves several time consuming steps: Plan-

ning the meals, buying the food, preparing the meals, and clean up. Your family can help you in each of these areas. Washing dishes, loading and unloading the dishwasher could be included on your meal-planning chart.

**Today's Refrigerator Bulletin:**

"Save time on meal preparations by enlisting help!"

Diana Koenig is a writer, educator, speaker and consultant. Send your questions and success stories to: Diana Koenig, P.O. Box 1702, Manchester, MO 63011, e-mail dianakoenig@hotmail.com. Visit [www.domesticplanner.com](http://www.domesticplanner.com).

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