BOOKS

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Copies signed by the author are available from the Arnold Arboretum Book Shop.

Owning *The City Gardener's Handbook* by *New York Times* garden writer and columnist Linda Yang is like living next door to the most resourceful plant enthusiast in town, who also happens to write with grace and style. Based on years of hands-on gardening experience, she has developed the confidence to look at an inhospitable area of concrete, shade, and pollution and immediately start planning its transformation into a garden space.

This is not a coffee-table book, but a practical, comprehensive guide to gardening in small and difficult situations. The numerous photographs, grouped in "blocks" for easy reference, are proof of the city resident's ability to create gardens in unimaginable spaces. Linked to garden plans or accompanied by plant lists, the pictures show the garden in all seasons and illustrate the creative use of fences, trellises, furniture, and containers.

Linda Yang's advice is useful to both novice and experienced gardeners. Her detailed chapter headings provide a ready trail of informative markers through the complicated process of creating a garden from scratch. The thirteen chapters include: starting off; assessment of problems of wind, pollutants, and soil conditions; selecting, locating, planting, and caring for appropriate plants; and understanding the ways of uninvited garden visitors—insects, diseases, and resident squirrels.

This is a book of answers—from a source list of mail-order suppliers of plants, tools, garden furniture, and accessories, to an almanac of seasonal tasks and reminders. The reader will also find useful guides, such as the "Chart of Reduced Fertilizer Quantities," which scales down applications to container and small yard proportions, and specialty plant lists covering such categories as plants for gardens with less than five hours of autumn sun, plants for medium-tall hedges, and weeping trees as accent plants on balconies.

Fifteen years ago, Linda Yang wrote *The Terrace Gardener's Handbook*, which contained many excellent suggestions on gardening in containers. In *The City Gardener's Handbook*, the information on containers is once again comprehensive, accurate, and inspiring. From anchoring a window box to planting birches in wooden tubs, the emphasis is on both how and what to plant, coupled with their integration into a cohesive design.

This is a book destined to bear the true mark of the gardener's companion—muddy thumb prints on every well-read page. With Linda Yang's assistance, city gardeners will be well equipped to create their own green spaces. Not trendy, not just decorative, this book is simply invaluable.