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Southern Gardening All Year Long

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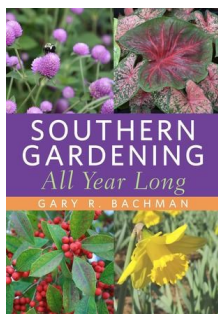
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creative nonfiction work, she has written several poetry chapbooks as well as a full-length collection and served as an editor for *New South Journal*. She currently is serving as Visiting Professor of Creative Nonfiction at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina.

Other Girls to Burn, awarded the 2020 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Award for Creative Nonfiction, is suited for academic and public libraries alike, particularly college and university libraries that support women's studies programs and creative writing departments.

Amanda Nash, University of North Georgia

Southern Gardening All Year Long



Gary R. Bachman
Jackson: University Press of
Mississippi, 2022
ISBN: 9781496838902
224 p. \$25.00 (Pbk)

In *Southern Gardening All Year Long*, author Gary Bachman speaks to amateur and experienced gardeners alike, giving helpful tips and inspiration to anyone looking to try their hand at ornamental horticulture. Bachman walks the reader through the annual rhythms of a garden's life; each of the book's twelve chapters is dedicated to a different month and spotlights plants and landscaping techniques that suit that time of year. The format makes the book an ideal quick reference for gardeners, regardless of the season.

Each chapter is composed of short, readable columns that Bachman originally wrote for *Southern Gardening*, a multimedia production of the Mississippi State University Extension that he has written for and hosted for over a decade. This highlights reel from Bachman's *Southern Gardening* column reveals a wide range of interests, including lichens, garden art, and microgreens. However, the book's overwhelming focus is ornamental landscaping. Readers seeking guidance on vegetable gardening and native landscaping will find occasional words of advice, but Bachman's recommendations are geared more toward plants with visual appeal, hardiness, and longevity.

This focus on visual appeal is accentuated by the beautiful, full-page photographic spreads that accompany each column. Bachman's photographs vividly demonstrate the variety of colors, sizes, and variegation within a single plant genus – like the massive, colorful blooms of the Summer Storm hibiscus as compared to the dark, serrated foliage of the Mahogany Splendor hibiscus. The author also uses these photographs to demonstrate plant pairings that complement each other when placed together in the landscape.

Bachman is mindful that he is speaking to a diverse audience that may not be working with the same expertise, space, or even the same environment. While his recommendations are tailored to plants that suit the clay-heavy soil and high temperatures of Coastal Mississippi, he makes sure to note the broader plant hardiness zones in which his featured plants can thrive. He also doesn't limit his recommendations to gardeners with plenty of land; Bachman includes tips on helping plants thrive in containers and/or indoors. In one column, "Be Creative and Persistent in Tough Garden Areas," he identifies resilient plants and planting strategies that work in awkward spaces with less-than-ideal conditions – or, as he calls them, "hell strips."

Bachman also addresses gardeners of various skill levels and abilities. When Bachman uses horticulture lingo, such as "deadheading" or "forcing," he always clarifies with a definition, making the book accessible to newcomers. On the other hand, the author's interest in newly discovered and propagated plants – like his own discovery, the beautyberry selection Duet – may appeal to more experienced gardeners looking to work with new and exciting selections. Throughout the book, Bachman takes care to note award-winning plant selections, including Mississippi Medallion and All-America Selection winners as well as Louisiana Super Plants. For readers less in the know, a discussion of the qualities that make for an award winner would have been a helpful inclusion.

Importantly, Bachman's focus on accessibility doesn't end with his attention to skill level and space considerations. He also takes care to include tips for gardeners with physical conditions that may make gardening a challenge. Accessibility tips are interspersed throughout the book; Bachman also devotes an entire column, "Simple

Concepts Make Accessible Gardening,” to accessible planters that require less stooping and crouching.

Southern Gardening All Year Long is an excellent source of inspiration for ornamental gardeners of any skill level. His conversational, down-to-earth writing style makes the book eminently readable, and his advice is practical and easy to follow. While this book is not intended for gardeners with a specific interest in native plants or food gardening, it is packed with practical advice for anyone interested in creating a cohesive, beautiful landscape that will transform with each passing month. This book would make a great addition to public library collections.

Teresa Nesbitt, University of North Georgia