

OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION
5320 Stanard Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44103
Phone: 216-429-8200

We're on the web!
cuyahogamg.org

Send MG mail to
MGCC
P. O. Box 603330
Cleveland, OH 44103

Trumpet Vine

Editor

Sandy Welches
Sandygorbywelch-
es@gmail.com

Graphic Design Editor

Pat Koch
pak711@aol.com

Copy Editor

Sandy Jones
sandymowrisjones@hot
mail.com

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FOUR BOOKS FOR GARDEN PLANNING, AND ENJOYMENT

Submitted by Carol Braverman, MGV '03

I came across these books that I thought I would like to own, or take notes from, or simply use as references.



First, *Plantiful* by Kristin Green. As the title implies, the plants covered in this book are ones that spread, self-sow, and over-winter. In addition to an informative preface, the book is divided into several sections. First, "50 Faithful Volunteers" with beautiful pictures of the flora, information on zones, descriptions, and growing conditions.

Taking into account plants that spread, instead of buying the usual three, buy one and see how that grows. The author has a guide to abundance reusing, replanting and repeating, along with well-illustrated propagation methods.

Another section is "50 Thrilling Fillers," which discusses plants that spread, provides a guide to abundance, and propagation.

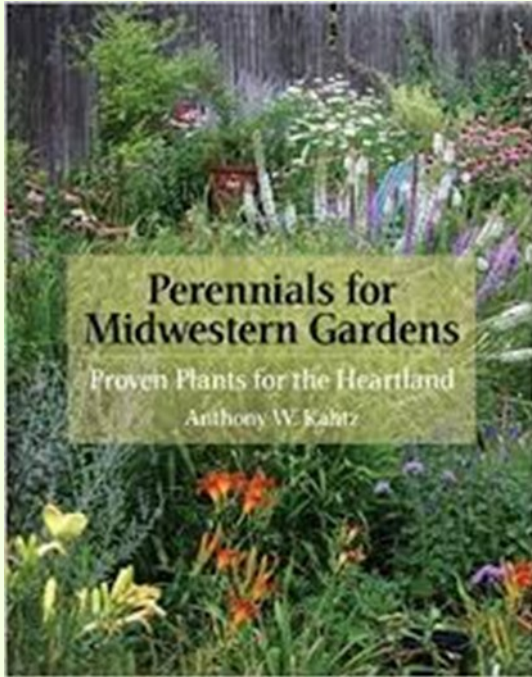
The third section takes into account something I try, but almost always give up on: frost-tender plants. Green includes plants which she feels worth pushing the zone for, if only to take cuttings and pot up during the winter months. There are also excellent tips for winter propagating and over-wintering.

The book is beautifully and generously illustrated with color photographs. Each plant discussed has a related and generous description paragraph, along with what the author terms "fine print." These are comments specific to aspects on the individual plant.

The book is not only a guide to planting, it is also something of a instruction manual. "A Reference and Resources" appendix completes the book. There are approximately 100 plants discussed, with associated photos.

It's a book worth owning and, also, very much worth consulting.

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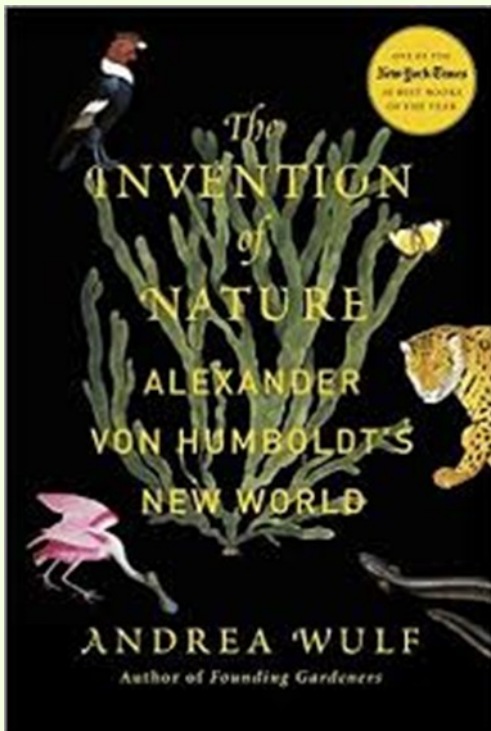


The second book I recommend is Anthony W. Kahtz's 2008 *Perennials for Midwestern Gardens: Proven Plants for the Heartland*. He presents in-depth profiles on 140 plant profiles, along with 260 additional recommendations for the Midwest gardener. He goes the extra mile by writing about each plant.



The third book I came across is a 2012 revised edition of *The Kew Plant Glossary* by Henk Beentje. It is an illustrated dictionary of plant terms, and certainly it is the go-to guide for answers to botanical words used by scientists in their writings: textbooks, scientific papers, or field guides. The book was also the winner of "Reference Book of the Year" prize at the Garden Media Awards in 2010. The *New York Times* judged it as, "Catnip for the garden geek....this fascinating, authoritative volume may seduce even the most casual browser." *I am delighted to say that I received it as a Christmas present.*

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As a fourth recommendation, you might like to have handy a copy of *The Invention of Nature: Alexander Humboldt's New World* by Andrea Wulf. It's especially timely due to the recent France Climate Change Summit in Paris. I didn't know much about Alexander von Humboldt, except for the Humboldt Redwoods State Park in California and a city park in Chicago, also named after him. Born in Berlin, Germany, in 1769, he is best known there and throughout Europe and South America where he explored and traveled extensively. What is of most interest about him is his technique of looking at the whole picture of a specimen, not just one plant species, one river, or one animal. And that whole picture includes, according to Humboldt, how each specific part of nature affects another—or others.

His style of writing is not just scientific, but also rather poetic. His many friends and admirers came from many backgrounds, which may account for his writing style. He was a tireless researcher, and had many publications to his credit, some of which influenced many scientists who accepted his beliefs. The book reveals his dealings with Goethe, Thomas Jefferson, a young Simon Bolivar, along with his influence on Darwin and Henry David Thoreau, especially in Walden. All fascinating material! It is also said that Humboldt's "Kosmos" was open as Whitman was writing *Leaves of Grass*. John Muir, of Yosemite fame, believed in Humboldt, which led to his ideas of natural preservation.

Humboldt's life (1769-1859) is exciting, but he also lived in an exciting time in both history and science. This comes through clearly in this biography. So much discovery was going on with him, and around him, yet all was happening without a cell phone or email. People wrote letters. Amazing!

Several lovely color plates and many line drawings included. No cameras were available then.

All books are available at Cuyahoga County Public Library and, thank goodness, can be ordered online.



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