



What To Do While Waiting for spring: Read Some Garden Books!

By Lynne Brosch, UCCE Master Gardener of Lake Tahoe

There is a new trend toward more natural landscaping being promoted by many garden book authors. I recently purchased a home with almost a half-acre of yard. I am not interested in running my lawn mower around all that yard so I am looking for ways to allow it to be more natural. I would like to restore it to the landscape that existed before the home was built. I am also interested in promoting the development of a more ecologically sound environment that will be and inducement to wildlife and pollinators. The main key to this type of environment is restoring native plants. With this in mind I have purchased a large number of garden books that will help me in my plans and I highly recommend these books to the general reader as well.

A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future by Benjamin Vogt (New Society Publishers, Canada, 2017)

Mr. Vogt expresses the idea of considering our landscape or garden ethic. By this he means that we should consider our personal perspective on how to share our garden with all species and to look beyond our desire for our yard to show beauty and usefulness to fulfill our entertainment needs. Even though he tends to run a bit over philosophical I think he provides great food for thought on our gardening purposes.



The Drought-Defying California Garden: 230 Native Plants for a Lush, Low-Water Landscape by Greg Rubin and Lucy Warren (Timber Press, 2016)

This book provides a good description and nice color photos of many native plants that would prove useful in turning your yard into a native landscape. Each plant description provides information on size, growing conditions, and water needs. The book also covers irrigation, mulching and pruning as plants grow larger. It is an excellent basic book on natives.

Wildlife in Your Garden: Planting and Landscaping to Create a Backyard Sanctuary, edited by Karen Lanier (Lumina Media, LLC, 2016)

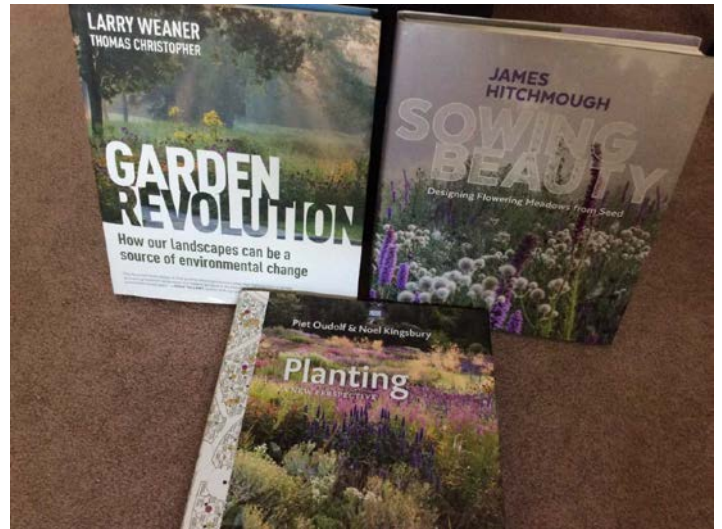
This is a beautiful book with so many colorful photographs that enhance all the wonderfully detailed instructions on how to encourage insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and an even more extensive section on birds. Birdscaping is covered in detail with instructions on the variety of birds you might expect, their breeding habits, kinds of nesting boxes and where to place feeders and what feed is best to use. Plants best used to encourage all forms of wildlife are covered as well as how to develop a safe ecosystem that can be enjoyed by all focusing on you and your pets' safety.

Sowing Beauty: Designing Flowering Meadows from Seed by James Hitchmough (Timber Press, 2017)

This book focuses more on the use of seed mixtures to design a natural plant community and how to establish and manage the growth of this meadow. The sample projects described are primarily in the United Kingdom and this large book is not one to read cover to cover but to peruse for the ideas that might be garnered in thinking natural meadow landscape. The photographs are worth a look.

Planting: A New Perspective by Piet Oudolf & Noel Kingsbury (Timber Press, 2013)

Again this is not a book that will provide the how to as much as the ideas and planting designs to peruse for encouraging more natural plantings. The authors focus on the changes in European gardens to enhance the more natural landscape.



Garden Revolution: How our landscapes can be a source of environmental change by Larry Weaner and Thomas Christopher (Timber Press, 2016)

The authors define the idea of ecological gardening and its history. They move on to defining all the parameters of an ecological garden and its importance in today's climate and environmental challenges. They delve into the how-to of setting up a master plan to redesign your landscape from the soil to the plantings to the plans for encouraging wildlife. The glorious photographs alone are worth looking through this book. If you don't have the urge to convert your landscape after looking at this book I would be quite surprised!

Enjoy checking out some of these books and I will be back in another newsletter with even more of the books on eco-gardening that I have been enjoying.