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Coulter provides a holistic approach to gardening in her beautiful heirloom gardening guide in this survey of all types of plants — flowers, fruits and vegetables — and in her holistic overview of the gardening season, including ways to promote a healthy garden by enlisting nature’s help instead of by employing harmful measures like pesticides and insecticides. The beauty of gardening with heirloom seeds is that they have proven resistant to diseases, as evidenced by their survival through multiple generations. Gardening begins with an explanatory introduction about utilizing heirloom seeds in the garden. Her anecdotal tales provide fond reminiscences of a simpler time and convey the sense that heirloom gardening allows gardeners to honor the past while enjoying a superior plant. This book is divided into sections dedicated to the different seasons, and each chapter begins with a summation of the gardening tasks specific to the season. Coulter describes favorite flowers, fruits and vegetables best suited to planting in the season highlighted. Fifty descriptions give historical placement of the plant, Coulter’s favorite varieties and growing tips specific to the plant. The chapter on winter recounts the mixed emotions the gardener experiences: the feeling of relief that the bounty of summer and fall is over, coupled with the anxiousness to begin the new season’s garden. Coulter provides a historical context for the planning process by recounting the history of the seed catalog and emphasizing its importance even for today’s gardener. The text is complemented with beautiful pictures of plants, seeds and old-fashioned seed packet illustrations. Botanically themed quotations grace the margins, with space reserved for note-taking. Complete with a bibliography, a guide for finding heirloom seeds and gardens, and an index. Suitable for gardeners in any area, but emphasis is on plants that do best in Southern climates. Recommended for public and academic libraries.

— Reviewed by Diana Hartle
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