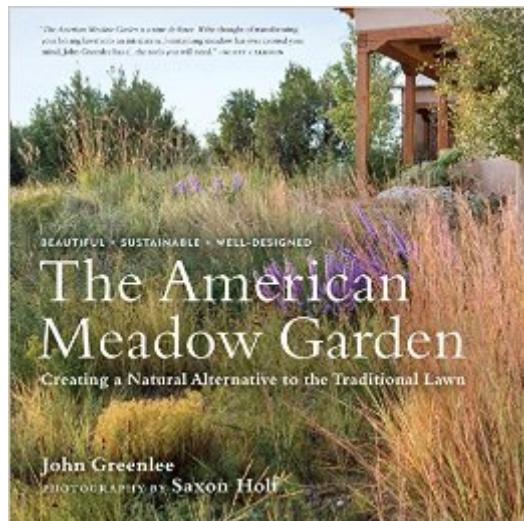


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The American Meadow Garden: Creating A Natural Alternative To The Traditional Lawn



Synopsis

If there's one lesson every homeowner must learn, it's this: The traditional lawn is a huge, time consuming, synthetic-chemical sucking mistake. The time has come to look for new ways to create friendly, livable spaces around our homes. In *The American Meadow Garden*, ornamental grass expert John Greenlee creates a new model for homeowners and gardeners. For Greenlee, a meadow isn't a random assortment of messy, anonymous grasses. Rather, it is a shimmering mini-ecosystem, in which regionally appropriate grasses combine with colorful perennials to form a rich tapestry that is friendly to all life — with minimal input of water, time, and other scarce resources. Kids and pets can play in complete safety, and birds and butterflies flock there. A prairie style planting is a place you want to be. With decades of experience as a nurseryman and designer, John Greenlee is the perfect guide. He details all the practicalities of site preparation, plant selection, and maintenance; particularly valuable are his explanations of how ornamental grasses perform in different climates and areas. Gorgeous photography by Saxon Holt visually illustrates the message with stunning examples of meadow gardens from across the country. We've reached a stage where we can no longer follow past practices unthinkingly, particularly when those practices are wasteful and harmful to the environment. It's time to get rid of the old-fashioned lawn and embrace a sane and healthy future: the American meadow garden.

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Customer Reviews

Though I pre-ordered this book and waited for three (3) months for the release, I now realize that I have actually been waiting for this book for years! After reading the American Meadow Garden, I feel positively free to dig up my lawn and replace it with a wonderland of ornamental grasses and native perennials. I have been gardening on the East Coast for over 25 years and have been huge fan of John Greenlee's West Coast work. His other reference work on ornamental grasses is a staple in my gardening library. In that text, as in his new book he is always careful to address all regions and environmental conditions that horticulturists might face. I have contemplated meadow gardening before, actually for a long time, as it is an age-old method of xeriscaping. I know full well that it is a nice thing to do for the Earth. I've researched the benefits, even visited sites such as Kurt Bluemel's design at the River Farm Meadow in Virginia that happens to be elegantly featured in this book ([...]). It always seemed like a nice place to visit and I really WOULD like to live there except for one hitch. Truthfully, I've always worried about what the neighbors would say if I had huge stands of ornamental grasses and a soft, wispy palette of butterfly attracting perennials with no suburban turf. What would they say if I didn't meet neck and neck with the Saturday morning mower-brigade? Would the mulch guy stop sending a fruit-log at Christmas if I stopped ordering my annual 12 yards? How would visitors feel if I gave up on keeping tidy paths and elongated turf vistas in the traditional methods of Gertrude Jekyll and Rosemary Verey? Who cares what they think; I hate fruit cake anyway! I have found a new truth.

I am enjoying the new crop of gardening books because most of them no longer masquerade as odes to gardening. Instead, authors and publishers make certain that books on horticulture empower readers to garden successfully. No matter how complex the topic, gardening advice now takes the form of an easily digestible manual, usually integrated into a reader-friendly text. The American Meadow Garden is a bold step in re-defining our outdoor environment. Here is a book that informs and instructs us how to use a meadow garden as an alternative for a lawn. Neat green lawns are becoming an albatross and an anachronism. Evolving lifestyles, shrinking natural resources, and a deepening concern about the chemicals that pollute our water table are causing some horticulturalists to re evaluate the role that lawns play in the quality of our life. John Greenlee is a respected horticulturalist and writer who suggests using meadow gardens as an alternative to green lawns. This is not the stereotypical meadow with cows grazing. The author presents us with a relatively new concept for North America: a field of ornamental grasses punctuated by naturalized bulbs and native flowering perennials. The design of an urban park, influenced by this principle, already exists at the Lurie Gardens in Chicago. Mr. Greenlee believes that this landscape treatment

is far more satisfying than either a lawn or a traditional mixed flower border and that it combines the best attributes of both. Furthermore, he argues, a meadow is more ecology-friendly than a lawn because it consumes fewer resources. A meadow garden should not intimidate, as it does not need to be all encompassing and expansive. This substitute for a manicured lawn may be small enough to insert into any size garden plan.

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