

If you're wondering what books to get that special gardener on your list here are a few suggestions. If winter is as cold and icy as predicted any of these books will be fun to read in front of a nice cozy fire while sipping a hot cup of cocoa, coffee or tea.

"The Garden Color Book" by Paul Williams (Chronicle Books) sells for \$27.50. I received this book as a gift from a dear friend and it's a delightful book. Every page is festooned with color prints of flowers (600 in all). Pages are divided into three parts to facilitate mixing and matching of plants. Using the flip-the-page method you can find over 343,000 combinations for your garden. Every segmented page contains nine plants and the opposite page has horticulture information and tips for success. The colors are a feast for the eyes.

"Forcing, etc." by Katherine Whiteside (Smith & Hawken) is an "indoor gardener's guide to bringing bulbs, branches and houseplants into bloom." Retailing for \$24.95 it's a great book for this time of year inspiring readers with pages full of ideas for indoor gardening. Every page abounds with appealing photographs and includes handy tips.

Books by Timber Press can be a bit pricey but two are extremely tempting. I have them on my Christmas wish list. "The Gardener's Guide to Growing Temperate Bamboos" (\$29.95) by Michael Bell is very complete. Even though they need to be constrained drastically, bamboos are wonderful in our Northwest landscapes. Included are pages on history, cultivation, landscaping, botany, propagation and where to see and buy bamboos. There's also an A-Z list of plants. Photos and details provided are excellent.

"Dream Plants for the Natural Garden" (\$34.95, Timber Press) by Henk Gerritsen and Piet Oudolf is ever so appealing. What a tempting book! Oudolf is famous for designing with plants that are "dependable, disease-resistant and easy to maintain, retaining their beauty throughout the year." Readers will find photos and information for over 1200 of the most gardener-friendly plants. I covet every one of these plants for my own garden.

Northwest authors Alison Beck and Marianne Binetti created both "Perennials for Washington and Oregon" and "Annuals for Washington and Oregon" (Lone Pine Publishing). Both books, in paperback, retail for \$18.95 making affordable and much-appreciated gifts for any gardener, seasoned or novice. Colorful photos and information are provided for 281 annuals and 434 perennials. All plants mentioned will thrive in our Kitsap County gardens.

Binetti also authored "Easy Answers for Great Gardens" (Sasquatch). Very reasonably priced at \$14.95 "Easy" answers a myriad of questions asked by gardeners each year. Readers will learn stress-free tips and laugh their way through most of this book and soon be praying for sunshine and mild weather to can go out and practice what they've learned.

We all miss Mary Preus from Silverbay Herb Farm now that she lives in the Seattle area. But we can still enjoy her words and advice about herbs in "The Northwest Herb Lover's Handbook" (Sasquatch) at \$16.95. "Herb Lover's" includes recipes, horticulture information, beautiful photos, dictionary of herbs, plans for planting twelve herb gardens and a seasonal calendar offering tips and reminders. This book is a must for any herb lover in your life.

Here's one last book suggestion. Sasquatch's "Plant This!" by Ketzil Levine is a rollicking great book. Levine lives in Portland, Oregon and is a joy to read. She discusses plants and gardening topics on NPR's Weekend Edition and writes for "Horticulture" and "The Oregonian." You'll want to own every one of the plants Ketzil describes and Rene Eisenbart illustrates. This book is delightful to read You'll pick it up again and again. I bought it as a gift for a friend and had to have my own copy.

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