



Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East

Ms. Carolyn Summers

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Gardeners, with all good fortune and flora, are endowed with love for a hobby that has profound potential for positive change. The beautifully illustrated *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East* approaches landscape design from an ecological perspective, encouraging professional horticulturalists and backyard enthusiasts alike to intensify their use of indigenous or native plants. These plants, ones that grow naturally in the same place in which they evolved, form the basis of the food web. Wildlife simply cannot continue to survive without them-nor can we.

Why indigenous plants, you may ask? What makes them so special to butterflies and bees and boys and girls? For Carolyn Summers, the answer is as natural as an ephemeral spring wildflower or berries of the gray dogwood, "As I studied indigenous plants, a strange thing happened. The plants grew on me. I began to love the plants themselves for their own unique qualities, quite apart from their usefulness in providing food and shelter for wildlife.

Emphasizing the importance of indigenous plant gardening and landscape design, Summers provides guidelines for skilled sowers and budding bloomers. She highlights . . .

- The best ways to use exotic and non-indigenous plants responsibly
- Easy-to-follow strategies for hosting wildlife in fields, forests, and gardens
- Designs for traditional gardens using native trees, shrubs, groundcovers as substitutes for exotic plants
- Examples of flourishing plant communities from freshwater streams to open meadows
- How to control plant reproduction, choose cultivars, open-pollinated indigenous plants, and different types of hybrids, and practice "safe sex in the garden"

From Maine to Kentucky and up and down the East Coast, *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East* lays the "gardenwork" for protecting natural areas through the thoughtful planting of indigenous plants. Finally we can bask in the knowledge that it is possible to have loads of fun at the same time we are growing a better world.

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