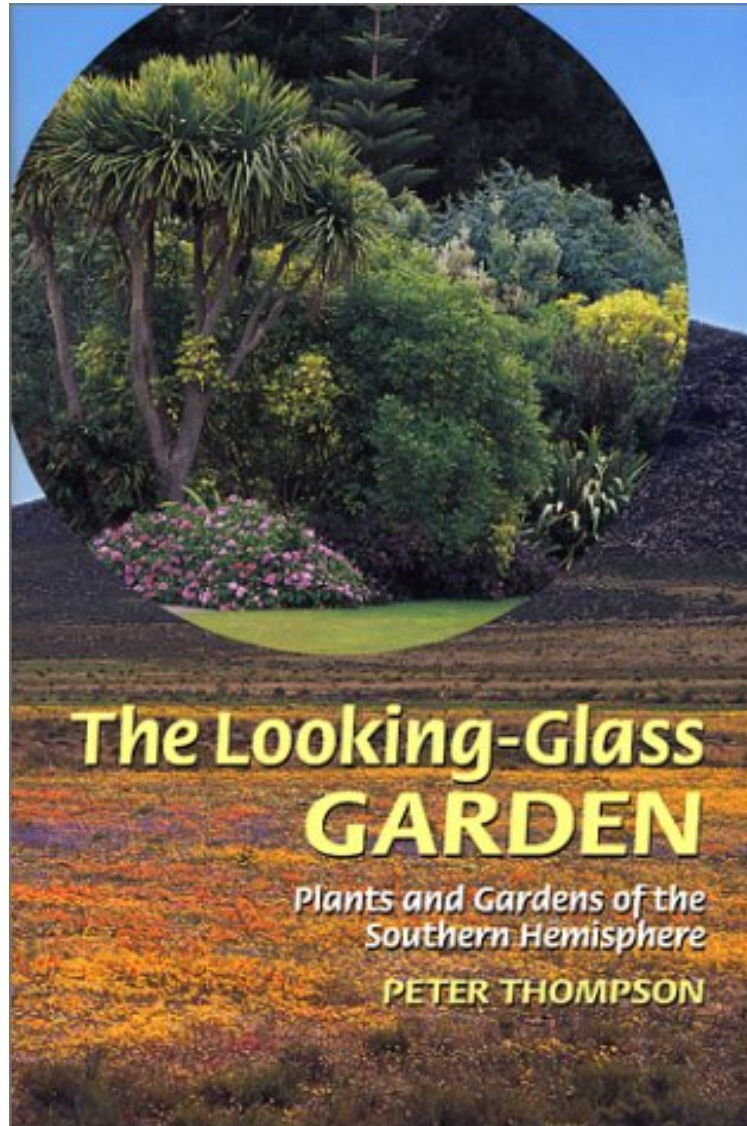


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The Looking-Glass Garden: Plants and Gardens of the Southern Hemisphere

Peter Thompson

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Peter Thompson : The Looking-Glass Garden: Plants and Gardens of the Southern Hemisphere before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Looking-Glass Garden: Plants and Gardens of the Southern Hemisphere:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyed the book. By Pamela Scott Batzek This was a very interesting book about plants we are just beginning to see in North America. I thoroughly enjoyed all the photos too. 0

of 0 people found the following review helpful. An interesting look at plants south of the equator
By Arthur Daigle
The Looking Glass Garden has a lot going for it. There are frequent color photos that are high quality and show plants many of us will never see. Plant descriptions are very details and I learned a great deal about plants growing in harsh conditions, including species of trees capable of producing their own nitrogen fertilizer with symbiotic bacteria. You will need a dictionary close at hand when reading, partly due to technical words related to botany and partly english words I haven't come across in decades of reading. I wish to make clear this is a comment rather than a complaint about the book. My only concern is the author's attitude towards invasive species. Peter Thompson acknowledges the problem early on in the book and later lists two species that have gone on to dominate the environments they were introduced in. In spite of this his view is unabashed enthusiasm for bringing plants across continents. I understand that most of the time this is not an issue since most plants don't get out of control, and admittedly this is less of a problem where I live since winters are too cold for nearly all of these plants to survive. But many animals and plants have been introduced to North America to everyone's sorrow. Dandelions, garlic mustard, european and asian carp, kudzu and even gypsy moths were brought over with the best of intentions and the worst of results, and that's a short list of offenders. Careful consideration should be given to bringing in plants that would lack the diseases and herbivores that normally keep them in check

Just as Alice's looking glass revealed a world where nothing was as expected, Peter Thompson's "looking-glass garden" offers readers a glimpse of a world of new plants and possibilities by crossing the equator. The floras of countries as diverse as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Chile offer adventurous gardeners palettes, forms, textures, and effects that have no parallel in the garden offerings of the north. As well as offering useful suggestions on interesting plants that can be incorporated in a variety of gardens in our latitudes, Thompson's book is also a travelogue of the wild landscapes of faraway lands and a tour of some of the great gardens to be found below the equator.

.com The Looking Glass Garden is an ambitious book; author Peter Thompson hopes to change the way westerners imagine a well-designed landscape. According to Thompson, for too long the English style has dominated in America and western Europe, resulting in a uniformity that edges out possibility and strangeness. The prevalence of gardening with "native plants" has also limited creativity: Thompson argues that as long as plants are well situated and well cared for, they can come from anywhere in the world. The book's title refers to the moment when Alice moved through the looking glass into Wonderland. In this context Wonderland flourishes in the gardens of New Zealand, Australia, Chile, and South Africa. Chapters concentrate on specific southern hemisphere design elements and distinctive plants-- "Oases with Trees," "Tropical Drama"--and are accompanied by enticing photographs. Thompson writes like a man on a mission: "This book tells of the challenge from south of the equator to these entrenched and long-accepted ideas," he explains. Once the challenge is accepted, "we will look back and recognize ... the start of another revolution." --Emily White
From Booklist
Given the rare opportunity to visit hundreds of gardens and wild habitats, Thompson has produced an exciting survey of exotic flora found south of the equator. The exhilarating writing promises to tantalize and educate garden enthusiasts by communicating the sensational, surreal allure of the region's plant life. In touring gardens of the Southern Hemisphere and the U.S., Thompson introduces readers to an eye-opening procession of species and to the innovative designs created by plantsmen and -women who utilize unusual plant material to create stunning landscapes. Among a panoply of floral wonders exist the exuberant bulbs of South Africa, Australia's unusual winter-flowering grevilleas (deer-resistant and drought-tolerant shrubs, trees, and ground covers), and the strange, textural inflorescences of banksias. Thompson's insightful commentary points out abundant specimens that promise to inspire daring home gardeners, who can then consult the listing of hardiness zones to assist in planting unorthodox alternatives in their own gardens. Consider this one an essential addition to gardening collections. Alice Joyce
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Genuinely inspiring." -- Book News, September 2001