

# Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

### Paradise on the Hudson

Caroline Seebohm, Timber Press, Portland, OR, 2020. 222 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$27.95.

GARDENS HAVE personalities, often reflecting those of the homeowner. What might one expect, then, from a 120-year-old garden created by a man described as progressive, competitive, iconoclastic, and, oh yes, always sporting an *Odontioda* orchid in his lapel? Author Caroline Seebohm, in her introduction to *Paradise on the Hudson*, promises, “the most original garden landscape in America.” A bold claim, given the wealth of stunning gardens, past and present, both on the Hudson River and off.

The “paradise” is Greystone, the estate of Samuel Untermyer (1858–1940) in Yonkers, a city along the Hudson about 15 miles north of Manhattan. Untermyer made his fortune through his law practice representing and opposing industry titans. With his wife, Minnie, he supported women’s suffrage and many philanthropic and artistic causes. At age 41, he bought the Victorian mansion, Greystone, expanding its land to 150 acres along the banks of the river.

Seebohm regales readers with interwoven tales tying together Untermyer, his garden designer and architect William Welles Bosworth, and the competition with John D. Rockefeller’s nearby estate, Kykuit. Although Greystone’s site, rocky and hilly, presented challenges, Bosworth’s schemes blended motifs from Greece, Italy, Persia, and India. The book’s beautiful historical and contemporary color images of The Temple of Love, Walled Garden, Amphitheater, and Vista feature Bosworth’s penchant for structure. Untermyer, however, preferred horticulture, keeping greenhouses that Bosworth deemed eyesores, and filling the “Color Gardens,” each devoted to a single hue, with thousands of flowers. The dynamic between plantsman and planners plays out through the book.

Seebohm devotes the last two chapters to Greystone’s decline after Untermyer’s death, and its rescue and reopening, led by architect Stephen Byrns. By 2019, the Untermyer Garden Conservancy had been resurrected and the evocative gardens restored, although the work continues. After reading this story of creation, ruin, and revival, you’ll be ready to visit and judge for yourself whether it is indeed America’s “most original garden landscape.”

—Cathy Jean Maloney

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Cathy Jean Maloney is a garden historian who has authored five books on horticultural history. She lives in the Gardener’s Cottage of a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed estate in historic Riverside, Illinois ([www.gardenerscottageriverside.com](http://www.gardenerscottageriverside.com)).

### A Year at Brandywine Cottage:

### Six Seasons of Beauty, Bounty, and Blooms

David L. Culp with Denise Cowie. Timber Press, Portland, OR, 2020. 293 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$35.

DAVID CULP had me at hello with his new book, *A Year at Brandywine Cottage*. Until now, I was not familiar with Culp or his long career as a nurseryman, hellebore breeder, landscape designer, educator, and fellow plant geek. From the very first page, I connected with this book. When asked, “What have you done with your life?” Culp’s response was, “I made a garden, and I can prove that because you’re reading this book.”

*A Year at Brandywine Cottage* is Culp’s opus, his artist’s masterpiece. The book is a celebration of Culp’s 30-year love story with the two-acre property located in Downingtown, Pennsylvania (USDA Zone 7).

Divided into six “seasons” of beauty, bounty, and blooms, Culp invites the reader on a month-by-month tour of his gardens, beginning with February. Each month gives the reader not only information on specific plants in his gardens, but tested garden practices, beautiful visuals, and recipes to try from garden harvests. Reminiscent of Martha Stewart’s lifestyle books, *A Year at Brandywine Cottage* is not only for the seasoned gardener but a newbie as well. Culp offers us many of his pearls of wisdom on gardening including, “The act of gardening is a display of optimism,” “Remember we do this (garden chore) because we love it,” and “for the most part the gardener’s role is simple referee,” to name just a few.

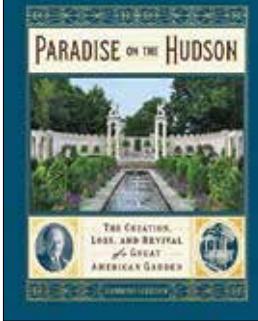
July offers practical design principles such as “Repetition, Repetition, Repetition.” August contains a good list of waterwise plants as Brandywine Cottage’s two acres are not irrigated or sprayed with herbicides, only handweeded. September includes his favorite list of weeds because as he says, “If you’re going to have a garden you’re going to have weeds.” December’s advice resonated: “Winter is not a dead season—we are just called upon to look at it a different way.”

Culp sums up by noting, “We are part of nature too. It’s man with nature—and unless we view it that way we will lose.” In light of our challenges today, it a philosophy we all hopefully embrace.

—Stephanie Dalton

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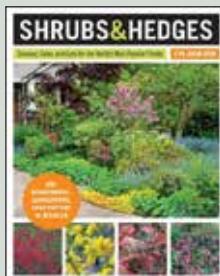
Stephanie Dalton is a Chicago-area horticulturist and landscape designer with more than 30 years experience. She is currently a partner at Can’t ContainHer and Edens Gate Design.



## GARDENER'S BOOKS: GARDENING BASICS

TWO NEW guide books offer inspiration for how to use plants to enrich our home spaces plus in-depth care instructions. Shrubs and hedges create privacy, valuable habitat, and four-season interest. Growing plants in containers gives myriad ways to add color and fragrance almost anywhere.

### Shrubs & Hedges: Discover, Grow, and Care for the World's Most Popular Plants



(Cool Springs Press, 2020, \$30). This comprehensive guide by Eva Monheim covers a wide range of evergreen and deciduous shrubs for the

home landscape. In addition to profiles of species by desired usage, the book includes in-depth information on pruning, propagation, and more, including advice on planting for pollinators and other wildlife and designing for winter interest. This reference is essential reading for both novice and experienced gardeners.

### Container and Fragrant Gardens (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020, \$18.99).



Explore the possibilities of container gardening with this useful reference guide from Peter Loewer. Loewer walks readers through the basics of container

selection and design with a wide-ranging list of plants suitable for growing in pots. The second half of the book dives into gardening for fragrance, opening with a discussion about fragrance trends before moving on to plant care and maintenance and a section on recommended fragrant plants from annuals and perennials to roses, shrubs, and houseplants.

—Heather Prince, Associate Editor

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