

A selection of the best book reviews of 2005, compliments of the *Weekend Gardener* magazine. Part 2.

Easy Gardening Recipes for Successful Planting

Miranda Beaufort & Jane Nicholas
Published by Frances Lincoln
\$NZ59.95
Reviewed by Mike Gowing



GARDENERS tend to shrink from titles with the word “easy” in them, but in this case the adjective refers to plant selection and grouping rather than nurturing plants. Plant selection is an aspect of gardening that many of us struggle with and need all the help we can get.

The British authors, designers who work in “English garden” tradition, have come up with beds with some 40 different sets of conditions and have chosen a mix of plants and colours to suit each of these beds. The recipes they offer apply to a wide range of sites and soils, many of which will be familiar to Kiwi readers.

Among the strengths of the book is its clear layout. We get a colourful planting plan for each 4m by 2m bed with a key clarifying plant placement. On the facing page there’s a gallery of photos portraying each of the recommended plants. The qualities and the conditions favoured by the selected plants are outlined, as well as the care they need. Each section also has a list of what else could be planted in that particular site.

If you’re bewildered by your borders this spring, *Easy Gardening*, despite its rather hefty price, may help you to fill the gap.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 179, 2005, Page 31

Floranova

Warwick Orme
Published by Random House
\$NZ49.95
Reviewed by Ray Cottle



THOSE for whom botanical photography is just a means of identifying a species might be better to leave this book sitting on the coffee table. *Floranova* is a big book, both in format and in terms of the vision of its creator, Sydney-based photographer Warwick Orme. Using a digital camera and technology as his paintbrush, Orme homes in on his subject matter, paring away and recomposing elements of flowers in a quest to portray their visual essence – their form and colour. The result is striking page after striking page – images, not of flowers as we know them, but flowers anew – “flora nova”.

The man who’s made a living photographing fashion models for such titles as *Vogue* and *Harpers Bazaar* says he loves looking at extreme close-ups of botanical specimens as their simplicity interests him. In his fashion work he was captivated by “the way clothes worked against or with the negative space that encompassed them”.

Just as British flower painter Jo Self compels viewers to revisit the plants that inspire her canvases, so Orme’s work leads us back into our gardens.

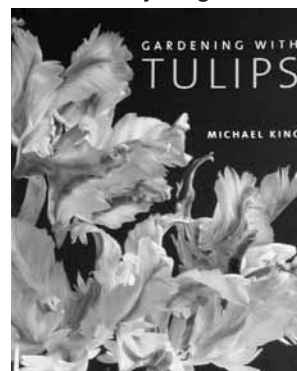
“I find when [people now] see the flower for real, they tend to look a little closer,” he said in a recent interview. “The modern world we’re living in can be too busy, fraught with too many emails and things like that. People enjoy the peace and serenity of being with their plants.”

If you, too, would like your eyes opened afresh on your garden, buy this lyrical book.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 179, 2005, Page 31

Gardening with Tulips

Michael King
Published by Frances Lincoln
Distributed by Bookwise
\$NZ75.00
Reviewed by Angela Donald



FOR 12 years English botanist, garden designer, writer and photographer Michael King has lived in Amsterdam, the world’s tulip capital. Thus the author generously warns the reader that “an interest in growing tulips can very quickly turn into an obsession ... only the size of your garden or your bank account are likely to assert any form of effective control”.

King gets to grips with the tulip’s origins and its botany, but the book’s real impact comes with his lively writing and his 480 breathtaking photographs of various “stars” of the garden.

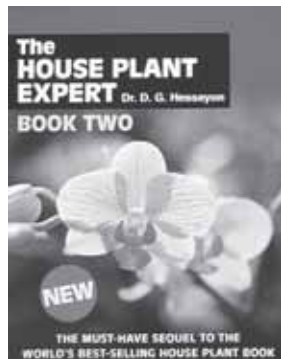
His advice on how best to use tulips in the contemporary garden, including putting them in pots and in the vegetable plot, stems directly from his experience of growing these spring beauties. King also calls for more sensitive use of tulips as a bedding plant and gives tips for their use in borders.

The last section of the book discusses tulips by colour. A stunning photo gallery of orange, toffee, yellow, red, violet and all the pastel tulips is an aid to choosing which of these beautiful bulbs to plant in your garden.

This will enthral both the tulip maniac and the merely interested.
Weekend Gardener, Issue 183, 2005, Page 37

The House Plant Expert Book Two

Dr D G Hessayon
Published by Expert Books
Distributed by Random House
\$NZ24.95
Reviewed by Trevor Hipkins



WITH over 49 million copies in print, Dr David Hessayon, who first published almost half a century ago, can lay claim to being the world's most widely read gardening guru. These manuals are about as far from the coffee table as you can get. This is an update of an earlier book on houseplants that, in the style of others in the "Expert" series, is no-nonsense, clearly illustrated and value for money.

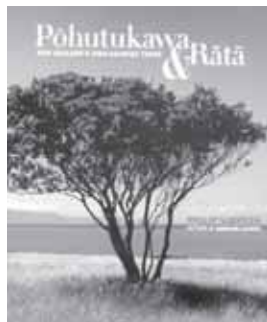
The A-Z of each species has an illustrated panel on each, making this book accessible and informative. There's discussion on the various types of house plant, a pointer to whether each is best for foliage or flower and the "secrets" to successful growing. There are separate chapters on bonsai, bromeliads, herbs, Christmas flowers, orchids and spectacular flowers. Everything from the stand-alone pot to terrariums and indoor water-gardens is dealt with under a chapter called "Roomscaping".

When it comes to question time at the back of the book, there's no beating about the bush. Posers like "Why do my plants never flower?" and "Everything I touch seems to die" get uncompromising answers. Included is a list of "cast-iron" species that defy the most cavalier gardener's efforts to bump them off. Great value for money.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 183, 2005, Page 37

Pohutukawa & Rata New Zealand's iron-hearted trees

Philip Simpson
Published by Te Papa Press
\$NZ59.99

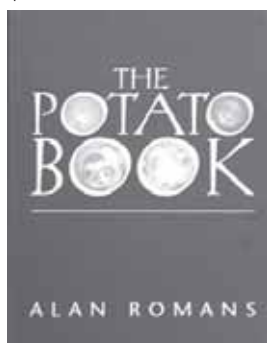


THESE two crimson-flowered members of the myrtle family are symbols of our country and enmeshed in our identity. Philip Simpson's exhaustive book makes for informative yet riveting reading as he explores the taxonomy, history, depredation and conservation of these trees. A book that deserves to be pored over by anyone who has our ecology at heart.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 185, 2005, Page 33

The Potato Book

Alan Romans
Published by Frances Lincoln
Distributed by Bookwise
\$NZ52.95



YOU won't find a mention of Rua or Ilam Hardy in this book, but for the "spud nut" Alan Romans offers plenty to chew on, albeit from a British perspective. He traces the history of the potato from its beginnings in South America, gives us stories of some of the breeders and explains how to grow spuds. There's a guide to more than 150 varieties, including some of the increasingly popular heritage varieties. A lot packed into a slender but absorbing read.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 185, 2005, Page 33

A Tohunga's Natural World Plants, gardening and food

Paul Moon
David Ling Publishing
\$NZ29.99

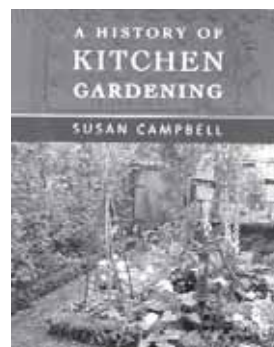


PAUL Moon, AUT University's senior lecturer in Maori Studies, talks to Tuhoe tohunga Hohepa Kereopa about the rich tradition and practice of gardening. Chapters also deal with food and recipes, flax and the medicinal uses of plants. An anecdotal and readable insight into a customary Maori perspective on the natural world.

Weekend Gardener, Issue 185, 2005, Page 33

A History of Kitchen Gardening

Susan Campbell
Published by Frances Lincoln
Distributed by Bookwise
\$NZ47.95



AN intriguing conducted tour around a 19th-century walled kitchen garden at Pylewell House in Hampshire. From walls to water, to layout, veggie types and growing techniques, there's plenty to enthral the reader here. Captivating sketches and line drawings enhance this informative history, the result of 15 years of research.

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