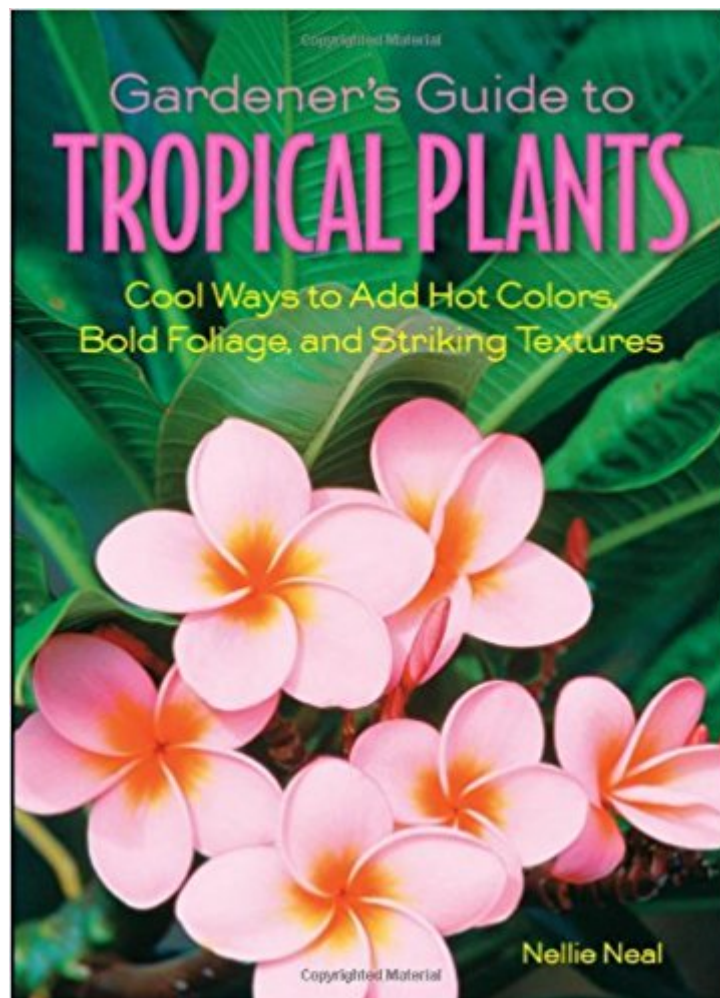




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Gardener's Guide To Tropical Plants: Cool Ways To Add Hot Colors, Bold Foliage, And Striking Textures (Gardener's Guides)



Synopsis

Now gardeners can bring an exotic flair to their gardens by introducing the color, textures, and fabulous foliage of tropical plants. Not just for hot climates anymore, bromeliads, orchids, bananas, palms, birds of paradise, elephant ears, canna, and more can bring a touch of the tropics to any garden. Gardeners can choose from more than 150 plants featured in this book, each chosen for the visual impact it adds to any landscape or container garden. Plants are organized by a range of clearly defined zones, making it easy for gardeners to find the plants that will succeed in their landscape. Author Nellie Neal explains how to best use tropical plants both indoors and out. To make this book a universally useful guide, it is organized to explain how to grow tropical plants in a wide range of clearly defined zones. Further, the book illustrates how to best use these plants in landscapes and containers, indoors and out, no matter where you live. It is a practical, user-friendly celebration of tropical plants.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"There is information about tons of individual plants and families in the book, including some that are downright crazy looking with bold patterns and bizarre blooms," say Neal - Mississippi Magazine

When you dream about the tropics, what do you see? Is it waving palm trees, hibiscus, and bird of

paradise plants? What if you could grow that dream, right in your own backyard? Well, guess what? — you can! — There are many tropics well suited to the ever-expanding tropic and subtropic zones of the United States. But even if you live where it gets downright cold in the winter, you can grow many tropics outdoors during the summer, then bring them indoors during the winter to brighten a sunny room. — The Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants features: — *More than 130 striking plants* Design tips and suggestions that help anyone add cool colors, bold foliage, and striking textures to their garden *Ways to overwinter tropical plants — indoors and out! — You don't have to leave town to have a tropical experience — you can grow one, right in your own backyard!

I have about 8 tropical garden design books, and this one is probably the most helpful as far as helping one with the details of a design. It's not perfect, but it contains some information that was missing from virtually all of the other tropical design books I have. Typical of garden books, this book has a few chapters giving an overview on tropical gardens subjects and then a longer section on various specific tropical plants. The first section covers topics such as container gardening, indoor plants, pests and disease, and plant propagation. The last two items are things not often covered in other books. This book does not provide a lot of complete garden photos (so one can get a sense of how to combine multiple plants), nor does it give standard design principles about layering low, mid, and tall plants. These would be appreciated, but it does discuss color theory, as well as mixing plant texture, with great examples on leaf shape. The section that discusses specific tropical plants are usually uninteresting because every book has the same information: plant size, hardiness zone, growing tips, etc. However, this book adds to the standard format. It provides a full page to each plant (instead of a small paragraph), so it is able to detail location/sun needs and growing tips. For plant size, it mentions size differences when planted in a pot vs in the ground. Perhaps best of all, it has a paragraph for companion planting and design aspects- what to plant with a particular plant. I found this very useful because it helps simplify all aspects of soil/sun/water requirements and texture/color theory into a simple recommendation. The only thing missing from here is no mention of the zone hardiness of each plant. Since the book contains several hardiness zone maps, I do not think this information was eliminated by accident. Rather, I think that specifying a hardiness zone is challenging when there are actual several zone maps, the maps are constantly changing, and certain plants will be an annual in a given zone, deciduous in another zone, etc. Applying a zone number to a plant can be misleading in essence. Still I wish one had been given. There is one additional gripe I have with the book in this section. You can only mention so many tropical plants,

and the book for the most part does a good job of listing standard tropicals (like bird of paradise) along with less known but great options. However, sometimes the author chooses to discuss a variant of a common plant, with virtually no mention of the common plant and how to incorporate it. For instance, the book takes a page discussing a red banana (ensete) , yet doesn't even mention the standard banana plants (musa), which in my region are more common and cold hardy. Likewise, instead of discussing common gingers like shell gingers or butterfly gingers, only the red alpinia ginger and curcuma (hidden ginger) are discussed. Again, its great that lesser known tropicals are given top bill, but I wish the descriptions had broadened to discuss how the hardier, easier-to-find varieties can be incorporated into the garden. The final section of the book at first glance seems to be just extraneous lists, but its another thing that makes this book different than other tropical garden books. Its lists of plants for special sites. Many of these lists detail plants for specific light and soil conditions (dry soil, moist soil, wet soil), which is a great way to reduce the number of prospective plants down to ones that will thrive in your specific yard conditions. I have seem similiar lists before, but not in such detail (sunny dry vs sunny drought tolerant vs sunny moist vs sunny wet for example). It also contains lists for tropical plants with specific traits, like evergreen leaves, or leaves with unusual colors, or flowers that are extremely fragrant. From experience, these lists really help with the plant selection process. Overall, the books gets 5 stars even though its not perfect. I still have to consult other books/internet for zone hardiness, and I have to get inspirational landscape photos from other sources as well. But with this book and the internet, I wouldn't see the designing of my tropical landscape as a daunting task.

Basic info: just what I was looking for when I ordered this book. The photos are generally close up and don't show entire plants, making it difficult to sometimes know what a plant looks like. For example, I saw a beautiful flowering plant that was unfamiliar to me at a nursery today. I asked, and was told it was a medinilla. When I came home, I looked for it on the internet before looking in this book. On the internet, I figured out that the plant I had seen was *Medinilla magnifica*. When I looked in this book, I found enough information to encourage me to add this plant to my garden. The book is well organized and the table of contents at the back allowed me to quickly find the information I was looking for today.

I started a tropical container garden a year ago so I'm just learning. I wish I had this when I first started so I could have better chosen which plants are best suited to which locations. This book is now my most trusted reference. Aside from having a very complete listing of tropical plants with

complete location and care instructions it also has a really handy reference list at the back that is divided into locations such as "sunny dry" or "shady wet". Though I have highlighted the plants that I either own or wish to buy this little guide at the back lets me quickly access a list of the right choices for whichever spot I'm trying to fill. I would say this will be the container garden book I reference most.

Good general intro on tropical plants. Nice early general sections along with good sections on many of the more common tropical plants.

Not as much about plumerias as I hoped, but there are many plants represented with nice photos.

Wonderful selection of plants, with extensive information included on each plant listed. However, it's unfortunate that the information given did not include the hardiness zones for each plant, which I feel would have been easy to include (it would have earned a 5-star rating from me).

Brought this book to view & plan a tropical garden in Thailand. In combination with another book I should be successful.

Landscape chairman in Florida - this book is just what you need if you are gardening in the tropics.

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