

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 11-27-02) , ©2005

During these hectic holidays why not pause and peruse the books at your favorite local bookstore? They're my picks for holiday gift giving. Some are so enticing you might want to give yourself a treat too.

"The Garden Through the Year" by Graham Stuart Thomas (ISBN 0898310776) at \$49.95 is the only present I want this winter. When we lived in England primetime TV on Friday nights in England was filled with gardening programs and I'd count the days waiting to see what Graham would be touring and telling us about next. Thomas is in his nineties and is an icon in the world of horticulture. This book is exquisitely illustrated by photographs and drawings by Graham himself and his elegant yet practical words paint the pictures and invite our imaginations to journey through a year in his own garden. This book would be an excellent gift for novice, experienced or even jaded gardeners.

If you know someone who loves words, writing and history as well as gardening you'll want to check out a series of reissued books edited by Michael Pollen and published by Random House. The first three retail for \$11.95 (Capek and Warner) and \$13.95 (Perenyi). "The Gardener's Year" by Karel Capek first published in 1929 is my very favorite of the three with "Summer in the Garden" by Charles Dudley Warner (circa late 1880s) running neck and neck. "Green Thoughts" by Eleanor Perenyi is not my favorite of the three (maybe it was the size of the type) but it's very well written. I covet and want to own the two by Warner and Capek. Capek writes with immense humor. Any gardener can relate to the hilarious gardening experiences extolled and will also love the illustrations by his older brother and writing partner Josef. Warner, a friend of Mark Twain, also writes with great humor, and the writings are selected from his weekly gardening column of the 1880s.

If you look forward to the Nichols Garden Nursery catalogue every year you'll really love this book. "The Bountiful Container" by Rose Marie Nichols McGee and Maggie Stuckey is the best book I've ever found on container gardening. Readers will find tips on growing vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers. Also included are numerous recipes and tips for ultimate success. Workman Publishing offers this book for the bargain price of \$16.95. Don't worry though you'll still want to order the Nichols catalogue. If you hunger for more books by this duo try Nichols McGee's "Basic Herb Cookery" and Stuckey's "Gardening from the Ground Up" and "The Houseplant Encyclopedia."

A gorgeous yet affordable (\$29.95) book "The Master Book of the Water Garden" by Philip Swindells will satisfy any water gardening enthusiast on your list. Every page has full color illustrations or photographs with information from beginning to end in selecting plants or fish and how to build water features from the very simple to the extremely complex. This is a great how-to reference book and it's also very pleasing to the eye and spirit.

"Making Twig Furniture" by Abby Ruoff published by Hartley and Marks is in its second edition and still going strong. Inside the cover of this book readers will find sixty-one projects for every skill level from beginner to expert. Every project includes complete instructions, clear

illustrations and color photos and patterns. Examples of projects inside are: birdhouses, feeders, furniture, fences, drying racks, shelves and garden markers. The book is in paperback at \$24.95.

Storey is one of my favorite gardening publishers. Check out “The City Gardener’s Handbook – The Definitive Guide to Small-Space Gardening” by Linda Yang and retailing for the bargain price of \$19.95. Author Yang lives in New York and the book’s cover says, “offers solutions for every kind of small-space challenge from an author who has experienced them all first-hand.” This book is a must have for any gardener’s resource library. It’s also a joy to read.

If you’re searching for a garden-themed book for yourself or those you love and you think you or they have seen or read every book ever on gardening then you might want to slip into your favorite bookstore (or visit the library) and check out “Inner Gardening – A Seasonal Path to Inner Peace” by Diane Dreher author of “The Tao of Inner Peace.” The book promises not only to nourish your outer garden but your inner spirit as well. The cover of this book has always intrigued me and I’m thinking I really need to start making the time to read it too. Check it out for yourself. It’s out in paperback and retails for \$13.95.