

wildness, the park is designed to feel unthreatening.

The Entrance Forest leads on to the Meadow, which cleverly mimics natural planting patterns. Through painstaking experimentation, Pearson and the gardeners have evolved several different seed mixes to ensure naturalistic variety, complexity and plant succession. Subtle variations in colour and mood define different areas, from the shady woodland boundaries to the hot, open, central ground. Similarly, complex plant patterns near the boardwalk, designed to stimulate visitors, segue into simpler flowing arrangements as the eye moves outward.

Beyond the Meadow is the productive area of kitchen garden, orchard, café, goat farm and rose garden. These demonstrate traditional agricultural techniques and model the principles of *satoyama* – a word which defines the physical area between cultivated land and forest, but encompasses the ethos of living harmoniously with nature. While providing produce for the café, and demonstrating the role of domestic livestock on the land, the goat farm also ensures entertainment for children. The rose garden guarantees seasonal drama and shows the commercial potential of this favourite flower in such items as cordials, ice cream, perfumes and cosmetics, made and sold on site.

Nearby is the Earth Garden which marks the meeting point of the agricultural plain and the forest – the place, effectively, where man and nature intersect. Here, what was once a large, flat, forbidding field, has been sculpted into gentle, undulating curves. While echoing the mountains beyond, this elegant landform eases visitors towards the naturalistic Forest Garden. With its mountain streams and woodland trails, the Forest Garden presents nature virtually untouched, the place to which all the other gardens have been leading.

Pearson maintains his link with the park through annual visits and interim emails with the head gardener. His detailed descriptions of his working methods, planting plans and philosophical approach are intercut with short meditations by Shintani, providing a Japanese perspective on the project, and giving insights on such subjects as nature worship in Japan, the tradition of forest foraging,

the eating of seasonal food and the experience of gardening abroad.

The book is illustrated with wonderful photographs by the in-house photographer Kiichi Noro; it also offers a resource section with details of websites, television programmes and books ranging from history and horticulture to aesthetics and even a section on the Ainu.

With his reverence for the land, his delight in simplicity, and his instinct to let nature shape the space, Pearson was the perfect choice to help further Hayashi's vision of encouraging visitors to respect nature by enabling them to engage with, observe and understand it at close quarters. Full of quiet wisdom and subtle insights, his reflections in *Tokachi Millennium Forest* are almost compensation enough for those unlikely to visit the park in person.

KATIE CAMPBELL

## *American Book Notes*

JUDITH B. TANKARD

In these stay-at-home days, books and gardens become even more meaningful, especially books about other people's gardens that we might visit one day. If your fancies include the American West, rather than the more familiar East Coast gardens, there's no better guide than Jennifer Jewell's *Under Western Skies: Visionary Gardens from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Coast* (Timber Press, \$50). Illustrated with dreamy photographs by Caitlin Atkinson, it reveals an awesome array of public and private gardens 'from wind-swept deserts to misty seaside hills and verdant valleys'. Jewell, an award-winning author of several books, hosts a popular weekly public radio programme and podcast, *Cultivating Place*. Jewell's selections for her new book range from public gardens, such as the not-to-be-missed Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix, Arizona, to private gardens, including one designed by Bernard Trainor in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. In addition to California and the Southwest, she also presents less-familiar areas such as Colorado,

Utah, Idaho and Wyoming as well as the Pacific Northwest, including Dan Hinkley's renowned Heronswood. The book is handsomely designed and immediately draws the reader in to another world, one of wildness and uncharted territory. The photographs are almost as good as being there in person.

Historic gardens, both old and in the making, are definitely a part of American culture these days. *Immersion: Living and Learning in an Olmsted Garden* by Nola Anderson (Damiani, \$70) celebrates an American garden that was rescued from years of neglect. In 1991 Anderson and her husband purchased The Chimneys, a twenty-eight-acre historic seaside estate north of Boston, Massachusetts, that had fallen into disrepair. They soon discovered that the grounds had been designed by the famed Olmsted firm, specifically Frederick Law Olmsted Jr, between 1903 and 1914 and had seen better days. This visually appealing book is a record of the owners' immersion in bringing the grounds back to life despite their inexperience with gardening, restoration methodology, or even American garden history. It is a very personal story, illustrated with a wealth of pictures, showing not only the rebirth of an important estate garden but the author's transformation from a 'naïve amateur to a Latin-slinging garden creator'. As part of their journey, they started visiting other important gardens, learned about horticulture, and called in experts to advise them. Anderson's transition from knowing nothing to learning on-the-spot makes for an engaging read. Close to three hundred pages and weighing over five pounds, *Immersion* is definitely for the specialist reader. It is filled with vintage plans and photographs as well as current images of a work-in-progress. It is an engaging story of accomplishment with an excellent visual record.

Historic gardens in the making is a new category with few notable examples in the United States until Ronald Lee Fleming's tour-de-force at Bellevue House, in Newport, Rhode Island. His new book, *The Adventures of a Narrative Gardener: Creating a Landscape of Memory* (D. Giles, \$39.95), combines Fleming's own sense of place and family history with a narrative about his extraordinary garden, which makes a strong case for classicism as a living language in

contemporary times. Fleming is the founder and president of the Townscape Institute, a not-for-profit public interest planning organisation based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A well-travelled connoisseur of historic houses and gardens, Fleming has selectively adapted ideas in his own extraordinary garden that surrounds historic Bellevue, once the home of Edith Wharton's collaborator, Ogden Codman's sister, Martha. Over the years he has transformed the landscape with the addition of exedrae, gazebos, green gardens, and more. Recent additions include a water table modelled after the one at Villa Lante in central Italy, a trellis adapted from the water garden at Het Loo Palace in The Netherlands, a Chinese Chippendale bridge and an Arts and Crafts pool modelled after a Lutyens and Jekyll design. Architectural elements abound, with nods to Thomas Chippendale and Samuel McIntire, plus a brand-new library with adjacent nymphaeum for nocturnal dips. In some ways the garden reminds me of a cross between England's Biddulph Grange and Hidcote Manor (but without the floral component). For those who are curious, all the present-day consultants are credited in the book, and there are plenty. Bellevue House is a unique accomplishment by an architectural connoisseur and the book is a worthy tribute to this, his worldwide travels and discerning judgment. Although privately owned, Bellevue House is occasionally open for charity events. The book serves as an excellent written and pictorial record of one of America's most important new gardens.

For the sheer delight of armchair reading, *Rosa: The Story of the Rose* (Yale University Press, \$30), with a foreword by me, is a treasure. By Peter E. Kukielski, former curator of the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden at the New York Botanical Garden and founder of the Millennial Rose Garden, it is not a dry, dull history of roses nor is it a practical encyclopedia. It's a connoisseur's guide to how roses played an important visual role not only in historical art, but in the lives of people, whether royal or peasants. From Roman times to the nineteenth century, we learn the importance of roses. In the chapter 'The Romantic Rose (1790-1850)', for example, we're told that roses have complex symbolism: 'beauty was troubling because

it contained the seeds of its passing, of decay, and the rose re-presented extremes – love and sorrow, joy and grief, life and death’. The book makes wonderful inspirational reading and the period illustrations are most welcome and engaging. It is also handsomely designed with a soothing teal-blue jacket and a single rose on the cover. It’s definitely a book to be dipped into frequently.

*All About Flowers: James Vick’s Nineteenth-Century Seed Company* (Ohio University Press, \$26.95) by Thomas J. Mickey is a welcome addition to American horticultural history. It is a well-researched account of the career of the American horticulturist, James Vick, who was known for his seed company and his many publications aimed at middle-class American gardeners. Mickey, an expert on nineteenth-century American gardening and the author of another popular book, *America’s Romance with the English Garden*, has done a prodigious amount of research, not only on the American seed industry, but also horticultural journals. A substantial library archive in Rochester, New York, allowed him to write this fascinating account of an important nineteenth-century author and seed merchant. James Vick (1818–82) began his career in publishing, eventually specialising in illustrated horticultural journals. One of his most popular publications was *Vick’s Illustrated Monthly*, which, according to Mickey, set the standard for the nation’s horticultural writing. From this he branched out to a major seed company where he systemised production from growing to shipping. Many of the plants that Vick promoted for home gardeners in the 1850s, such as pansies, petunias, marigolds and impatiens, are still popular in the superstores today. This is the fascinating account of a long-forgotten, energetic man who single-handedly changed the face of American horticulture.

# HORTUS

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