

Garden books make good holiday gifts

Here are some books you might like to give someone this holiday season.

A real treat is the just published *The Botanical Garden, Volume I: Trees and Shrubs*, and *Volume II: Perennials and Annuals*, Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix (Firefly Books, \$75 each).

These books contain more than 4,000 photographs and took 10 years to produce.

Plants from more than 1,200 distinct groups are described and are presented in evolutionary order, from the most primitive to the most advanced, such as in Volume I - tree ferns, gingkoes and some conifers to early-flowering plants, fruit and nut trees, and more. And in Volume II - from sphagnum mosses and ferns to the modern irises, hostas and sedges.

The visually rich and highly accurate references will remain current for many years. The information bridges the gap between garden-friendly books and scientific texts in the tradition of the great botanical illustrations.

The two most attractive volumes are an all-inclusive source of information of more than 2,000 genera of temperate plants. Included is the history of plant development to current DNA studies that are revolutionizing plant classification.

FOREST AND FARM
Oftentimes I open a book and it's like Christmas. *The American Woodland Garden: Capturing the Spirit of the Deciduous Forest*, Rick Darke (Timber Press, \$49.95), is such a book.

Darke encourages the reader to appreciate the essence of the deciduous forest and to celebrate it in our own designed landscapes. He tells how to transform a garden by using an existing tree as a starting point, underplanting with native shrubs to effect a beautiful, although small, woodland garden.

"Woodland gardening can be so much more than cultivating plants that bloom in the shade," Darke says. The photographs depict many gardens in all seasons



Garden Spot
Marty Figley

and show the diversity and beauty of nature at her finest; all accompanied by his personal comments. He tells how to plan and maintain such a garden and describes appropriate plants.

"My intention has been to produce a book firmly grounded in horticultural and ecological science, yet stimulating enough in language and imagery that it could serve as a persuasive model," Darke says.

Birdhouse Chronicles, Cathleen Miller (*The Lyons Press*, \$24.95), is the account of the adventures Miller and her husband, Kerby, experienced when they left the corporate world in California and moved to a remote farmhouse in Pennsylvania - a very dilapidated one at that.

We agonize with them (and laugh) as they face the perils of, and tackle the chores of, farm life and the frustrating remodeling of the house.

Miller writes realistically and beautifully as she learns about nature and wildlife during her walks, and shares how the couple succeeds with the creation of the perfect "nest" for them.

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!
Of Leaf and Flower: Stories and Poems for Gardeners, edited by Charles Dean and Clyde Wachsberger (Persea Books, \$21.95), contains 24 poems and essays, chosen because they evoke the passion that plants and gardens inspire.

Authors include Robert Frost, with his poem *Leaves Compared with Flowers*; a humorous narrative by Saki concerning the gardening one-up-manship of two society matrons; and Eugenia Collier's poignant story of Miss Lottie's marigolds.

"This lovely book will be a quiet diversion before sleep or any time of the day. When you buy one for a friend, get one



Garden books such as these make good holiday gifts.

for yourself because when you read it you won't want to give it up.

The Year is a Circle: A Celebration of Henry David Thoreau, Victor Carl Friesen (Natural Heritage, distributed by Chelsea Green, \$19.95, paper), will delight Thoreau's admirers and nature lovers.

The author has taken a number of Thoreau's quotations that demonstrate how zealous and concerned for the earth he was, and written a poem about each.

All follow the seasons of the year and the superb photographs enhance the message. Keep a few handy for gifts.

HERBS, WILDFLOWERS
Basic Herb Cookery, Rose Marie Nichols McGee and N.P. Nichols (\$10.95), can be ordered by mail (Nichols Nursery Garden Press, 1190 Old Salem Road, NE, Albany, OR 97321). Add \$3.75 postage and handling.

Rose Marie is the daughter of N.P. who wrote the book in the 1960s. She has updated the information using many fresh herbs, now more readily available than when the book was first published.

I have seen many herb cookbooks, but this one contains numerous innovative recipes that I haven't seen before

(Rosemary Parsnip Casserole, Curry Biscuits, Aristocratic Ice Tea).

You won't be disappointed with this small soft-cover book that is packed full of good stuff. Great stocking stuffer.

North Woods Wildflowers: A Field Guide to Wildflowers of the Northeastern United States and Southeastern Canada, Doug Ladd (Falcon, \$24.95, soft, distributed by Globe Pequot), is a user-friendly guide that contains descriptions and color photos of 350-plus species, arranged by flower color.

Readers will learn about habitats and ecology, plant characteristics, many botanical terms and more while studying this handy book.

I believe it will be a great source of pleasure and discovery, especially if you have a place up north.

GOODGARDEN TIP
Dirr's Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates, Michael A. Dirr, is the perfect gift for someone who lives down South. His books are excellent! (Timber Press, \$69.95).

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.

GARDEN CALENDAR

Farmington Garden Club
The Farmington Garden Club will meet Monday, Dec. 2, at Longacre House, on the west side of Farmington Road between 10 and 11 Mile. Lunch at noon.
The topic will be creative wreath design by Dennis Banning. Finished designs will be offered for sale. Call (248) 615-3616 for information.

Poinsettia Soiree
The Belle Isle Botanical Society will present the 15th annual Poinsettia Soiree 6-9 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8, at the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory on Belle Isle.
The event will benefit the conservatory and surrounding gardens. Donation is \$40 per person. Light supper and desserts by Union Street of Detroit. Musical entertainment by Bill

Meyer, caricature illustrations by Robert J. Bauer, and door prizes (including poinsettias, wreaths and a gingerbread house) will be featured.
Make reservations by Thursday, Dec. 5. Call (313) 852-4064 for more information.
School of Gardening
The Michigan School of Gardening offers a variety of classes. Advance

registration is required. Space is limited and some classes have prerequisites. Call (248) 4-GARDEN for information.
The schedule includes Using Quickbooks (\$72), Tuesdays, Dec. 3-10, at 29429 Six Mile in Livonia. Just west of Middlebelt. This class will give an overview of Quickbooks financial software for people in the gardening business.

NEARBY CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS

Rattalee Lake Tree Farm, 7650 Rattalee Lake Road, Independence Township, (248) 625-9127.

■ Directions: From I-75, exit M-15; go north on M-15, about two miles; go west on Rattalee Lake Road, just past Reese; first driveway on right.

■ Hours: Noon to dark Thursday and Friday, and 10 a.m. to dark Saturday and Sunday.

■ Species: Scotch Pine, Douglas Fir, Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, pre-harvested Fraser Fir.

■ Features: Harvest yourself or full-service harvesting; services include tree transport, shaking, baling, stand drilling, loading and tying; saws provided; indoor coffee, hot cocoa and doughnuts.

■ Addison-Oaks Christmas Tree Farm, 355 Lake George Road, Oakland Township, north of Rochester, (248) 814-0583.

■ Directions: From I-75, exit Rochester Road; go north on Rochester Road, about 15 miles; turn west on Stoney Creek; turn north on Lake George Road.

■ Hours: Noon to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 9 a.m. to dark Saturday and Sunday.

■ Species: Colorado Blue Spruce, White Spruce, Black Hills Spruce, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir, Balsam Fir, Concolor Fir, Fraser Fir, Austrian Pine, Scotch Pine, White Pine.

■ Features: Harvest yourself; saws, help and shaking provided; wrapping provided for fee; trees up 14 feet in height; wreath and gift shops; antique wagon display; on-site parking and rest rooms; weekend warming station with hot beverages and snacks.

■ Tennant's Christmas Tree Farm, 311 North Sashabaw, Ortonville, (248) 627-3616, or visit www.rockwall.com/christmastrees.

■ Directions: From I-75, exit Sashabaw; go north on Sashabaw, about eight miles; go west on Granger; turn north on Sashabaw.

■ Hours: 9 a.m. to dark, Nov. 29; thereafter, noon to dark Monday-Friday and 9 a.m. to dark Saturday and Sunday through Dec. 24.

■ Species: Scotch Pine, Blue Spruce and pre-harvested Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir and Fraser Fir.

■ Features: Harvest yourself or full-service harvesting; services include needle removal, wrapping and loading; saws provided. Candy Cane Christmas Tree Farm, 4780 Seymour Lake Road, Oxford, (248) 628-8699.

■ Directions: From I-75, exit Sashabaw; go north on Sashabaw; go east on Seymour Lake Road.

■ Hours: Noon to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday through Dec. 15.

■ Species: Concolor Fir, Fraser Fir, Colorado Blue Spruce, Balsam Fir, Black Hill Spruce, White Pine, Austrian Pine, Serbian Spruce.

Currently growing several exotic species for future seasons.

■ Features: Harvest yourself or full-service harvesting; services include shaking, baling, loading; saws provided; custom carts for transport to car available; Christmas music; viewing zoo; hot cocoa and coffee; Snow Fresh certification; custom fresh wreaths available.

Eaton Springs Tree Farm, 9011 Eaton, Davisburg, (800) 485-5081.

■ Directions: From I-75, exit Holly Road; go east on Holly Road; turn south on Tindall; turn west on Rattalee Lake Road; turn south on Eaton Road.

■ Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends only, Nov. 29-Dec. 21 and by appointment.

■ Species: Scotch Pine, White Pine, Douglas Fir, Balsam Fir, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, Fraser Fir.

■ Features: Harvest yourself or full-service harvesting; saws provided; free tree cleaning by machine and wrapping; candy canes and magic reindeer food; hot and cold cider; festive campfire.

TREES

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more than one way, from the aroma of a farm-fresh tree to the thrill of a spontaneous snowball fight.

For visitors to Urquhart's Tree Farm in Dexter, the outdoor experience probably stands apart.

"It's a very pretty piece of property," said the farm's co-owner, Susan Urquhart. "It's like going out in the woods to Grandmother's house."

Lee Arend, owner of Arend

Tree Farm in Chelsea, said many of his younger visitors are experiencing the country for the first time.

In the end, harvesting a Christmas tree is an old-fashioned holiday tradition and a family event.

Cutting down your own Christmas tree "is something that's been around a long time in terms of tradition," said Arend.

"It's something that the whole family can participate in, but it's also a way to create a tradition."

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