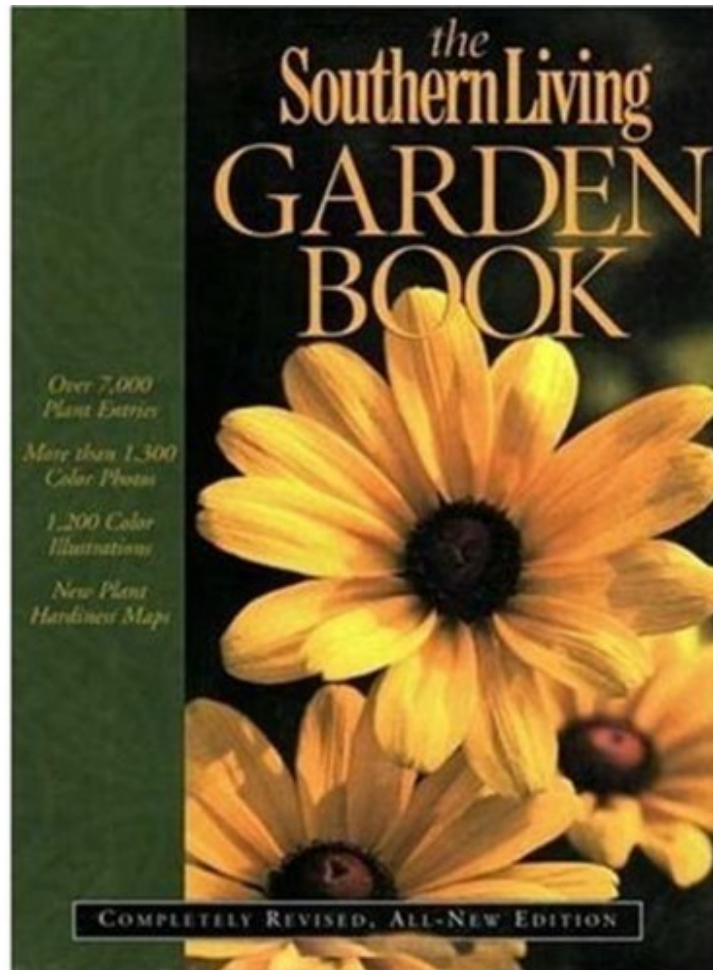


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## The Southern Living Garden Book: Completely Revised, All-New Edition

Steve Bender

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**Steve Bender : The Southern Living Garden Book: Completely Revised, All-New Edition** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Southern Living Garden Book: Completely Revised, All-New Edition:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Showing Its Age, Needs More Texas Orientation By Howard Nemerov Texas is in a funny location. It's too far west to be considered southern. It's too east to be called the West. It's somewhat south to be called part of the Great Plains. Yet it's referred to as all those things. I consider it Texas and home. Nevertheless, the Southern Living Garden Book includes Texas, albeit not very well. First off, the Southern Living Garden Book is, in my experience, the best general reference available because of its extensive plant encyclopedia and the inclusion of the American Horticultural Society's heat zones. But the book is in need of some

editing and updates. The heat zone map included in this book remains a work in progress. Their map puts us in Heat Zone 9, but we're really Zone 10, based upon my examination of historical temperature data and gardening experience. This year, due to the drought, we were Zone 11. You have to keep such variations in mind, because the El Nio/La Nia cycles may raise and lower your heat zone from year to year. This year taught me to move more towards Xeriscape. Also, a thermometer survey showed that near the south-facing street is as much as 20 hotter than just 30 feet back under the Pecans. (We're installing a 60 foot dedicated cacti/succulent bed.) Considering these factors in your landscape plan will make the Southern Living Garden Book a more valuable reference when you look for the right plants for your nano-climates. Some plants were inaccurately rated for both heat and cold hardiness by the Southern Living Garden Book, experience showing that they aren't tough enough for our heat. For example, they claim *Fatsia japonica* is hardy enough for Heat Zone 12. Hah, hah. Experience shows it's perhaps good for Zone 9. We had one below-average summer and it lived. The next year, back to Heat Zone 10, and it died. This year, I tried once more, placing a new specimen in a more protected area. It did fine during the winter, despite two streaks of three 15 nights, but last summer's heat killed it. The book also says *Fatsia japonica* is marginally hardy for the Lower South (USDA cold hardiness zone 8, which is where we live). Perhaps the book needs to split Lower South into two zones to reflect the USDA's division into Zones 8A and 8B. We live in 8B, which may explain why *Fatsia japonica* is cold hardy here. The editorial offices reside in Birmingham, Alabama, which may explain why this book is more southern oriented and not so relevant for Texas. The editors would benefit from corresponding with the experts at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and Texas AM, the latter being the source of the Texas Superstar plant list of heat- and drought-hardy plants for Texas. By incorporating this expertise, the next edition of the Southern Living Garden Book-and it definitely needs an update-will be much more valuable to Texas gardeners. The current edition doesn't include many species listed by those two Texas sources, including many Texas natives. On the plus side, compared to the Texas-centric gardening books I've read, the Southern Living Garden Book provides the most extensive plant information and is a useful addition to your garden library.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Gift for Southern Gardeners  
By Mr. Spock  
I have ordered two copies of this edition for grandchildren who are new homeowners. I have had a previous edition - and referred to it frequently - so know how useful it is. I did not order the most recent edition as published reviews indicated that it was not as well organized as the previous editions. And, yes, the grandchildren have found it very helpful in establishing their new landscaping.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. The most valuable book on your shelf!  
By D. Wheatley  
I had the first edition of The Southern Living Gardening Book and wore it out over the years. Recently, I purchased the new one, and it's even better! If you garden in the south, you must have this book! The way the book divides the south into zones takes the guess work out of buying plants. If the doesn't say a plant will grow in your zone, don't waste your money. It simply will not. The information for each plant is excellent. And the list is exhaustive. It's the rare plant that isn't listed, and if it's not, it means one of two things: either the plant is so new it wasn't included in the book or it simply won't grow anywhere in the south. I am a garden designer, and I find the plant lists in the book invaluable. Need evergreens? Need blooming shrubs? Need flowers? Go to the lists and pick and choose according to your needs. For the most part, the plants in the lists will be readily available at your local garden center. Are you browsing garden catalogs? How many times have you ordered and planted new things just to have them die, making you feel like a failure? Before you spend your money on a new, exotic looking plant, check the SLGB. It will tell you where to plant, how to plant, and whether it will thrive in your garden. Big confidence builder! Whether you are a beginning gardener or have gardened for decades, you need this book! If I could only have one, this would be it!

When it first hit the shelves in 1998, it took the South by storm. After all, it was the first major, comprehensive gardening encyclopedia solely dedicated to the South. Now there's a new reason to celebrate. The 2004 edition is bigger, brighter, and bolder than ever, with more luscious photography, updated plant listings, and a special focus on native and heritage plants. Find the right plant for every place with Plant Selection Guides and 7,000 plant listings keyed to the Southern Living climate maps. With hundreds of practical hints and tips plus some garden gospel from Southern Living's resident experts this is the single most authoritative source for gardening in the South. Key Features: - New American Horticultural Society Heat Zone Map and plant ratings -2,000 new plant entries -More than 1,200 all-new, full-color plant illustrations -More than 1,300 color photographs -New Practical Guide to Gardening, -70-page section of tips and techniques -Updated list of mail-order nurseries and Southern public gardens