

Gardening with the Library

In Indiana, "setting out a garden" usually means starting up a plot of vegetables. However, as you stand with your cup of coffee looking out the window, what do you see? A rewarding vista, with flowering trees, shrubs, and glorious plants in full bloom? Or is your view a startling reminder of neglect, with sullen trees and plants trying to adapt to the conditions you've given them? May is no time for inertia; it's actually a great time to beautify your yard! Make the library your first stop, because we can provide you with reading materials to help you make your garden worthy of the name.

Your Bartholomew County Public Library has an extensive, up-to-date collection of gardening books and magazines - as well as occasional programs - to inspire the under-motivated and help the veteran gardener. Are you considering a new plan for your garden? You don't need to hire an expensive landscape architect, because the library has all kinds of books to help you get ideas. I especially like *The Garden Planner*, by Peter McHoy, *The Low-Maintenance Garden*, by Susan Berry, *Making the Most of Your Own Backyard*, a Sunset publication that is a very practical guide towards making your backyard more livable, and *Dreamscaping*, by Ruth Rogers Clausen. *Front Yard Gardens*, by Liz Primeau offers a new approach for those who are intrigued with the idea of walking through a cottage flower garden to get to their front door.

If you live in an older home, and your yard has become over-crowded with rangy shrubs, tangled vines, and trees that looked great a few years ago, but now are producing so much shade that nothing in your yard seems to thrive any more, *The Natural Shade Garden* by Ken Druse can prevent you from cutting it all down and help you cope with the situation by working with, rather than against the shade to create a beautiful and garden books.

The Well-Tended Perennial Garden, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust is an insurance policy for success with these valuable plants that can last for years if handled properly. Books like these can be referred to before your gardening problems arise. There are also single-subject books (or monographs) on roses, clematis, orchids, begonias, cacti, etc. It is amazing, the variety we offer. Do the deer treat your garden like a salad bar? Read *Deerproofing Your Yard & Garden*, by Rhonda Hart. All gardens have bugs. *Good Bugs For Your Garden*, by Allison Starcher can change your perspective.

We also have several books on gardening for the disabled and for children. We carry garden periodicals or magazines that circulate (except for current issues). Titles include *Horticulture*, *Fine Gardening*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Organic Gardening*, and *The Herb Companion*.

One of the most profound experiences in working with the gardening collection is the presence of so many Memorial Books, lovingly given by a friend or family member in memory of another. It is a touching reminder that our gardens often live on long after we are gone, and family or friends who knew that gardening was our passion honor it with the gift of a book to the library. For those who have given a Memorial Book on this - or any other topic - Thank you.

Suzanne Smith is a Reference Librarian at Bartholomew County Public Library