



Book Review by Margaret Hodgson

Winter-flowering Shrubs by Michael W. Buffin,
Timber Press, Inc. Portland, Oregon, 2005.
232 pages, approx. 138 colour photos,
1 Hardiness zone map, Bibliography, Index.
Hardbound, \$54.95

This book by Michael Buffin seems to be the perfect selection for a book review at this time of year. Buffin presently advises on 70 historical gardens and parks in southern

England for the National Trust. His biography reveals that he spent several years as Curator of Living Collections at The Harold Hillier Gardens in Hampshire where, among other responsibilities, he designed the planting of the Winter Garden. He trained at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and spent time at the Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania.

In the Introduction, Buffin describes how he was very much influenced by Graham Stuart Thomas's *Colour of the Winter Garden* which Buffin read as a young student. This book was to shape his passion for winter gardening in the years to come.

The book is well organized with a preface, a brief introduction, followed by a chapter entitled Designing for Winter which gives tips on such topics as the importance of winter sunlight, stem and bark effects, evergreen companion plants along with many other basic elements.

Following this very informative material, Buffin has organized his material alphabetically A – to Z of Winter-flowering Shrubs with the colour photos closely aligned with the written description of the shrubs. The writer gives the reader many aspects to consider in the winter garden, ranging from unusual or colourful bark on trees, ornamental grasses, delicate foliage on frosty mornings, winter flowers, bright berries to the weird fruits of *Decaisnea fargesii* which attract attention in a winter garden.

Winter-flowering Shrubs is a particularly usual book in our part of the country. Borrow it from the library. You will enjoy reading it.