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The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden



Synopsis

“A veritable goldmine for gardeners. Plant Talk We’ve all seen gorgeous perennial gardens packed with color, texture, and multi-season interest. Designed by a professional and maintained by a crew, they are aspirational bits of beauty too difficult to attempt at home. Or are they? The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden makes a design-magazine-worthy garden achievable at home. The new, simplified approach is made up of hardy, beautiful plants grown on a 10x14 foot grid. Each of the 62 garden plans combines complementary plants that thrive together and grow as a community. They are designed to make maintenance a snap. The garden plans can be followed explicitly or adjusted to meet individual needs, unlocking rich perennial landscape designs for individualization and creativity.”

Book Information

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Timber Press (March 11, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1604693347

ISBN-13: 978-1604693348

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.6 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #154,067 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Flowers > Perennials #86 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Landscape #96 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Garden Design

Customer Reviews

“[Diblik] appropriately starts the book off with chapters on understanding your garden (soil, light, shade), understanding plants (growth habits, flowers, foliage, stems, crowns), preparing and maintaining the site, and some likely plants to consider. Then comes the true treasure •chapter 6 has 62 planting plans, broken down into sun and shade, and then further into themes inspired by successful public plantings (the High Line, “Essence of Piet Oudolf”) or even paintings (van Gogh’s Poet’s Garden). •Landscape Architecture “Diblik has codified a naturalistic, yet artistic, approach to building garden beds in the northern tier of North America. Soil composition and

amount of sunlight form the starting point to finding a palette of plants sympathetic with a site. Diblik stresses intimate contact with your plants as it allows you to “know” them, the most important aspect of gardening in his opinion. Many inspiring photographs depict the colorful and textural results. Ornamental grasses figure prominently as a foil for the colorful blossoming plants. Themed templates, many titled after Impressionist paintings, will help readers knowingly plan their garden.

•Country Gardens “A stunning guide to creating nature inspired gardens. . . . Diblik, who supplied many of the plants for the award-winning Lurie Garden at Millennium Park in Chicago, offers up detailed information about 74 sturdy and appealing perennials in a photo-rich reference.

•Chicago Tribune “Perennial gardeners will appreciate *The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden*, a book based on the premise that knowing your plants helps you care for them more effectively, with less work.

•Akron Beacon Journal “Diblik explains the concepts behind self-sustaining plant communities •plants that naturally grow well in harmony and require little maintenance, once established. With Diblik’s method, you can throw out the mulch, abandon staking, deadheading, the fertilizers and herbicides, the end-of-the-season cleanups. Instead, you’ll learn to understand how plants grow •their soil, water, and light requirements •and the easy ways to get what you want. . . . A wonderful book for homeowners and designers alike •it definitely belongs on your bookshelf.

•Garden Design Online “A straightforward, easy-to-follow guidebook for planting design success, suitable for the homeowner and professional alike.

•The Designer “A book for thinking gardeners who really want to take the time to know their plants and understand how their plants live and work together as a sustainable community. Armed with this knowledge, gardeners will be free to actually spend time enjoying their gardens.

•A Garden of Possibilities “If you’re dreaming of a low-maintenance, lush, perennial garden this spring, then Roy Diblik’s new book should be your planting bible. It provides dozens of fresh, detailed plans and gorgeous color photographs of easy-care yet stunningly artistic gardens.

•Garden Variety News “The first half of the book covers site preparation, planting, care, maintenance, and of course, key plants for the author’s “know maintenance” system. Diblik shows you how to reduce garden chores to only minutes a week. You will learn when to plant and water, and how to weed strategically.

•Michigan Gardener “Diblik gives plant combination advice to make his lower maintenance, sustainable, and environmentally friendly technique work well and provide beauty year round.

•Journal Times “The nuts and

bolts of success with perennial flowers along with 62 sample garden designs and 74 high-performing, low-care perennial plants. • Patriot-New

Looking for a lush, gorgeous, low-maintenance perennial garden? Roy Diblik's Know Maintenance system shows you the way. Choose from 62 plans, each designed to fill a 10- by 14-foot space. Every plan tells you which plants you need and shows you where to place them. There are plans for sun and shade, and for an array of different moods and color schemes. The plans are like building blocks to arrange any way you want. Have limited space? Select a single plan or use part of one. For large spaces, simply repeat a plan or combine it with others. Best of all, the Know Maintenance system will show you how to reduce garden chores to only minutes a week. You'll learn when to plant and water, how to weed strategically, and how to relax and enjoy the garden of your dreams. • Noted plantsman and designer Roy Diblik has spent more than 30 years studying, growing, and enjoying plants. He is the owner of Northwind Perennial Farm, a nursery in Burlington, Wisconsin, and is best known as the plantsman behind the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park in Chicago. •

Elsewhere, you'll need to translate his plant palette and redesign each plan. Plans are depicted as planting grids, in overhead view only. The absence of a ground-level view showing height and form makes visualization difficult, especially if you are not familiar with the plants. No photographs of executed plans (although for me that's not a showstopper). As an amateur, I was unable to browse through the plans to quickly narrow down which I might have further interest in. Instead I will need to work through each to get an idea of the ground-level view. On the Kindle, the font size for some of the plan legends is too small to read. Fortunately because the symbol used for each plant is consistent across all plans, it should eventually be possible to figure them all out. (There doesn't appear to be a key showing all the symbols in one place, and even if there were, on the Kindle it would be a pain to flip back and forth. I'll need to create my own key.) The most valuable contribution of this book to my admittedly novice-level knowledge was an insight into how a designer thinks about plants (as a living, multi-dimensional palette) and the patterns that can be developed in a design. The author's advocacy of developing an intimate knowledge of each variety of plant you work with covering all seasons through the years of its development is both inspiring and daunting. There is much to be gained from a study of this book, but it won't come easily.

Rarely has a garden book inspired me to actually make grand changes to my gardens. This book

inspired me and gave me the tools needed to make the changes. There are already many excellent reviews here. I think most of the reviews for positive and negative aspects of this book are very fair, and true. This is not a "gardening 101 for idiots" book. You do have to read the book, and study the plans and the pictures. Sometimes you have to go back and forth in the book to find an answer to your immediate question. However, I find Diblik to be a true teacher and if you do "work" with his book, you will come away with the ability to make your own plan that fits into your own garden. One of the reasons that I give this book 5 stars is because it IS a new way of creating a bed, it IS ground-breaking and different than the million garden books we have on our shelves already from the last 50 years. If you think of this as WORKbook for helping you design a bed, I think you'll be very satisfied with this book. You don't have to cookie-cut his plans. I was able to use his ideas and meld them into my existing beds that are not open fields a la Diblik and a la Oudolf. Much of my yard is already established with shrubs/trees/perennials that I do not want to move. If you study his many garden plans (that have no pics), you start to see patterns in how he does his plantings. There are MANY photos in this book, plenty of them will give you the knowledge you need to imagine how these plans might look. He's showing you HOW makes the plans. It would be impractical and impossible to have pics of all of them. (One of the criticisms). Instead, he's sharing his process...how you can take a community of well-chosen plants and use them in endless flexibility to create a special garden, all your own. And, let me say that here in Wisconsin I was able to find many of his recommended plants on clearance in the fall. Fall is a perfect time to plant a garden in most areas of the country. You can save A LOT of money on grasses, etc, by buying them on clearance when everyone else is ignoring the garden centers. The types of plants Diblik recommends are often on steep clearance in autumn: grasses, salvias, nepetas, etc.

The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden Roy Diblik, of 30 years experience as a plantsman and garden designer, in "The Know Maintenance Garden" has given us an excellent guide to "meadow" or the more modern term "natural" gardening. Roy starts by stating the philosophy of his gardening approach, illustrating his approach with good and bad examples. Roy does not like the "old" style garden of each plant as an individual set in a sea of wood chips. He would rather see a prairie like sea of color and texture spreading across the landscape. He moves into choosing a site with suggestions for pre-established lawns, to newly built construction site, to old gardens. Then he tells us how to start, how to prepare the soil, how to choose plants and how to plant the plants. He includes an excellent list of 74 hardy, common, standard stock perennials that he has used in his native Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa area, meaning zones 3 - 5 in the upper Midwest. This puts him

on the west side of Lake Michigan, a major divide for plant ranges. His descriptions, planting instructions, care and maintenance suggestions, and comments on the plants are right on, easy to follow, and very helpful. The images are well done and illustrative. Roy does not talk much about the trees and shrubs that could form structure and boarder for these gardens. Then Roy lays out 62 garden plans for 10 x 14 foot spaces. He does say these spaces could be combined or divided up as fits different garden sizes. There are shade plans and sun plans. These plans are well done and easily followed. They also lend themselves to dividing and combining. I would have liked to see more pictures of the gardens following the plans. This is a well written book full of suggestions for moving into meadow or natural gardening. Following the instructions in this book, given the time and money, one could develop several beautiful gardens solving most garden problems. A very good buy for anyone interested in developing a meadow or natural garden.

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