



Book Reviews (Margaret Hodgson)

Design in the Plant Collector's Garden from Chaos to Beauty by Roger Turner
 Timber Press, Inc. Portland, Oregon, 2005.
 224 pages, approx. 240 colour photos,
 Bibliography, Index, Hardbound, \$47.50
 ISBN 0-88192-690-6

Roger Turner trained as an architect and now works as a landscape designer. He is a knowledgeable plantsman, active in the Hardy Plant Society and founding member of the Gloucestershire group of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG). Author of the monograph, ***Euphorbias – A Gardener's Guide***, Roger Turner also wrote ***Better Garden Design*** and ***Capability Brown***. He contributes to a number of journals and magazines including *Hortus* and *The English Garden*, and lectures on a wide range of subjects.

In the preface of ***Design in the Plant Collector's Garden***, from Chaos to Beauty, the author brings to mind that interesting plants do not always make a good garden; they can be surprisingly difficult to reconcile. He suggests that perhaps we choose plants with one part of our brains and make gardens with another. In the best gardens, design and plantmanship complement each other and exist to mutual advantage. This book aims to show how a range of straightforward and common-sense ideas can improve the appearance of a garden without limiting in any

way the scope to grow a wide range of interesting plants. On the contrary, the plants will be seen to greater advantage.

The book is organized into three main sections: **Part 1, On Plants and Gardens**, entails five chapters, covering the topics of the plant enthusiast's garden, collecting plants, making a general collection, the single genus collection, and a strategy for the garden. Many interesting aspects come into play and the author raises questions for the reader to consider. When planning a garden, what is our aim? Some gardeners, most gardeners one should say, build up a general plant collection which at its best becomes an "Eclectic collection" or the best of everything. Other gardeners, somewhere along their experience, decide to turn to a particular genus, and become interested in seeing how many plants of one genus or varieties of one species they can bring together in their garden.

Part 2, Collecting Garden Plants, in eight chapters, covers the practical applications of selecting trees, trees, gardens and arboreta, climbers and wall shrubs, shrubs, collecting perennials, choosing perennials, bulbs, and alpines. In this chapter the author gives good advice of what of what trees, shrubs, climbers etc. go well together. He says "plant an assortment of *Abies*, *Piceae*, *Larix*, *Pinus*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Juniperus*, and *Thuja* together, and the effect will be like a family of eccentrics who don't speak to each other at funerals." **Part 3, Plant Associations, Beds, and Borders**, gives in five chapters, very detailed advice on plant associations, border style, border strategy, integrating the single-genus collection and some favourite genera. As suggested in the title of this section, the author is presenting some considerations that plants grouped together need to look as though they belong together. They should perhaps flower at the same time or at least be ornamental simultaneously. What colours do you want together? What foliage and textures work well? What style of border are you willing to have in the garden? The labour-saving border, The exotic border, the mixed border are all answers which appear in this section of the book.

A most useful book for the enthusiastic gardener!