

Arnoldia Reviews



January. From To Everything There Is A Season.

To Everything There Is A Season. Thalasso Cruso. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1973. 309 pages, illustrated. \$6.95.

Like its two predecessors, this book raises the question: for whom has it been written: beginning gardeners, old-time gardeners who seek polishing, modern ecologists of the lay variety, or for the author herself? Probably all are addressed, but Miss Cruso is primarily a spokesman for herself. The work is a subjective distillation of her newspaper columns in the form of essays bearing a calendar format, but in no sense a horticultural calendar. Much of the work is autobiographical and the recollections of her English childhood are seldom relevant to horticulture, but more sociologically and historically illuminating.

The work is splendid for the account of the evolution of an individual's development of horticultural acumen, emphasizing the "look it up," "try it another way" empirical approach to problems. Valuable portions deal with shopping for plants, repotting and growing-on techniques; devices like shaping a bough to order by weighting it with a bagful of stones; revelations that white-flowering pelargoniums (geraniums) are difficult to flower indoors; the desirability of abandoning greenhouse benches (advice with which this reviewer concurs). It's a fine book for reading in winter when you can't garden. Do not, however, buy it for your young niece who is on a hanging-philodendron-in-the-window kick. Said niece will not know what is being talked about, for this is *not* a work for the novice.

The writing in some areas is over-contrived. For example, an allusion to ". . . the red snouts of the peonies" was found far from felicitous. Nevertheless, this is a handsome, well-set volume incorporating a very useful index.

ELINOR B. TROWBRIDGE

Plum Crazy, A book about beach plums. Elizabeth Post Mirel. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. 1973. 144 pages, illustrated with drawings. \$5.95.

The beach Plum, *Prunus maritima*, native and restricted to the eastern shores of North America from Maine to Virginia, was described as new to science by Humphrey Marshall of Pennsylvania in 1785. Earlier the Pilgrims had described the fruit in letters to England, comparing it to damson plums. Explorers and travelers had encountered the plant, and a Hessian officer, fighting for the British in the Revolutionary War, had taken seeds to Germany. By the early 1800's several horticultural selections had been made and were offered by local nurseries. But in spite of its beauty as a flowering shrub, which also produces a useful fruit, the beach plum is infrequently cultivated in the 1970's.

Making beach plum jelly remains a cottage industry. Perhaps this charming book, well-written after much research, and illustrated with appealing drawings by Betty Fraser, will change all this. The plant deserves to be grown in home landscaping plantings, and Ms. Mirel's suggestions for the use of the fruit offer many opportunities for experimentation.

RICHARD A. HOWARD

Land Above the Trees: A Guide to American Alpine Tundra. Ann H. Zwinger and Beatrice E. Willard. New York: Harper and Row. 1972. 489 pages, 230 line drawings, 45 color plates. \$15.00.

Occasionally a book comes along that fills a complete void and is so excellent in its treatment that it will be difficult to improve upon it for a long time. This is such a book. It is the first comprehensive work dealing with the ecology of the alpine tundra of the United States. The areas covered in detail are the Colorado Rockies, the Sierra Nevada of California, the White Mountains in Great Basin on the Nevada — California border, Mount Hood and Mount Ranier in the Cascades of Oregon and Washington, the Olympic Mountains of Washington, and Mount Washington in the New Hampshire White Mountains.

Most of the many line drawings by Ann Zwinger are fine, but in a few cases some of the wispiest ones would seem to be more useful in bolder outline. These drawings should be very helpful in identification of the plant material as was intended.

Sixty pages are devoted to a "comprehensive listing" of alpine plants giving the flower color, blooming time, type of habitat, distribution in the United States and throughout the rest of the world.

A brief glossary deals mostly with terms in the book associated with alpine conditions and there is a valuable series of references covering eleven pages.

This book should appeal to a wide audience consisting, at least, of rock gardeners, ecologists, botanists, artists, photographers and lovers of the outdoors in general.

The authors seem to feel that each plant should have a common name, and if none exists they have translated the scientific name literally, resulting in some odd epithets.

If your background in botany is so poor that you are not familiar with woolly kittentails, owl clover, mousetails, whitlow-worts, elephantelles, bastard toadflax, monkeyflowers, bladder-pods, billberries, pussypaws, eyebrights, chimneybells, viviparous bistorts, sticky sky pilots, louseworts, and kinnikinniks, and if you are unfamiliar with the genera, *Smelowskia*, *Leutkea*, *Lesquerella*, *Lloydia*, *Phyllodoce*, *Oxyria*, *Erysimum*, *Eritrichium*, *Thlaspi*, and *Zygadenus*, all is not lost. This book will fill you in. You will, also, be able to tell a fellfield and a solifluction terrace from a krummholz if anyone should ask!

GEORGE H. PRIDE

A Traveler's Guide to North American Gardens. Harry Britton Logan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1974. 253 pages, illustrated. \$15.00.

This directory of arboreta and botanical gardens in North America, including Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Canada, would be a useful book for interested travelers. It is illustrated with black and white and colored photographs of some of the gardens, and is alphabetized according to state and then by cities and towns within each state. Many national and state parks, famous nurseries, tourist information bureaus, and plant societies also are included.

There are several errors in the information given about the Arnold Arboretum, which might apply as well to other gardens and arboreta listed. I do not think this book is worthy of the price.

ROSEMARY WALSH

The ABC of Indoor Plants. Jocelyn Baines and Katherine Key. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1973. 192 pages, 300 full color illustrations. \$12.50.

As this book's title indicates, it is a primer. Its avowed purpose is to introduce the indoor gardener to the very basic information concerning propagation, cultivation, and growth characteristics of some 300 house plants. It carries the amateur beyond the usual philodendron, *Ficus elastica* stage, introducing him to many of the more exotic and rewarding, but still easily-grown genera.

Concise, descriptive paragraphs in large print accompanied by beautifully-reproduced and detailed photographs comprise the text. An outstanding feature is the use of a symbol system for plant requirements and characteristics. Incorporated in each paragraph, its simple diagrammatic illustrations eliminate redundancy in description. Index and glossary by which common names, botanical names, and families can be cross-referenced easily make the book most useful for the less-than-scientific reader as well as the more sophisticated house plant enthusiast.

What seems to be another coffee-table decoration at first glance, becomes upon inspection a delightfully informative working addition to the indoor gardener's library.

BARBARA O. EPSTEIN

Jamaica, A Vacation Guide. Ian Sangster. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1974. 96 pages, illustrated. \$4.95.

This brief volume with some illustrations (black and white), maps, and uncomfortably small print, is an excellent guide to the island of Jamaica, before, during, or after a visit. The text is unusually and disarmingly frank in its discussion of history, race and color, modern social problems, scenic values or the difficulties of climbing certain hills, or visiting certain areas (take a compass, there will be no one to help you if you get lost.) I looked for a special section on botanic gardens, to no avail, for the data is scattered in area studies. My favorite spot, the Institute of Jamaica, deserves more emphasis. Highly recommended.

RICHARD A. HOWARD

Environmental Boomerang. Leonard J. Webb. Australia: The Jacaranda Press. 1973. 126 pages, illustrated. \$3.85. (Available in the United States from Richard Abel & Company, Post Office Box 4245, Portland, Oregon 97208)

The catchy title supports the fact that man's misuse of his environment will return to challenge his ability to survive on this planet. Webb calls this "a problem without boundaries"; this volume is written for Australians about Australia. Five case histories are presented on the topics of soil erosion, killing of wildlife, water pollution, air pollution, and sensory stimuli and stress from noise and crowding. The illustrations are frightening graphic documentation. The author is very practical in discussing "the Criteria for Conservation," and the book ends with an excellent summary of "Ecological Principles in Practice."

This short volume is a forceful treatment of the subject by a competent scientist who is concerned about his homeland. The same text could be written for the United States, yet those who tried have not had comparable success. We recommend that you read *Environmental Boomerang* and take heed.

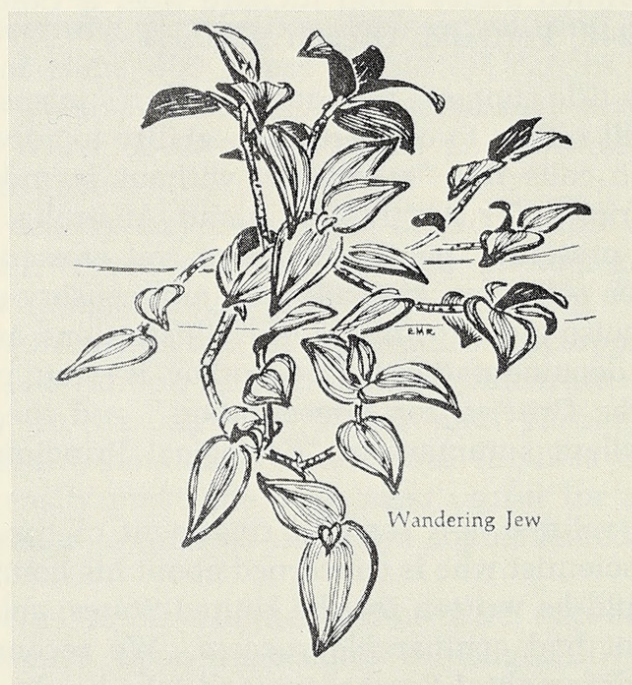
RICHARD A. HOWARD

Greenworks. Judith Handelsman and Sara Baerwald. New York: Macmillan. 1974. 182 pages, illustrated. \$5.95.

This is an arch, infantile, breathless, ungrammatical, overly-enthusiastic manual on how to grow the particular plants that the young authors coincidentally vend somewhere in Manhattan. It is tedious in its overuse of such epithets about the plants as "perky, bouncy . . ." The term "hardy" is frequently used when apparently "durable" is intended.

The book is written in the first person by two authors who exude an awareness of the state of ignorance in which they took up minor horticulture; a state in which this reader feels they remain. This is unkind; actually this is the book to buy for that young person who is pulsating with "good earth" identification and has the pocketbook to go into the Schefflera/Maranta/Tradescantia route of self-expression. In case you think I am too brutal, try this quotation: "(Scales) . . . remind me of shiny turtle-like warts." In the jargon of the authors, if you are over twenty-five this work will drive you up a wall although you are not a vine. If you are younger, this little manual may satisfy your immediate horticultural needs.

ELINOR B. TROWBRIDGE



Wandering Jew. From Greenworks.

Conradi Gesneri Historia Plantarum. H. Zoller, M. Steinmann, and K. Schmid (eds.). 1972. Zurich, Switzerland: Urs Graf-Verlag Dietikon. 106 pages, illustrated. \$250.00.

Conrad Gessner (1516–1565) was called by Cuvier the Pliny of the Middle Ages. He was variously Professor of Greek at the University of Lausanne, Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Natural History at the University of Zurich. Among his accomplishments were a *Bibliotheca Universalis* one-volume folio, 1545, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and *Mithridates de differentiis linguis*, 1555, an account of about 130 languages with the Lord's Prayer in 22 of them!

Among biologists Gessner is remembered for an *Historia Animalium* (1551–1558) published in four volumes folio. He planned a companion *Historia Plantarum* but this was never published due to his death from the Plague. Various of his illustrations were used by Kaspar Wolf and Joachim Camerarius the Younger. In 1751–1771 Casimir Christoph Schmiedel edited two volumes containing some 74 of his illustrations. The entire corpus of Gessner's materials was acquired by the Library of the University of Erlangen where it still remains.

The present volume printed in the German language and in folio format, with pages $18 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches, is a sumptuous presentation of some 27 leaves of water colors from the Erlanger collection. The reproduction is superb. The critical apparatus, transcription, identification, and annotations seem to be full and accurate.

Five hundred and fifty numbered copies have been printed. Most, no doubt, will be purchased by libraries. It is to be hoped however, that there still remain a few private individuals who appreciate beauty and revere the names of famous men.

GORDON P. DEWOLF

Gardening With Wild Flowers. Frances Tenenbaum. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1973. 206 pages, illustrated. \$7.95.

The cliché "you can't tell a book from its cover" truly applies to this volume. A major error in identification relates to the colorful jacket and is repeated on page 139. The plant at the left, partially cut off in reproduction, is the "native blue elderberry," not the "exotic-looking tall plants in the center" which

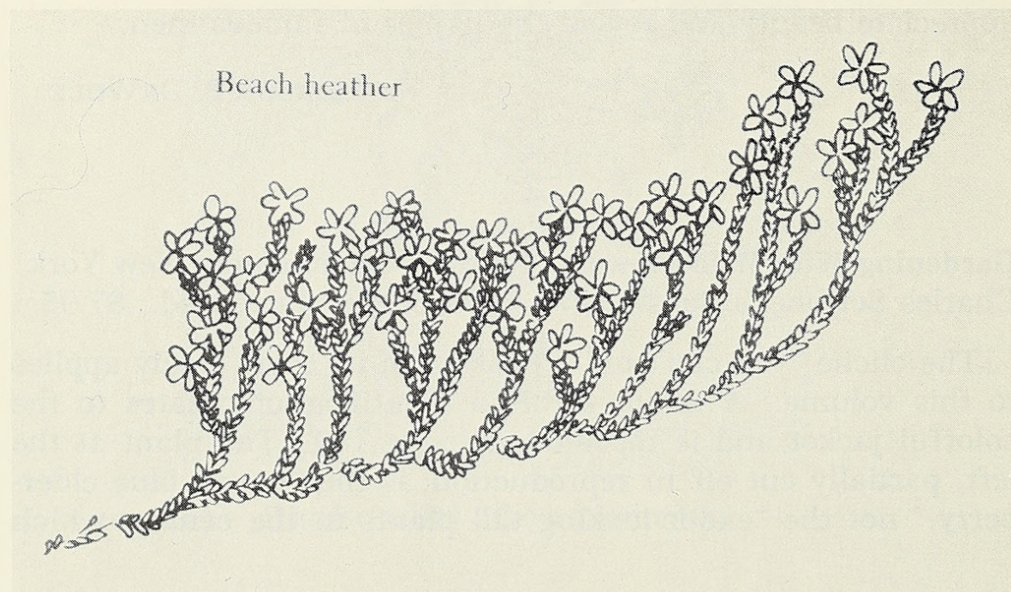
are a member of the Umbelliferae, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, from Europe.

The author has accepted a broad definition of "wild flowers," including many plants native to foreign lands, that have become established in America as weeds or escaped garden plants. Horticultural varieties are often confused as "wild flowers" in the text and the illustrations.

The gardening aspect of this book has been divided into chapters of application as ground covers, ferns, woodland gardens, seashore gardens, meadows and ponds and bogs, and in basic chapters on culture of wild flowers, as well as collecting and buying. A chapter on "poisonous plants and edible plants" is well written but no supporting references are given there, and only one on poisonous plants appears in the "selected bibliography." Many plants are mentioned in several categories and described in detail but once. When used subsequently in the text, the plant name is followed with an asterisk indicating a discussion elsewhere which causes the reader to refer to the index. Rarely does one criticize an index, but this one, essential to the use of this book, is woefully inadequate. The plants mentioned under "meadows," for example, are not included in the index and other references are lacking.

The author is frank in stating what is included and what is omitted from this book. The information given is based on her own experience and herein lies the value of this volume. It is a useful book for the beginning gardener who wishes to use wild flowers in appropriate garden locations and needs to know their culture and propagation.

RICHARD A. HOWARD



Beach Heather. From Gardening With Wild Flowers.

Terrarium Gardening. Jack Kramer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1974. 146 pages, illustrated. \$9.95.

The Complete Book of Terrariums. Charles Marden Fitch. New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc. 1974. 150 pages, illustrated. \$8.95.

Fun With Terrarium Gardening. Virginie and George A. Elbert. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 1973. 144 pages, illustrated. \$5.95.

It is difficult for an author to come up with anything original when he is writing on a subject as popular as terrariums. In fact, judging from the covers of these three books, it's even hard to find a distinctive title.

Each of the authors under scrutiny covers the standard topics: types of terrariums and their selection, how to plan and assemble, accessories, types of plant materials, care after planting, and sources of supply.

Jack Kramer is seriously at fault for not stressing the importance of proper light in the maintenance of all types of terrariums; in fact, he dismisses the matter with just a few lines, inaccurately suggesting that the "desert or tropical garden will tolerate more light, perhaps a few hours of late afternoon sun." He also falls short by giving only brief descriptions of the plants he recommends, without noting characteristics such as aggressive tendencies, need for dormancy, or special care. The book is beautifully illustrated with fine drawings and photographs, both black and white and colored. A detailed appendix with tabular lists of plants for various uses is included, but there is no index for ready reference.

Charles Marden Fitch has produced a good, basic guide that lives up to its title in most respects. His step-by-step planting instructions are clear and explicit, and he includes a useful section on propagating terrarium plants, as well as one on growing orchids which usually are not included in such plantings. The book is well-indexed, profusely illustrated, and offers a long and diversified list of recommended plants with useful notations on many.

The Elbert guide accurately and successfully delineates the pitfalls as well as the pleasures of terrarium gardening. Emphasizing artificial light culture, as might be expected (George Elbert is president of the Indoor Light Gardening Society of

America), *Fun With Terrarium Gardening* offers pertinent comments on the plants described, and details the actual building of a basic terrarium in 24 pages of how-to text and photographs. A section devoted to terrariums of many kinds focuses on their contents and explains how they were assembled; bottle gardens also are noted briefly.

JEANNE S. WADLEIGH

Wildflowers of Alabama and Adjoining States. Blanche E. Dean, Amy Mason and Joab L. Thomas. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press. 1973. 230 pages, illustrated. \$10.00.

This volume is a welcome addition to the recommended list of books on wildflowers of a state for local residents and visitors. The book will apply to Mississippi, Georgia, northern Florida and Tennessee. Every species is illustrated with excellent photographs in color well reproduced in soft tones; many of them are truly works of art. Dr. Thomas has supplied concise, easily read botanical descriptions offering flowering times, distribution, and comments on the plants' frequency or need for protection. The volume contains plates of line drawings illustrating the technical terms used; a glossary; and a combined index to common and scientific names. The plants are arranged by families in the sequence of more technical floras.

Dr. Thomas, now a university dean with administrative responsibilities, was formerly a member of the staff of the Arnold Arboretum.

RICHARD A. HOWARD

Lectures on Photomorphogenesis. H. Mohr. New York: Springer-Verlag. 1972. 237 pages. \$14.80.

Although beyond the interest of most readers of *Arnoldia*, we call attention to this volume based on a series of lectures given by the author at the University of Massachusetts. The emphasis of the volume is the response of the plant to light.

Various chapters have a bearing on horticultural practices and knowledge, such as the effects of light on the germination of seeds, the developments of seedlings and of pigments, and the induction of flowering. Work on higher vascular plants and ferns, fungi and liverworts is included. A bibliography of 303 titles is supplied. The volume is an excellent scientific review of the topic.

RICHARD A. HOWARD



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