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## The Victorian Garden (Shire Library)

*Caroline Ikin*

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### THE VICTORIAN GARDEN

CAROLINE IKIN

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**Caroline Ikin : The Victorian Garden (Shire Library)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Victorian Garden (Shire Library):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A gem!By HelenCaroline Ikin's "The Victorian Garden" is a lovely gem. The text is well paced and reads easily. The book covers a range of topics about the Victorians, their gardens and gardeners and the horticultural legacy they left behind for us. I particularly enjoyed the range and breadth of images related to the theme - Mrs. Ikin obviously worked diligently to find all sorts of historic illustrations to amplify her text. It's a great read.

Gardening became a popular pastime in Victorian Britain with the rise of suburban gardens and a passion for the

outdoors. New plant introductions from abroad brought a greater variety of plants, while improvements in technology made gardening more accessible. Gardening books and magazines spread the appeal and debate raged over the merits of colour and order versus wild and natural. The large and impressive gardens of country houses were emulated in suburban settings as the appeal of gardens and gardening spread to the masses, while the creation of public parks introduced green spaces to grey cities. As with architecture, Victorian gardens underwent a 'battle of the styles', and an exploration of the period reveals contrasting fashions for garish bedding, ornate Italian terracing, naturalistic planting, cool ferneries, colourful parterres, tranquil Japanese water features, and the occasional eccentric embellishment. The characters involved include such Victorian luminaries as John Loudon, Joseph Paxton and Charles Darwin, alongside the garden designers William Nesfield, Charles Barry and William Robinson, plant hunters Joseph Hooker, Robert Fortune and William Lobb, and the influential women Marianne North, Alicia Amherst and Jane Loudon. The pace of change makes the Victorian era of gardens an exciting time of exotic new plants, fiercely competitive head gardeners, impressive glasshouse engineering, strong personalities and contrasting ideals.

About the Author Caroline Ikin is a writer and historian specialising in the Victorian era. She has studied History of Art and Garden History, and has worked for the National Trust.