



By the Book

Take a leaf out of these gorgeous gardening books, or wrap them up for under the Christmas tree, says landscape designer Franchesca Watson

1 *Gardens in Perspective*

JERRY HARPUR (MITCHELL BEAZLEY)

Photographing gardens is not easy, but Jerry Harpur is a master – he has spent a lifetime photographing gardens and this book is a consummate overview of his life's work. Not only has he portrayed images spanning decades of garden design, but he has written the text himself, revealing his thorough understanding of the design, which separates his work from so many others. The book covers various themes and offers insight into Harpur's own interests, preferences and masterful understanding of light and luck. There is also a wealth of information and anecdotes about garden designers and owners – fascinating.

2 *The Garden Source*

ANDREA JONES (RIZZOLI)

Another book from a photographer, this is a source book with images from gardens in England, Europe, America, Japan and Brazil. This comprehensive picture library is divided into four main sections: Connect, Divide, Space and Style, with many subsections to each. Each picture is captioned well and cleverly arranged to offer literally hundreds of design solutions. There is a helpful index and additional lists of gardens, designers, festivals and so on, making it very useful.

3 *Food Plants of the World*

BEN-ERIK VAN WYK (BRIZA)

Written by a Professor of Botany at the University of Johannesburg, this book features 350 plants that can be found in restaurants or markets all over the world. There are informative lists at the beginning, such as cold and warm-climate fruits, spices, beverage plants and nuts. Each plant has a page with photographs and information, including cultivation, nutrition and origin. I've found it particularly useful for planning food gardens, sorting out fact from fiction.

4 *Green*

BRENDAN MOAR (LIFESTYLE)

Written by a hunky Australian gardening television host, this book is a useful and inspiring read. Taking its theme as dry-spell gardening, which translates as being climate aware, it guides you through the process of making the best choices for your environment, and how to have the least impact. The pictures are good and the ideas relevant, particularly when it comes to new materials, and, as always, the information from down under is practical, cheerful and uncomplicated – a lot of fun.

5 *Futurescapes*

TIM RICHARDSON (THAMES & HUDSON)

Landscape critic Tim Richardson can

be relied upon to deliver a deeply contemporary viewpoint with fresh and intelligent commentary. He gives an overview of 50 landscape-design firms from all over the world, including Gauteng's GreenInc (Freedom Park, Forum Homini, etc). Over 40 are from Europe and North America, including some old favourites such as Piet Oudolf and Dan Pearson, but there is also masterful material from the likes of Landscape India, Turenscape in Beijing and Vladimir Djurovic in Lebanon. A host of rather amazing images accompany the text, providing much food for thought along modernist lines.

6 *The Art of Creative Pruning*

JAKE HOBSON (TIMBER PRESS)

This book is not just about 'how to', but about the creative possibilities that clipping plants can yield. Jake Hobson started pruning while training in sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art. I like his approach: 'Clip hard, be brave and learn from your mistakes', and the way he blends practical information with philosophical and aesthetic considerations. There is also an informative chapter on Eastern Influence, which enhances nature.

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