

Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

An Abundance of Flowers: More Great Flower Breeders of the Past

Judith M. Taylor. Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, Athens, OH, 2018. 232 pages. Publisher's price, softcover: \$28.95.

AN ABUNDANCE OF FLOWERS is the next installment of Judith Taylor's research into the stories of plant breeders, some famous and some not-so. In her first book, *Visions of Loveliness*, Taylor covered 16 genera of ornamental flowers. In this one, she offers the stories of breeders who were active in eight additional groups, including poinsettias, chrysanthemums, and clematis.

Each chapter discusses a particular genus or group of plants, detailing their botanical characteristics, and major and minor breeders. Taylor focuses on breeding achievements in England, France, and the United States, but includes several other countries such as Thailand and Japan. She promises to weed out the myths surrounding some plant introductions. For example, she firmly refutes the long-held belief that Joel R. Poinsett introduced the poinsettia in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1828. (You will have to refer to her book for the real story!)

In addition to memorializing these breeders, Taylor provides interesting political and economic context to their work. In one example, she reports that *Gladiolus* was successfully grown in the Channel Islands of Great Britain by the Mahy family in the 1930s. During the German occupation of Guernsey in World War II, the Mahy fields were obliterated. A Dutch grower helped repopulate the fields with *Gladiolus* stock he had acquired from the family before the war.

Not all breeding efforts are successful. One example is the 1905 commercial failure of the *Dianthus* cultivar 'Fiancee' owned by the Chicago Carnation Company. It caused a sensation upon its debut at a flower show, resulting in thousands of orders for the plants. Unfortunately, the cultivar proved difficult to mass produce, so the company was unable to fill the orders. As Taylor wryly observes, "the name 'Fiancee' is perilously close to fiasco."

Through these and many other stories, Taylor notes that "we who enjoy the result of so many painstaking efforts... can now look at familiar plants in a new light." In this volume, Taylor succeeds once again in bringing the stories of diligent flower breeders of the past to the gardeners who benefit from their efforts today.

—Denise W. Adams

Denise W. Adams is the author, with Laura L. S. Burchfield, of American Home Landscapes: A Design Guide to Creating Period Garden Styles (Timber Press, 2013).

The Wellness Garden: Grow, Eat, and Walk Your Way to Better Health

Shawna Coronado, Cool Springs Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2017. 160 pages. Publisher's price, softcover: \$24.99.

WELLNESS AND GARDENING are a natural pairing. For Shawna Coronado, who planted thousands of vegetables every year on her property near Chicago, Illinois, this connection became critical to her health when she was diagnosed with severe degenerative osteoarthritis of the spine in 2015.

Enveloped in intense pain and depressed because this incurable condition put limits on her physical abilities, Coronado turned to a trusted source for relief: the garden. Over the next two years, she forged a lifestyle that she outlines in her latest—and most personal—book, *The Wellness Garden*. "By committing yourself to wellness and to live more mindfully, you make a choice every single day on how you want to live, eat, move, and travel your life path," she writes.

The book's three sections—Growing the Wellness Diet & Lifestyle; Incorporating Exercise in the Garden; and Therapeutic Gardening—paint broad brushstrokes on how to incorporate the lessons Coronado learned while navigating her new lifestyle. Some of the topics—such as growing your own food, using ergonomically-friendly tools, and designing gardens for therapeutic benefits—may seem elementary to those who already garden, but for those new to the concept, the book may be a gateway to useful natural health solutions.

Coronado addresses how her modified diet composed of unprocessed foods and plants with anti-inflammatory benefits helped to naturally reduce her pain levels. Given her success, I wish she had included a few examples of her favorite recipes, but perhaps there will be a *Wellness Garden Cookbook* one day. I also would have liked to see a little more of the author's effervescent personality, which shines through in her frequent speaking appearances and online writing.

If you or someone you know is seeking wellness for whatever reason, I prescribe Coronado's book—plus time spent in a garden, of course.

—Deb Wiley

Deb Wiley, a Des Moines, Iowa-based garden writer, editor, and photographer, was honored last year as a Fellow of GWA: The Association of Garden Communicators.

GARDENER'S BOOKS

Inspiration for the Edible Garden

PART OF the fun of growing your own vegetables, fruits, and herbs is the ability to try species or varieties that you wouldn't necessarily find in your local grocery store or even at a farmer's market. No matter where you garden, you can grow all sorts of colors, sizes, and flavors of edibles. Here are a few recently published books that will provide plenty of ideas and inspiration for edible gardening.

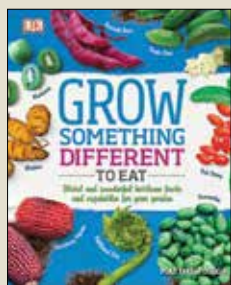
In *Grow What You Love: 12 Food Plant Families to Change Your Life* (Firefly Books, 2018, \$24.95), Emily Murphy encourages readers to “focus on the plants that provide abundance with less space and time.” These include herbs, greens, berries, and even flowers. For the individual plants in each category, Murphy describes how to grow, harvest, and use them. She provides several easy recipes, DIY projects, practical tips, and honest advice on everything from planning your garden to composting.



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Grow Something Different to Eat (DK, 2018, \$21.95) by Matthew Biggs profiles veggies, herbs, and fruits that are sure to add pizzazz to your plate. Plants like cucamelon, honeyberry, and strawberry popcorn taste as exciting as they sound. Sections such as “Crops for Pots,” “Shade-Loving Crops,” and “Crops for Soggy Ground,” help gardeners select the best choices for specific conditions. Biggs also gives step-by-step growing guidelines for each of these less common edibles, along with cooking tips.



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The Illustrated Book of Edible Plants (Gibbs Smith, 2017, \$24.99) is a visually appealing collection of what author Jack Staub calls “85 of the most winning edible plants on the planet.” He includes both well-known and unusual edibles, each charmingly illustrated by Ellen Sheppard Buchert and accompanied by essays about their noteworthy characteristics. You'll also find plenty of fascinating tidbits such as the Taoist importance of the peach, the wartime medicinal benefits of dill in ancient Rome, and the Elizabethan folklore surrounding the artichoke.



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—Mackenzie Nichols, Editorial Intern



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