

## Gardening Inspiration From the Library Shelves

By Claire Hanson

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Whether you are an experienced gardener or a newbie, there is always something to learn, especially here in our dry, windy, high-elevation paradise. Gardening friends, the Master Gardeners at the Farmer's Market, books, and even seed catalogs are great sources. The Estes Valley Community Garden website has lots of articles and links to information in response to our own gardeners' questions and requests. Click on [evcg.org](http://evcg.org) and select Resources to see what's there.

Meanwhile, here are some books I've found at the Estes Valley Library that might inspire you to go dig in the dirt. You'll find a treasure trove of other great gardening books, if you go looking for these four on the Library's shelves. As the Roman statesman Cicero stated a long, long time ago, "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."

*Small-Space Vegetable Gardens: Growing Edibles in Containers, Raised Beds, and Small Plots* (Andrea Bellamy, Timber Press, 2014). This is a wide-ranging guide to starting from scratch in all aspects of gardening in small spaces. If I were a new gardener, I'd like to have this as a guidebook.

*The Colorado Gardeners Companion: An Insider's Guide to Gardening in the Centennial State* (Jodi Torpey, GPP, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2015) is an excellent resource for beginning or experienced gardeners. Colorado challenges including soil, water, weather and pests/diseases are addressed. Chapters on veggies, annuals, perennials, trees/shrubs and lawns include varieties and growing techniques for the nine separate hardiness zones (3a – 7a) in our state. A listing of resources – from CSU Extension to Bat Conservation International ([batcon.org](http://batcon.org)) – is helpful if you are seeking more specifics.

*Good Garden Bugs: Everything You Need to Know About Beneficial Predatory Insects* (Mary Gardiner, Quarry Books, 2015). Please don't squash every bug you see in your garden! While this book is a detailed treatise, just paging through would give you a new appreciation for what is out there helping gardeners, as well as an incentive to identify any insects you see on your plants or in your soil, before you panic. The clear photos will help with identification, although you may want to start with [bugguide.net](http://bugguide.net) (recommended by the author) if you have no idea what's crawling around on your green bean leaves.

And just for fun, as well as to help nurture a new generation of gardeners, check out *Gardening Lab for Kids: 52 Fun Experiments to Learn, Grow, Harvest, Make, Play, and Enjoy Your Garden* (Renata Fossen Brown, Quarry Books, 2014). This is a varied collection of projects for kids of all ages, with materials lists and pictures to supplement the clear directions. Paint a rock to decorate your garden, or build a rain gauge – they all sound like fun!

A new book in 2021, *Kitchen Garden Revival: A Modern Guide to Creating a Stylish Small-Scale, Low-Maintenance Edible Garden* (Nicole Johnsey Burke, Cool Springs Press, 2020), is a nice overview of the steps needed to start from nothing and end up with a small but productive garden where vegetables, fruits and herbs are close by for everyday use in the kitchen. The 8 chapters provide step-by-step advice for each phase of planning, building, planting, tending and harvesting. Includes lots of photos, lists and charts to help guide your journey.

Another new addition is *The Heirloom Gardener: Traditional Plants & Skills for the Modern World* (John Forti, Timber Press, 2021.) This is a beautiful collection of very short essays on the theme of "...a celebration of the renaissance that is taking place in fields, backyards, and local economies around the world. .... about building upon a sense of place to promote health, happiness, and common ground, whether it be for your own backyard homestead, farmstead, or community." (p. 11) You may be inspired to try a specific new plant or skill; perhaps growing the sweet herb angelica, or foraging for edible flowers, or saving seed from heirloom veggies. There's a lot of food for thought in these pages.

See you at the Library! If you are looking for more information about Estes Valley Community Garden, explore our website at [evcg.org](http://evcg.org) or email the Board at [evcg@evcg.org](mailto:evcg@evcg.org). We'd love to hear from you.

*Claire Hanson will grow salad greens at the Community Garden for the 8th year this season, having gardened with her mother and grandmother in New Jersey, then having to relearn everything in Boulder and all over again in Estes Park. On the EVCG Board, she also volunteers at the Library.*