

Favorite Garden Reading

Apples, by Frank Browning. 1998: North Point Press, New York, ISBN 0-86547-537-7. [Reviewed by Karen Palmer]

This is not a hard-core gardening book, but it is a darn good read. If you are at all interested in apples (or are just naturally curious), you will find this book fascinating. Frank Browning grew up surrounded by an apple orchard in Kentucky. That is where his story begins. Before long, you will learn about the origin of apples in Kazakhstan; the apple germ-plasm repository in Geneva, New York; hybridization and genetic engineering; crop management; and the art of making Calvados in France and cider in England.

If you need a practical reason to read this book, there are a few appendixes that cover apple varieties, basic information on planting and managing a back-yard orchard, and recipes. The rest of the book, however, is the real jewel.

Dear Mr. Jefferson: Letters from a Nantucket Gardener, by Laura Simon. 1998: Crown, ISBN 0-60960-097-4. [Reviewed by Fran Luxford]

"There is not a sprig of grass that shoots uninteresting to me", Thomas Jefferson once wrote to his daughter Martha. In her 1998 book, *Dear Mr. Jefferson*, Laura Simon fashioned her chapters as letters to our third president, who was an avid gardener. An author of historical novels and a passionate gardener, Simon felt the need to communicate with someone about her hobby. The introduction to her book tells you how she decided upon Jefferson as the recipient of a series of letters that cover nearly a year. If you are interested in gardening (you must be – you're visiting our site!), Americana, and/or good writing, sample this treasure.

Natural Landscaping: Gardening with Nature to Create a Backyard Paradise, by Sally Roth. 1997: Rodale Press, Inc., Emmaus, PA. ISBN 0-87596-704-3. [Reviewed by Kathy Manning]

"For more than a decade, I tried to make my gardens look like the centerfold of some glossy magazine-perfectly designed, perfectly planted, perfectly groomed. In a word, perfect." If this quote from author Sally Roth sounds like you, *Natural Landscaping* may be just the book to help you out of your "perfect" gardening mind-set. In this attractively designed, generously illustrated book, Roth guides you through creating a natural landscape that provides beauty and benefits to both the gardener and wild creatures.

With detailed garden plans, plant lists, and step-by-step installation techniques, *Natural Landscaping* shows you everything you need to know to create meadow and prairie gardens, woodland and shade gardens, water and bog gardens, and gardens to attract birds, butterflies, and moths. The book also includes gardening basics, such as seed starting and pest control; maintenance tips; sidebars about wildlife; and profiles of other gardeners across the country, each featuring a different type of natural landscape.

Whether you want to create a small bog garden or convert your entire yard into a natural area, Natural Landscaping will provide inspiration, tips, techniques, and ideas to bring the beauty of nature to your landscape.

200 Tips for Growing Flowers in the Pacific Northwest, by Barbara Ashmun. 1996: Chicago Review Press, ISBN 1-55652-253-3. [Reviewed by Arlene Beesing-Sparks]

This is a small but interesting book offering down-to-earth gardening tips for Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Northern California. For a new resident to the Pacific Northwest, the author provides information on the best flowering plants and how to grow them.

In a short and sweet manner the author details the advantages and disadvantages of the various weather zones. Once past the basic challenges of the weather and determining the soil composition, there are tips on how best to improve the soil texture and drainage, as well as what to add to the soil to promote healthy green leaves.

For the beginning gardener there are suggestions on ways to produce a layout plan and develop a record of your garden. Concise information on incorporating color and the use of shrubs, perennials, annuals, biennials, bulbs and fragrant flowers are also covered. As a quick and easy reference, this is a good start to understanding the various nuances of gardening in the Pacific Northwest.

The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust. 1998: Timber Press, Inc., Portland, OR, ISBN 0-88192-414-8. [Reviewed by Emily Chase]

This book is absolutely fantastic with regard to information on taking care of many of our most common perennials. The color plates are very good, and the text is well written. Information contained includes deadheading, pinching, cutting back, thinning, disbudding and deadleafing. It also contains an extensive encyclopedia of perennial species and cultivars that clearly explains the pruning and maintenance of each plant. There is a month-by-month planting and maintenance schedule.