

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for May 9, 2001), ©2005

Can you believe it's almost Mother's Day? (Hint: It's this Sunday.) Here's a few suggestions for last-minute Mother's Day gifts.

Books are always a winner. Published last year, "Plant This" written by Ketzal Levine and illustrated by Rene Eisenhart of Portland (Sasquatch \$21.95) is still one of my favorites. I don't know which I like better Ketzal's words or Rene's illustrations. Plants are grouped by season starting in spring. Levine even tells us, in a humorous way, how to pronounce those often tricky botanical names.

One of my favorite Seattle garden writers, Valerie Easton (Sunday Times/PI) and horticultural librarian at the Elizabeth Miller Library at the Center for Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington teamed up with fellow Seattle garden writer David Laskin to create a book illustrated with tantalizing photographs by Allan Mandell (Portland, Oregon) to create "Artists in their Gardens" (Sasquatch \$23.95). The gardens of Bainbridge Islanders George Little and David Lewis are featured, as is Dan Hinkley's Heronswood. Again, I can't decide which is more sumptuous about this book, the words painted by Easton and Laskin or the images illustrated by Mandell. Maybe your mom will let you borrow this great book.

"Time-Tested Plants – Thirty Years in a Four-Season Garden" by Pamela J. Harper (Timber Press \$39.95) is the story of the author's love of plants and gardening. Harper is a self-taught horticulturist who began gardening in England in 1955 and ran a small nursery specializing in heaths and heathers from 1957 to 1968. She then lived in Connecticut, Maryland and finally Virginia. Harper isn't afraid to explain her mistakes and offer advice. Even though she gardens on the east coast I found her book a pleasure to read and ponder. All but two of the 250 photos are taken directly in the author's garden. Nearly every plant will grow here. I've added this book to my own library.

Last but by no means least is our own treasured Ann Lovejoy's newest book. "Ann Lovejoy's Organic Garden Design School" (Rodale \$35.00), would make a fantastic present for any mom. Ann shares all her gardening secrets with us. The book is exquisitely photographed by Adam McCauley. Lovejoy dedicates her book to "the students who inspired the garden school: Your ardent, questing spirit keeps life rich." These heartfelt words set the tone for the entire book. If you can afford only one gardening book, this is it. I, of course, own this superb book.

If your mom's bookshelves are overflowing maybe you'd rather take her for a lovely drive to a beautiful garden. Pack a picnic lunch or brunch and drive up Highway 3 and across the Hood Canal Bridge to the small town of Brinnon on the other side of the canal. Keep driving south through Brinnon until you reach Whitney Gardens (it's on Highway 101). From South Kitsap you might want to drive up the other side of the canal along Highway 101, if the road is open. The rhododendrons and azaleas will not disappoint your mom or you.

Be sure to meet nursery owners, mother and daughter, Anna and Ellie Sather. Tell the Sathers that Peg and Pat Tillery sent you. Mother's Day is one of their busiest days; you may want to take your mom the week after Mother's Day. Admission to tour the gardens is one dollar per person (on the honor system) but for that amount you'll also get one of their gorgeous and informative catalogues (definitely a keeper). The catalogue makes a great reference for rhododendrons, azaleas, and Japanese maples. If you forget to pack a picnic, Anna and Ellie always know the best places to eat. Don't forget to leave room in your vehicle for a plant or two.

Gardening "accompaniments" are always great. The list is endless. Many nurseries and stores abound with garden-themed gifts. Two of my favorite purchases in the last year were a big wide brimmed lightweight hat and a pair of rubber gardening clogs. Gift certificates are usually welcomed too. Every gardener needs gardening gloves. Stretchy, washable gloves with latex-coated fingers and palms are perfect and very

reasonable for under six dollars. Packets of seeds tied up with a pretty ribbon and a handmade card are a real treat. There's still time to purchase a few clay pots and some acrylic paint to paint up some decorative containers and mom will think of you each time she waters.

One last tip: There's a new magazine out called "Grow!" See pages 32 through 47 for my articles. It's a great magazine for beginning gardeners and families, and not a single advertisement. I found copies at Joann's in Silverdale.

Contact Peg with comments or questions in care of this newspaper or at gardenmentor@yahoo.com