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# Chesapeake Gardening And Landscaping: The Essential Green Guide



## Chesapeake Gardening & Landscaping THE ESSENTIAL GREEN GUIDE

Barbara W. Ellis

Neil Soderstrom, *Principal Photographer*

Published in association with the ADKINS ARBORETUM



## Synopsis

What if, one step at a time, we could make our gardens and landscapes more eco-friendly? Barbara W. Ellis's colorful, comprehensive guide shows homeowners, gardeners, garden designers, and landscapers how to do just that for the large and beautiful Chesapeake Bay watershed region. This area includes Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and part of West Virginia (translating to portions of USDA Zones 6, 7, and 8). Here, mid-Atlantic gardeners, from beginners to advanced, will find the essential tools for taking steps to make their gardens part of the solution through long-term planning and planting. The guide is built from the ground up around six simple but powerful principles that anyone can use:<sup>\*</sup> Reduce lawn<sup>\*</sup> Build plant diversity<sup>\*</sup> Grow native plants<sup>\*</sup> Manage water runoff<sup>\*</sup> Welcome wildlife<sup>\*</sup> Garden wisely Included are detailed instructions for assessing and designing your particular garden or landscape site; choosing and caring for trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, and flowers; and succeeding with such conditions as shade or poor soil. From rain gardens to woodland gardens, meadow gardens to wildlife gardens, and much more, this indispensable guide features more than 300 color photographs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Both enjoyable reading and an invaluable reference. It lacks for nothing with elegant multiple entry points to satisfy a veteran or a novice gardener.--The Association for Garden Communicators Offers helpful advice on assessing, designing, planting, and maintaining earth friendly landscapes.--The American Gardener

This book addresses an important topic for the twenty-first century: how better landcare practices in our gardens and landscapes at home can improve local watersheds as well as the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The extensive plant lists and conversational tone make this a ready reference tool for the home gardener looking for direction on watershed-healthy garden practices. Using the plant lists and suggestions will help gardeners develop landscapes they can love and learn in while doing their part for the Bay.--Ann English, RainScapes Program Manager, Department of Environmental Protection, Montgomery County, Maryland, and landscape architectAn important, valuable, and timely resource for Chesapeake gardeners, and the only book of its kind for the region. The volume's structure and practical how-to nature will make it useful both to readers just starting their gardening endeavors and to experienced gardeners inspired to bring their landscapes into more conformity with their natural contexts.--Mollie Ridout, Director of Horticulture, Historic Annapolis Foundation

Coming from zone 3, i.e. the frozen tundra of upstate NY, this is a course in what will grow here and what to expect. I continue to be amazed at how this familiar plant is twice as high here(zone 7) than it was in NY (zone 3) - this is a wonderful book for me.

Really nice book, great pictures and information. It's a book I sat down and read, not just a reference. Very helpful for a new Eastern Shore gardner.

Being new to the area, this book is very helpful with good info on types of plants for the area, great gardening tips and ideas for gardens.

This is a great resource for anyone interested in native plants / gardens. There is information on plants by type (trees, shrubs, perennials, etc) as well as for specific interests (butterflies, bees, other pollinators). I've been a serious gardener for 25+ years and still learned many new things from the this book. A bonus is the beautiful photography throughout.

This book will be extremely useful to a new-ish gardener, useful to an experienced gardener, and is applicable to gardening far beyond the banks of the Chesapeake Bay. The ten steps around which it is organized would work anywhere, at least anywhere east of the Mississippi, as would the later specific plant suggestions for various settings. Don't let the title scare you off if you are not on or around the Chesapeake: this book is of wider interest than it appears!

I waited years for this book! Phenomenal! I have worked for years in conservation, including instructing about gardening for wildlife and the environment, and this book is wonderful -- so easy to use and it covers EVERYTHING in an easy-to-read, user-friendly format. A must have.

I was very eager to see a book specific to gardening in the Mid-Atlantic region, but it turned out to be rather disappointing. The greatest fault is the extremely poor organization of the book. The first part of the book discusses a lot of the basics of gardening/landscape design, which might be useful to the novice but as an amateur gardener with around ten years experience looking to learn more about natives and plants that grow easily in this region, it was a bit demeaning to be told that sun plants need sun and shade plants need shade. That theme came up repeatedly throughout the book, and could have been summarized by telling the reader to look at a map of their property if they didn't already know east from west, and a quick reminder of how sunrise moves from northeast in June to southeast in December, and sunset shifts from northwest to southwest. The author failed to actually address this seasonality, and how a June-blooming plant might get different total light than a September-blooming plant right next to it. The description of identifying soil as sandy, loamy, or clay would have been greatly assisted by some photographs of a freshly dug hole and a map of typical soils across the Bay watershed. Having lived in Va just west of DC and Md just east of DC, there is actually quite a difference between dense orange clay in Va and sandier soil in Md, further from Piedmont into Tidewater. Moving into Part 2 (after 100 pages!!) the author finally gets into the heart of the matter with her plant descriptions. Here the redundancy suffers tremendously. There are chapters for Shrubs/Trees/Vines, Ground covers, Flowers, and then a chapter for shade which reiterates large amounts of material about the shrubs, trees, vines, ground covers, and flowers already discussed. In two separate places she defines spring ephemerals. For some strange reason, grasses for gardens and meadow gardens (one of Barbara Ellis's pet ideas) were grouped in under the Flowers chapter, where they would have been much better served as their own chapter along with the final chapters for Rain Gardens and Wildlife. In fact, those two as well as the Meadow chapter that should have been, ought to have all been pulled out as Part 3: Specialty gardening. The information on how to build a meadow was the best part of the book, in my opinion. Back in the ground cover chapter, which includes ground cover for sun and shade together, a large number of the listed plants were far taller than the average definition of ground cover. There were several ferns in the 2'-4' range and even shrubs included as ground cover (already mentioned in the shrub chapter, and still to come again in the shade chapter!) that reach 3-5 feet. Ironically, in her meadow

section, Ellis admits that meadows "are far taller than typical ground covers." Another frustrating part of this book is the confusion between native and nonnative varieties of the same genus or species. Ellis mentions several times the great evils of using non-native honeysuckle, viburnum, clematis, and others, and then proceeds to recommend planting native honeysuckle, viburnum, clematis, etc. It would be incredibly helpful to have some sort of table in an appendix listing the precise latin names and cultivars of what she considers a dangerous invasive and what is a perfectly good native. It would also be nice to have some idea presented about how invasive even natives might be, which could lead to a lot of time spent cutting back plants in a garden when the whole intention was to be low maintenance (thinking of honeysuckle here, and american wisteria). There are some non-native common garden plants mentioned as being acceptable for use in a garden as they are not considered invasive (daffodils, hosta), but many other common plants that never are brought up throughout the book (lilac and weigala come to mind). Some of these can still support pollinators, so are they "bad" or not? I also would have liked a better understanding of when cultivars are still good to support wildlife, and when they aren't (intuitively, those bred to flower but not fruit probably aren't as good by not producing the food for birds, small mammals, etc., but it is never explicitly said). Finally, and this is just a personal nuisance, but Ellis seems to have an unhealthy obsession with northern sea oats and Joe Pye weed - they appear over and over in text and photographs throughout the book, and they aren't really something the average suburban neighbor would be happy seeing in your yard.

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