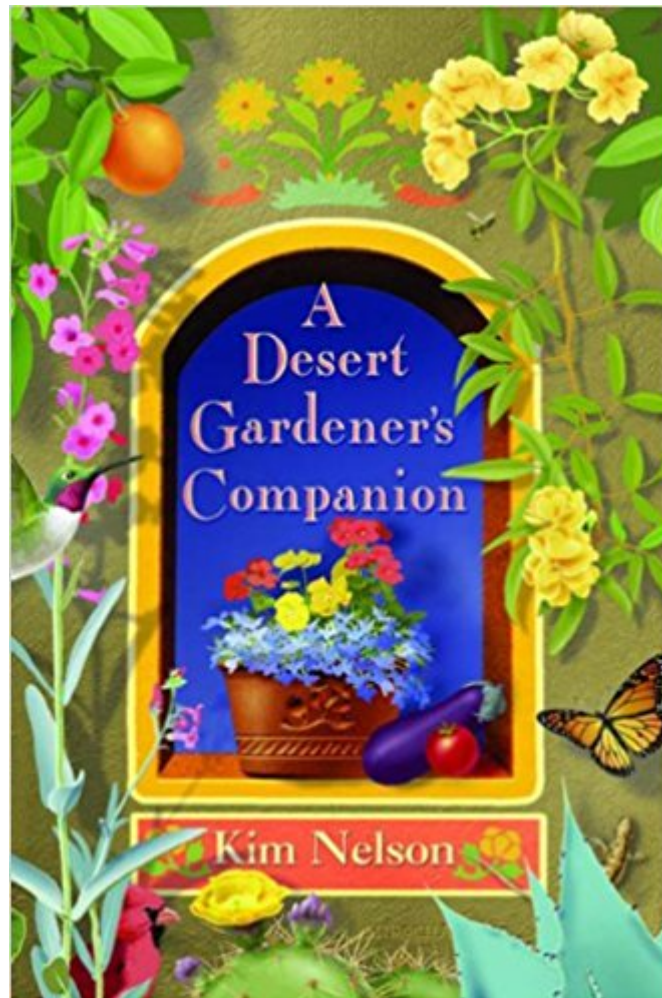




The book was found

A Desert Gardener's Companion



Synopsis

For old hands or inexperienced newcomers, *A Desert Gardener's Companion* is the essential reference for creating and maintaining a bountiful and environmentally sensitive Southwestern garden. Master Gardener Kim Nelson provides a wealth of information in an easy-to-use seasonal format, covering what to do week-by-week in the desert climates of southern California, Arizona, southern Nevada, southern New Mexico, and west Texas.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Just to let everyone know, I'm not writing these reviews for the people who are going to check my grammar, punctuation, or writing style. If I start worrying about that, I'll never write a review. I always seem to be in a hurry when I sit down to write so please, forgive my punctuational errors. *A Desert Gardener's Companion* by Kim Nelson Rio Nuevo Publishers I was honestly surprised how much I liked this book. Generally, I don't care for "month by month in the garden" type books. They seem to serve more as reminders of what needs doing in the season and, while somewhat helpful, are just not my thing. The problem I have with them is that they don't seem to go in depth on anything while touching lightly on many topics and I've read enough lightweight garden books to want something more substantial. I also find it difficult to lay my hands (eyes?) on the specific topic I'm looking for when it's written in this format. *A Desert Gardener's Companion* made me eat my words. I thoroughly enjoyed every chapter. I enjoyed hearing about the Kim's gardening experiences and found the monthly guides to be but a small part of the book. There is a checklist at the beginning of

each month and then there is a chapter for each week in the year. This chapter talks about what the author typically does in that week, adding helpful information about each task. Then there are discussions on things that you may or may not encounter around that time of year. I'll use April as an example. April starts with a checklist of tasks for the month - nice but not unusual. I wouldn't buy the book for this. She then starts with each week in April: Week 14: First, Kim talks about cleaning up after the last frost, pruning damaged plants, and what you might expect to see in your garden. After a page of this, she launches into "The Ants Return" and spends about 1 1/2 pages talking about the various types of ants you find in your yard, what kind of damage they do and methods of organic control. Then there is a section on "Intensive Planting of Warm-Season Vegetables." She writes about what she is harvesting, things to plant, cleaning out the beds, what kinds of fertilizer you might add, checking your irrigation system, and why intensive planting is helpful. She mentions specific tomatoes, peppers and eggplant varieties that do well in the desert. (This information is not as easy to find as it should be.) After this, she goes over beans, melons, corn, cucumbers and pumpkins - mentioning that you will want to plan ahead to give your plants some afternoon shade by June and what kind of shade cloth is best. She talks about harvesting some of these vegetables and even mentions a couple of her favorite cookbooks. Next comes "Ready to Fertilize" and the various options you have, discussing what the numbers on bagged fertilizer mean and what kind of manure may or may not be acceptable for garden use. She discusses the pathogens that might survive the compost pile and how to age your manure - even if you buy it bagged. Remember, all this is just in week 14! Week 15: There are 4 1/2 pages on "Annual Flowers from Seed" - how she picks her seeds, where she likes to plant them, varieties that are drought tolerant, and flowers that transplant easily. She gives a paragraph to some of her favorites: cockscomb, coreopsis, cosmos, gaillardia, globe amaranth, marigolds, moss roses, and zinnias. Her comments may include favorite varieties, ways they benefit the garden, if they are edible, and how to use them to best effect. "By the Light of the Silvery Moon" discusses the joys of moonlight gardens; plants that work well in them, planning to coordinate height and texture, flowers and foliage, and planning theme gardens for nighttime enjoyment. Week 16: "The Desert Cottage Garden" is 4 1/2 great pages that tell you how to go about getting that wonderful cottage-garden effect here in the desert, where so many cottage gardens fail. The secret lies in planning and plant selection and this is the place to find excellent and specific information on appropriate plants - names, mature height, bloom color and whether it is an annual, biennial or perennial. There are sections on background plants, upper plants center plants lower plants and base plants. She includes cool season herbs that make excellent filler plants and adding strategically placed containers with ready-to-go color to fill in the gaps. "Growing Gourds" is next with

a little more than 2 pages on varieties, growing, using, fertilizing, spacing, potential problems, and eating gourds. She describes the different varieties, and then gives ideas on how you might use them and how they look while they grow. The end of this section suggest seed companies that offer varieties that succeed in the desert. Week 17: "Creating a Standard Topiary." If you ever want to create your own topiary, this is the place to find out how. It was fun to read and would be even more fun to do! If you start in April, you will have wonderful topiaries to decorate with when the holidays roll around. You do have to plan ahead for this stuff. April finishes up with "The Drought-Tolerant Treasure Called Penstemon." There are 2 1/2 pages that will whet your appetite for growing this beautiful flower in our arid climate, where penstemons often fail. It's nice to know ahead of time which varieties are easy to grow and which ones are more of a challenge. I would never have expected to find so many tidbits and treasures in this book. It is well written and well organized. If you want to find a specific topic, you can look at the Table of Contents in the front, or The Plant Index and The Subject Index in the back. Those of us who garden in the arid southwest know how difficult it is to find good gardening books that address our unique climate. A Desert Gardener's Companion does so. It is not the book that a beginning gardener would want to buy as his/her only desert gardening manual, but gardeners of any level will enjoy reading it. I'm writing a quick review because I have to (very reluctantly) return the book to the library before it closes today. This book has joined my "gotta get it right now" book list, so my order will be sent off soon. The author lives and gardens in Tucson and I guarantee that desert gardeners will learn something new and helpful.

This is helpful for gardeners with some experience and also for new gardeners. While it's not a beginners manual per se, it's entertaining enough to inspire. The monthly checklists are practical, but the personal writing style means you can read the whole book for enjoyment and then go back to specific sections for detailed info. There are even some step-by-step sections, for example on forcing bulbs, planting a pecan tree, and growing succulents from seed.

Very specific to the Tucson area, and anyone who is familiar with Arizona knows that all deserts are not the same. Unfortunately it has not been the resource I was hopping for. Although I bought an LIKE NEW it had markings and water stains throughout. Still useable but not as advertised.

This is a book with monthly chapters of things "to do". Kim has included lots of information about so many things, I look at the index if I'm specifically looking for information on a certain subject. I like that it's specific for the Phoenix-Tucson metro area. Love this book!

As expected

seems to deal mostly with the low desert, rather than NM's high desert, but still has some pretty good tips. Just have to readjust the timing a little.

It's what's for dinner

We enjoyed reading this book, it has good tips for anyone wanting to have more success in gardening in a dry, hot climate.

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