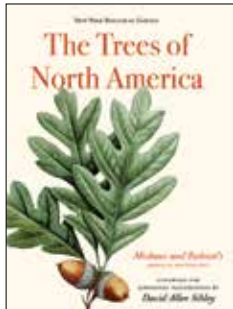


Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

The Trees of North America

New York Botanical Garden. Abbeville Press, New York, NY, 2017. 392 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$49.95.

COINCIDING WITH its 125th anniversary this year, the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) has released *The Trees of North America: Michaux and Redouté's American Masterpiece*. This beautiful book is a reorganized, updated, and easy-to-read version of *The North American Sylva*, which was first published as an English translation in 1817. At the time, it was considered the preeminent authority on North American trees, and this edition promises to be equally well respected.



First, the modern-day reader is introduced to François-André Michaux

and his father, André. Their commission to catalog, propagate, and deliver new world trees to France provided the expertise François-André would later use to author the first editions of *The North American Sylva*. In the 1840s, the English naturalist Thomas Nuttall added a three-volume supplement that included trees of the western and southern regions of the continent.

Most of the book consists of 277 full-page color plates with descriptions that include the scientific and common name originally ascribed by Michaux or Nuttall, as well as modern common and scientific nomenclature. In the afterword, David Allen Sibley, renowned ornithologist and talented artist in his own right, provides fascinating insight into the botanical illustrations and printing technology of the age, highlighting the “undisputed master of the genre,” Pierre-Joseph Redouté, whose techniques of illustration are employed by many naturalist artists to this day.

The Trees of North America also includes a useful reference section penned by members of the NYBG staff. Short, yet detailed “treatments” below a thumbnail of the corresponding plate provide interesting facts about each tree, such as growth habit, range, and a bit of related history. Did you know, for example, that William Bligh’s first attempt to introduce Tahitian breadfruit to the British West Indies was unsuccessful because of the notorious mutiny on the *HMS Bounty* in 1789?

An important addition to any plant and tree lover’s library, this meticulous makeover of a treasured work still conveys a late enlightenment-era enthusiasm for scientific knowledge, provides a connection to the rich history of American naturalism, and offers a splendid resource for the modern enthusiast or professional.

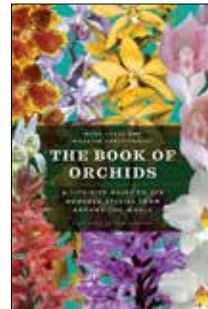
—Jason Doran

Jason Doran is a certified arborist and landscape designer based in Boise, Idaho.

The Book of Orchids

Mark Chase, Maarten Christenhusz, and Tom Mirenda. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 2017. 656 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$55.

IF YOU'RE looking for a book about how to grow orchids, *The Book of Orchids* is not it. If you are looking for a compendium on these plants, with clean design and a fondness for common names, this hefty five-pound opus will do the trick. Authors Mark Chase and Maarten Christenhusz are established botanists affiliated with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England, and Tom Mirenda has curated orchids at the Smithsonian Institution in the United States. Together, they bring years of expertise, the latest authoritative research,



and up-to-date nomenclature to this panoramic guide.

While most orchid overviews tackle a more limited range of genera and then explore the diversity within, *The Book of Orchids* takes a broader approach. Nearly two-thirds of the known 749 orchid genera from around the globe are represented within its pages—a striking achievement. The authors concentrate on 600 of the world’s 26,000 species, and generally highlight only one species per genus, to celebrate the sweeping scope of the orchid family. (Species and genus totals are per taxonomist Chase’s sometimes hotly contested counts, given the constantly changing classification of orchids.)

Each species gets a full page packed with detail: a line drawing of plant habit, color photograph of flower, succinct table listing habitat, range, bloom time, and conservation status. A couple of descriptive paragraphs provide technical jargon, name derivations, pollinator information, and interesting tidbits. My favorite bizarre anecdote was the Sinhalese legend of the crazed, incest-seeking behavior of a princess who had ingested the pseudobulb of a daffodil orchid (*Ipsea speciosa*), which is still used today in local love potions.

The photo of each orchid’s flower is printed at actual size; for very small flowers, a scaled up version is also shown on the same page. All flower images are silhouetted against a white background, which works well overall, but sometimes pieces of a flower are distractingly outlined, unnaturally jagged, or completely missing.

Quibbles aside, *The Book of Orchids* is a worthy reference, especially for understanding and appreciating the diversity of these fascinating plants. The text is more dense than the uncluttered layout suggests, but that just means that you’ll get lots of meat-and-potato fundamentals along with eye-catching dessert.

—judywhite

judywhite is the author/photographer of Taylor’s Guide to Orchids (Houghton Mifflin) and Bloom-Again Orchids (Timber Press).

GARDENER'S BOOKS: SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCULENTS

SUCCULENTS BIG and small are the stars of the show in the following books. Newcomers to the world of succulents will discover its inhabitants come in a stunningly eccentric array of forms, colors, and textures. These recently published books provide insightful and expert advice on growing these plants both indoors and out.

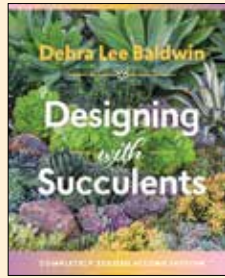
If you don't know the difference between a cactus's areole spines and glochids, or



between a thorn and a prickle, **Success with Succulents** (Cool Springs Press, 2017, \$24.99) by John Bagnasco and Bob Reidmuller will prove most enlightening.

The book's first half reviews the physiology of succulents and takes readers through the process of choosing, growing, and caring for these plants. The second half of the book features a list of 100 favorites, while sidebars discuss the cultural significance of succulents such as agaves, aloes, and peyote.

In **Designing with Succulents** (Timber Press, 2017, \$34.95), Debra Lee Baldwin ex-



plores how to use succulents in garden design. "Like seashells and snowflakes, succulent foliage forms patterns that illustrate nature's innate geometry," writes

Baldwin, whose book not only extols the aesthetic potential of succulents, but breaks down design techniques such as use of contrasting colors and textures. Baldwin shows how succulents can either mimic the natural, as in a fountain cascade, or the artificial, aligned like a mosaic or living chessboard.

Prick (Mitchell Beazley, 2017, \$19.99) is



a colorful chronicle of the succulent and cacti boutique with the same name that author Gynelle Leon runs in East London. Leon describes her collection as "living sculptures" that are "well suited to modern city living." Some of the

most intriguing include: *Crassula* 'Buddha's Temple' with overlapping leaves that resemble a pagoda; liver plant (*Pleiospilos nelii*), a speckled stone succulent; and burro's tail (*Sedum morganianum*), sporting leaves that overlap like a chain.

—Aaron Dorman, Editorial Intern

DON'T STOP BELEAFING.



The Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park is located on the grounds of the old Traverse City State Hospital and serves as a year-round sanctuary of preservation, recreation and education in northern Michigan. From the enchanting Walled Garden to the soothing sounds of the fountains and the swaying of the branches along the Maple Allee, the Botanic Garden's 26 acres are a place of renewal and reflection, nurturing the soul and enlivening our history. Please visit thebotanicgarden.org to learn more.