

Picture a Garden: Think Outside the Window Box

Linda Hornberg

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Grounded in values of sustainability and ecological authenticity, Picture a Garden is an imaginative and informative introduction to gardening.

Linda Hornberg's delightful gardening handbook *Picture a Garden* is an illustrated guide to cultivating outdoor spaces.

Told through handwritten text and colorful drawings, this book encourages creating a garden, no matter its size. It recommends types of plants, trees, and flowers to grow. And it personifies wild creatures and habitats to engender goodwill, promoting environmental appreciation through straightforward explanations of science, ecology, and everyday encounters with the natural world. For example, impatiens are annuals eager for next year to arrive; cauliflower is shy, but "take[s] center stage as an exciting, gluten-free pizza crust"; and earthworms are industrious at keeping the soil healthy.

Enhanced with anecdotal snippets, as when Hornberg shares her introduction to gardening through her grandmother and mother in New York City, the book is inspiring in treating gardening as a way to learn more about one's environment. It takes a macro- to microgardening approach, delving into subjects surrounding gardens. Whether canvassing the world to explain the evolution of plants and seeds or listing essential tools, it covers an array of helpful topics to aid any level of gardener. To further inform, the text debunks negative associations with nature, plants, and pests. For instance, a chapter on coexistence advises on "beneficials"—insects such as praying mantises, parasitic wasps, and green lacewings that benefit gardens by attacking plant-destroying aphids.

Best read in hard copy to fully appreciate its original artwork and lush text, this field guide can be entered into on any page. It's a manageable encyclopedic text that's unique in its layout and knowledge. The expansiveness of its material—which covers subjects ranging from families of organisms to careers in ecofriendly industries, the best methods for planting a tree, and a cheerful story about the medicinal benefits of garlic—bolsters its persuasiveness.

The prose is conversational and includes lighthearted asides, as with a drawing of a clown in a barber's chair in a section on topping trees. Humorous plays on words pep up its section titles, as with "23 trees and me" and "some thoughts for food." Comics preface each chapter to foreshadow the material ahead, and the visual approach evokes diligent understanding of the natural world. Though some pages are crowded with text, this is still a spacious book that engages throughout.

An excellent reference manual for creating a garden, *Picture a Garden* is kaleidoscopic in sharing tips and tricks for nurturing one's surrounding environmental spaces.

KATY KEFFER (January 7, 2025)

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