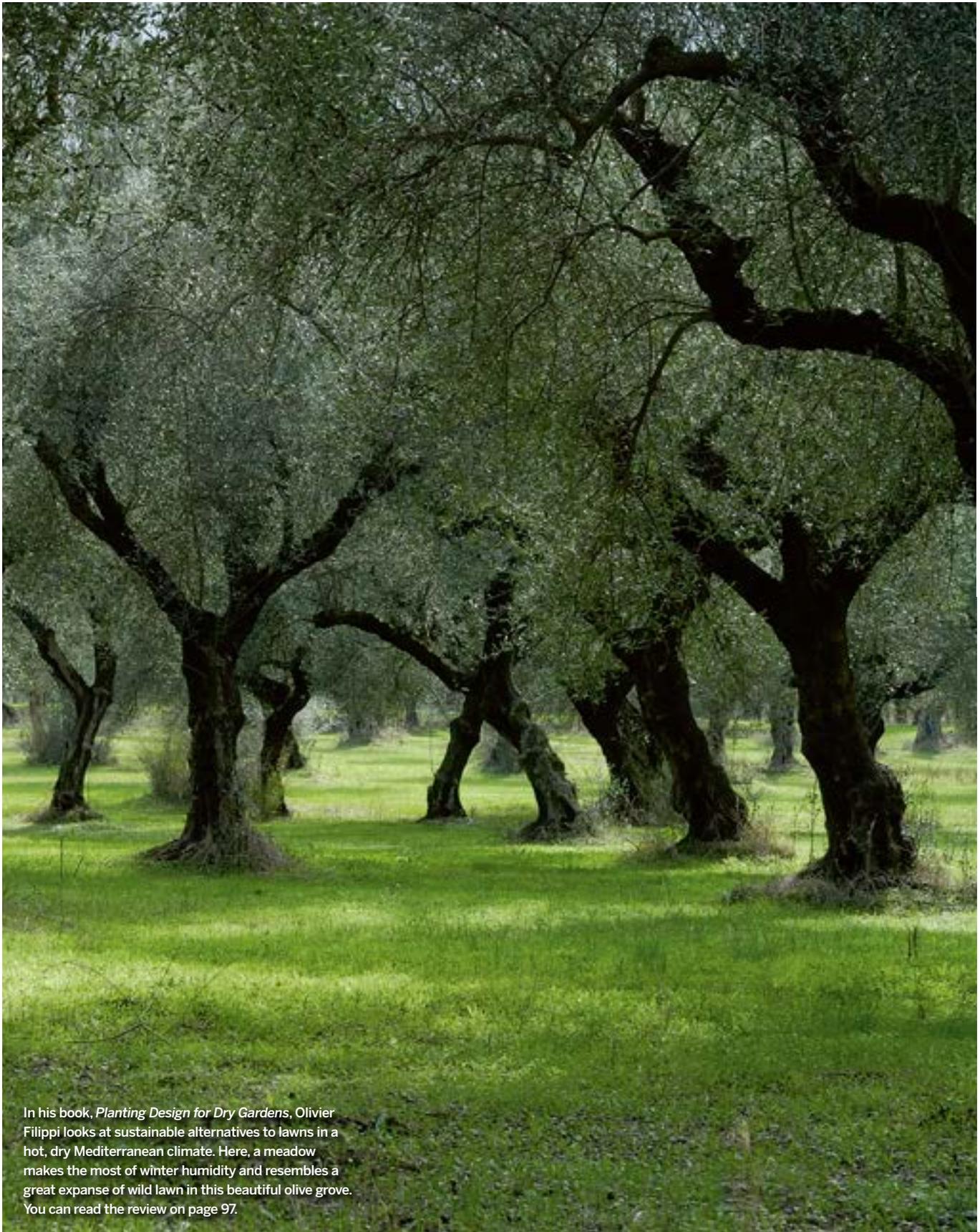


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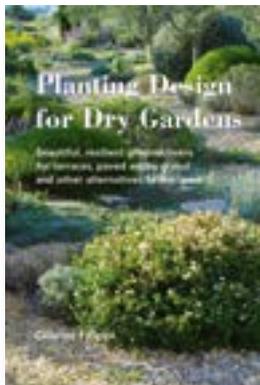
Book reviews, crossword, back issues, shop



In his book, *Planting Design for Dry Gardens*, Olivier Filippi looks at sustainable alternatives to lawns in a hot, dry Mediterranean climate. Here, a meadow makes the most of winter humidity and resembles a great expanse of wild lawn in this beautiful olive grove. You can read the review on page 97.

OLIVIER FILIPPI

Book reviews



PLANTING DESIGN FOR DRY GARDENS

by Olivier Filippi

Filbert Press, £35
ISBN 978-0993389207

Filled with alternative ways of looking at the design of green spaces in a hot, dry Mediterranean climate.

Reviewer John Hoyland is a writer and plantsman.

For the past 30 years French nurseryman Olivier Filippi and his wife Clara have been growing and researching plants that are adapted to the poor soil and the hot, dry summers of their Mediterranean home. More recently, they have been studying landscapes and ecological systems with similar climates.

This book is a result of their search to find alternatives to lawns in areas with a Mediterranean climate. The lush green sward of cool, damp northern Europe is only achievable in these areas at huge environmental cost, and, as Filippi points out, in parts of southern California 60 per cent of water consumption is used to irrigate lawns. He proposes flowering meadows, gravel gardens, green carpets (plants you can walk on) and flowering terraces as sustainable alternatives. All are inspired by Mediterranean landscapes. None rely on artificial irrigation, pesticides or herbicides to look

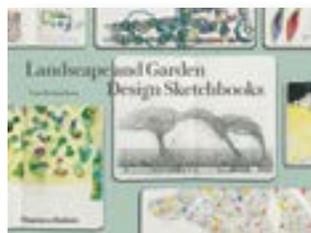
healthy and beautiful. The book is broadly divided into four sections: an argument for new ways of looking at green spaces in gardens and public spaces; the alternative ways of approaching ground cover; the practicalities of creating and maintaining a ground-cover garden; and a directory of suitable plants.

Well-researched and scholarly, this book is also packed with practical horticultural advice that is rooted on Filippi's extensive experience of making gardens and studying landscapes. It would be an invaluable resource for anyone struggling to create green spaces in hot, dry climates.

The title is slightly misleading for a book about ground-cover planting for gardens and open spaces in a Mediterranean climate. Its original title translates literally as 'alternatives to lawn' – while it might not be catchy enough to leap out from bookshop shelves, it is a more apt description of the contents.

Book offer

RRP £35. **Reader offer price £31.50** including p&p*.



LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN DESIGN SKETCHBOOKS

by Tim Richardson

Thames & Hudson, £29.95
ISBN 978-0500518045

A behind-the-scenes look at the personal sketchbooks of 37 top international landscape designers.

Reviewer Camilla Phelps is a writer and city gardener.

This is a fascinating collection of hand-drawn sketches from the studios of the world's top contemporary landscape designers. Instead of beautiful shots of finished gardens, Richardson uses the drawings and accompanying interviews to give a rare and intimate glimpse of the design process through the eyes of the designers.

Through the sketches we gain an insight into the early stages and inspiration behind some key projects. But this book is not just about the visuals. In the interviews Richardson teases out the essence of each designer's approach to drawing, capturing their thoughts about the relationship between designer and pen. From Isabel and Julian Bannerman's refreshing championing of the 'back of a fag packet method' to Claude Cormier's description of a sketch as the 'soul' of a project, there are some entertaining viewpoints.

There is much debate about hand-drawing versus computers

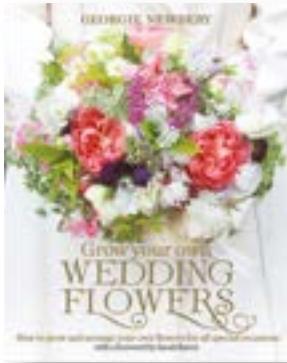
and, in a world where CAD (computer-aided design) is the norm, the book is a celebration of pen on paper. From simple geometric line drawings by Estúdio OCA and a gorgeous concept study in crayon and watercolours by Monika Gora, to Raymond Jungles' elaborate hand-drawn plans, Piet Oudolf's unique planting blueprints and some lovely Cleve West sketches, many approaches are revealed. You glean a real sense of how the designers experiment with, develop and finalise their ideas and how sometimes Photoshop and SketchUp play a part.

This would have been a wonderful textbook to have had when I was studying garden design. And while it is a must-have for every design student, it is also a good read and a joyful visual feast for design lovers. In a year when we are celebrating the heritage of 'Capability' Brown, it feels important to have such a fantastic record of how garden designers work today.

Book offer

RRP £29.95. **Reader offer price £26.95** including p&p*.

Book reviews



GROW YOUR OWN WEDDING FLOWERS

by Georgie Newbery

Green Books, £24.95
ISBN 978-0857842534

A useful book full of practical tips, but which never loses sight of the magic of the task in hand.

Reviewer Lia Leendertz is a garden writer and allotmenteer.

I have two experiences of home-grown wedding flowers: a friend grew and arranged my wedding flowers to magical effect; and I later attempted to do the same for another friend, with less fabulous results and plenty of panicked last-minute flower buying. I can vouch for how special home-grown wedding flowers can be when you get them right – and how tricky it is to do so.

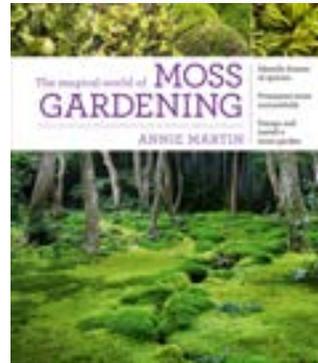
Georgie Newbery is the owner of Common Farm Flowers in Somerset, where she grows and arranges flowers for mail order and around 50 weddings a year, so she knows a thing or two. In her new book she rolls up her sleeves and steps purposefully into the breach between the fantasy and the reality of growing wedding flowers. She piles straight into the practicalities, giving a true picture of the scale of the task but then immediately breaking it down so that it feels possible and manageable. I particularly

liked the ‘stem count’, where she cleverly shows you how to work backwards from the amount of arrangements you will need to make, to work out exactly how many flowers you are going to need for your particular wedding. Reassuring stuff.

Helpfully, the bulk of the book is given over to chapters on weddings at particular times of year – an early summer wedding, a winter wedding and so on – so you can concentrate on tasks that apply to the wedding you are growing for. For each season Newbery tells us the best plants, when to sow and how to grow, and what to pick from the garden and hedgerow. Then follows several glorious real-life case studies, and a set of comprehensive instructions for all the different arrangements you would be expected to make for the big day. This excellent book is packed with practicality and inspiration for this most meaningful of horticultural challenges.

Book offer

RRP £24.95. **Reader offer price £21.95** including p&p*.



THE MAGICAL WORLD OF MOSS GARDENING

by Annie Martin

Timber Press, £15
ISBN 978-1604695601

A detailed look at the beauty and versatility of moss with considered advice on how to grow and use it in the garden.

Reviewer Noël Kingsbury is a writer and plantsman.

To say ‘it’s more moss than grass’ is an almost standard gardening expression about a poor quality lawn. This book takes off with that idea, suggesting we forget the grass and celebrate the beauty, utility and versatility of mosses. Japanese gardens make creative use of moss, and so, it would appear, do an increasing number of those in North America. Get up close, and it is easy to appreciate how beautiful mosses are; they seem to dominate certain habitats, and there are lots of different species – 760-odd in the British Isles alone.

The book, written by an enthusiastic grower from North Carolina known as ‘Mossin’ Annie’, starts off (perhaps with an eye to convincing the sceptic) with a tour of gardens that creatively use moss. She moves on to the natural history of mosses, explaining how they are different to other, more advanced, plants, then discusses in some detail 25 recommended

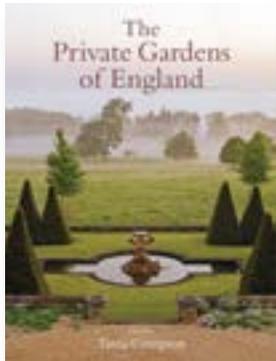
species (many of which might be American although most genera are common to North America and Europe) and moves on to advise on designing with mosses and giving detailed advice on how to grow them.

Comprehensive, inspirational, and full of information, this is a fascinating book for anyone wanting to truly broaden the range of plants they grow. The author’s home region is a very moss-friendly one, but I was left feeling a bit unsure about how those of us in other places might choose a good location for growing them. The plants appear to flourish (and crucially non-mosses do not thrive) once certain low thresholds of light, moisture and nutrients are reached, however, I did not feel I got the guidance I wanted here. Nevertheless a very useful guide, and key perhaps to bringing life to some of the garden habitats conventionally seen as particularly challenging.

Book offer

RRP £15. **Reader offer price £12.50** including p&p*.

Book reviews



THE PRIVATE GARDENS OF ENGLAND

by Tania Compton

Constable, £75
ISBN 978-1472121011

Enjoy more than a month's worth of upmarket garden open days without having to move from your armchair.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

Why do we like looking at other people's gardens? Of course we go to be impressed, to be inspired, and to eat home-made cakes, but above all, I suspect, what we most enjoy is the simple pleasure of peeking into otherwise hidden lives.

In this book, Tania Compton presents an armchair tour of 35 gardens that rarely, if ever, open to the public, described by the men and women who care for them. Compton is a respected designer, writer and trustee of the Garden Museum, who moves in elevated horticultural circles and appears to have rifled through her personal address book to make this selection.

Gardeners with ancestral homes account for a fair portion of this book, as do the big-name designers who divide their time between Chelsea and the homes of the international jet set. But you will also find fashion designer Jasper Conran's Somerset estate, the garden that theatrical impresario Cameron

Mackintosh shares with his partner Michael Le Poer Trench, and Wyken Hall in Suffolk, where Carla Carlisle's Mississippi roots are manifest in a row of Adirondack chairs that say 'come over here, take a load off'.

In every possible way this is a book that sets out to be exclusive, and it is doubtless destined to grace many an expensive coffee table but, refreshingly, it is also well worth reading. It is an opportunity to eavesdrop on the grander side of the horticultural world. If nothing else, hearing Lady Caroline Egremont bemoan the impossibility of digging up 1,000 'superior' but charmless Dutch crocus she planted as a naïve newcomer to Petworth House, will put your own horticultural mishaps into perspective. Not every one of the 35 contributors writes well, but their individual voices ring out clearly, making this series of essays a genuinely illuminating exploration of gardens and gardeners.

Book offer

RRP £75. Reader offer price **£67.50** including p&p*.

Other books

Useful tips and tricks to ensure you get the most from your garden, plus stylish ideas to improve your garden design



WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY HOUSEPLANT?

by David Deardorff and
Kathryn Wadsworth
Timber Press, £16.99
ISBN 978-1604695908

A helpful guide that identifies common houseplant problems.

OFFER
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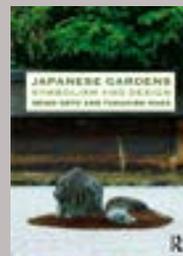


GARDEN DESIGN SOLUTIONS

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Jacqui Small, £25
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