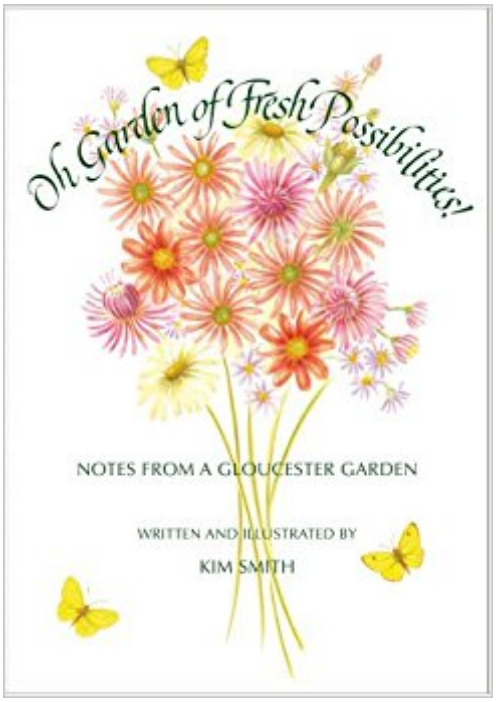
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Oh Garden Of Fresh Possibilities!: Notes From A Gloucester Garden



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Synopsis

A Beautiful Garden, and a book that successfully conveys the process of how to create one, rely on a gardener’s capacity to discover how things grow and a writer’s ability to explain it. A love of plants, along with an understanding of their needs, peculiarities, and idiosyncrasies, provide the foundation on which all memorable gardens are built and upon which truly useful gardening books depend.Kim Smith’s passion is her garden, a small and densely-packed quarter acre beside her family’s seaside home in Gloucester, brimming with every species imaginable and some (including apricots) a few might consider unimaginable. Here she has created the framework, a living tapestry of fragrance, foliage, flower and fruit, that establishes the soul of her garden. She is sensistive to the plant’s forms, hues, and horticultural demands, and has, by design, established a succession of blooms and a selection of plant materials that reduce the needs for pesticides and herbicides. Any gardener wrestling with the challenges of blight, bugs, poor soil, limited light, and the vagaries of weather will find in these pages both sound advice and practical solutions - in spades.But this is, quite deliberately, intended as more than another (and predictable) how-to book. The author is especially and equally interested in the intangibles a garden provides: the moods and ambiance, the butterflies attracted, the harmonious patterns of color, light, and texture. This is as much about how to visualize a garden, as about particular trees, shrubs, vines, perennials, and annuals. Eclectic in its approach, citing poetry and quotations from Eastern and Western sources, it challenges us with an artist’s eye while drawing from down-to-earth practical experience.Illustrated in full color with the author’s own exquisite drawings, containing twenty-two chapters that illuminate every aspect of garden planning and planting, this book recommends itself to gardeners seeking both sensible guidance and design inspiration.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Think of these essays as a series of conversations with a gardener who has not only learned by doing, but spent some time researching the topics dear to her heart. The essays are loosely arranged chronologically and often touch on fragrant plants, attracting butterflies, or Oriental garden philosophy-often all three in the same chapter. Every essay opens with poetry and often quotes more poetry further on, and every chapter, as well as the front cover, is liberally illustrated with the author's watercolors. You get the impression that Kim Smith is sensitive to beauty in all its forms, and she wants to share them all with you. You will surely learn something from this book. In a chapter on her outdoor shower, I learned that some sweet autumn clematis vines have no fragrance at all, which confirmed my own experience of this plant that others call wonderfully fragrant. In a chapter describing her first year in the garden, growing nothing but annuals as she observed what was already planted there, I learned she gets bloom from a second sowing of corn poppies. I suspect my growing season is a bit shorter, so that may not work for me, but it had never occurred to me to try. I love fragrant yellow daylilies, and now I know of a few I didn't know before. Kim devotes a chapter to them, and is just as fond of good ol' `Hyperion' as I am. And I had no idea there was a lily-of-the-valley (Convallaria majuscula) native to North America until I read about it on page 172. -Kathy Purdy, Cold Climate Gardening (April 2009) Oh Garden! is a treasure, and perhaps the best garden gift book of the season. Both dream-like and practical, it captures the gardener's journey by integrating personal essays, hand's-on advice, and paintings.-Boston Globe

This is a book to dip into and come away refreshed. The author's own exquisite paintings abound.-Bloomsbury Review (added by author) ...a delight for both the author's lyrical prose and her exquisite color drawings, but it deserves equal accolades for its array of day-to-day and season-by-season plant-design/how-to knowledge and ideas. -Avant Gardener Smith's writing is lithe and clean and her experiences in conjuring beauty out of her garden in Gloucester make for excellent reading. -Hawk and Whippoorwill Oh Garden! is a joy to read for anyone looking for design inspiration for their garden.Ã Â A line that testifies to the book's value is: "Our garden has grown from plantings we consider to beautiful to live without."Ã Â Ã Â -Patriot Ledger

Kim Smith lives in Gloucester, Massachusetts with her husband, Tom, and children, Liv and Alex, in their home up from the harbor and surrounded by their well lived-in garden. Like many gardening books that have come before, Oh Garden of Fresh Possibilities! was written over a period of several years. Through planning and planting, writing, painting, and photographing - observing intimately the natural world found in a garden - Kim has become a committed conservationist. She currently writes and photographs a column on garden design, with a focus on planting native flora to attract native fauna. Oh Garden of Fresh Possibilities!, her first book, combines her love for horticulture, writing, painting, and poetry.

Picking up this book is like taking a deep breath of fragrant garden air. There is a meaningful levity to its appearance and style that helps a reader to escape into its pages and get a taste for when gardens were valued as inspiring spaces for conversation, reflection, and a reminder of the interconnectedness of all living, growing things. Too often in our society leisure time is either forfeited in the pursuit of success and money, or spent on frivolous popular activites that do nothing but busy our heads and drain our wallets. This book, while full of useful information, inspired me to take pause for life’s simple pleasures...literally to stop and smell the butterfly bushes.

I had initially bought this book for my mother in law as a christmas gift. But when I got the book, I ended up reading it myself! It is always nice to read local authors, but this book is very special. Not only is the artwork in it beautiful, which the writer is also the illustrator, but Kim quotes other poetry as well. I only expected a local gardening book, but I was so surprised at how good of a read it was. And I don’t garden ;)... well, yet anyways. I suggest it to anyone who lives in New England who appreciates beauty in nature and art.

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