
This gardening guide is a compilation of articles from ten years of *Extension’s Successful Gardener,* a newsletter of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service founded and edited by Leah Chester-Davis. The advice of experts is always an attraction, and this book contains the advice of many gardening experts. Even better, they are all North Carolinians. The list of extension agent authors contains many familiar names, starting with Toby Bost himself, who is both co-editor and an author of several essays.

The editors have arranged the articles in useful sections, grouped broadly by subject. My favorite is chapter two, “70 Top Plant Choices.” What a treasure trove it is! The chapter is divided into two parts, “Annuals and Perennials” and “Woody Plants,” and includes plants from agave to ferns. There are some of my recently discovered favorites, such as hellebores, as well as plants I have never considered. I have always been intrigued by rain lilies, but have shied away from them. Now I will plant some. Water lilies seem more nearly possible after reading *The Successful Gardener Guide.*

The experts discuss lawns, trees, perennials, pests, landscapes, vegetables and regional gardening (in North Carolina, of course). They also answer questions and bring “hot” new plants to our attention. The section on new plants in local nurseries is wonderfully up-to-date.

This book is current in its information, but there are many features of timeless value. There are also beautiful and inspiring color photographs scattered throughout. Because the articles are written by a number of agents, you will find various points of view, always a useful thing. Different authors may stress different aspects of a subject, but each author includes the design and cultural basics because the essays were originally written as standalone articles.

The book contains a list of county extension agencies and two indexes—a plant index and a general index. These indexes broaden the usefulness of the book quite a bit. For instance, there is information on lawns in several sections and the indexes will lead you to all of the references.

This book will be useful to beginning gardeners, gardeners new to North Carolina, and seasoned gardeners as well, because we all like to keep current on useful new techniques and new plants for our region. This book does that and more.

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