

Gifts for the Garden Guru

I am not a big fan of Christmas; I prefer the tropical climates far from the hustle and bustle of the season. I minimize gift giving by purchasing an airline ticket; you're not expected to give if you're not in the country. I return when Santa has gone back to the pole. I need nothing for Christmas, I thought, until my editor asked me to write a feature on what to give a gardener. She paraphrased this by suggesting I mention things that I would like. I hope she is putting together her shopping list or at least knows where she can send these wonderful gifts for the serious gardener; Me.

In my travels this year and in every year past I always take along my favourite pruners. These I find handy for opening the packages of cellophane airline food, for cutting the fresh roles they give you and of course useful in discouraging your seat mate from talking to you when you're trying to nap; try doing those things with a plastic knife. Of course they are now considered a weapon and can no longer be carried in the hand luggage, but they still go everywhere with me. My pruners, actually they are secateurs, are Felco # 7. The red handle is a dead give away and is seen as a mark of the true professional in the secret world of horticulturists. In fact if I see someone wearing anything but a Felco, the true professional carries them in holsters strapped to the hip, I immediately dismiss them as an amateur. One pair will last a life time, I have eight pairs, don't ask me why but I find they are great for clipping the dogs toe nails and chipping away ice from the truck windshield in winter. Oh, the best thing is that all the parts can be ordered from the tiniest rivet to the handle sleeves, all at a reasonable cost.

Of course no self respecting secateur toting horticulturist would be without a Haws English Watering Can. You need the professional model, in the 2 gallon (8.* litres) size, anything smaller is just plain sissy. They are available in three colours, galvanized, blue and British Racing Green. Of course to be recognized as a serious gardener, you must have your watering can properly displayed at the front door, preferably with water still dripping from the brass rose as guests arrive for dinner. They will marvel at how you can accomplish such feats of gardening and dinner in one fell swoop. Don't however, forget to remove your holstered secateurs from your hip before sitting down to dine, unless of course, if distracted by the garden you've overcooked the roast beef then they may come in handy: yet another use for Felco Pruners.



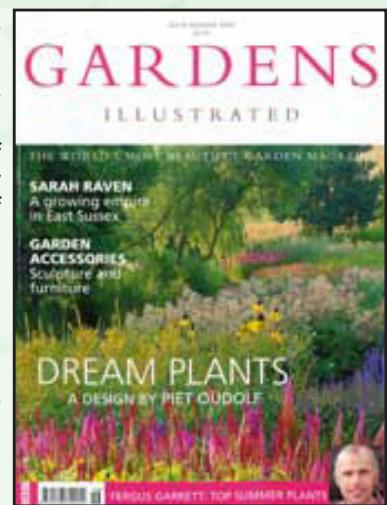
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\$71.50, www.leevalley.com



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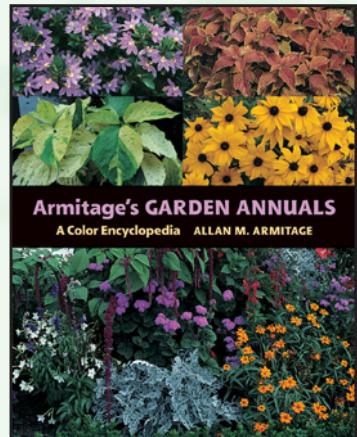
www.thecopperleaf.com

Magazines are the true mark of the professional; my house is full of boring horticultural journals that are appropriately displayed according to the visitor. The journal of Dendrology reserved for the select few. However, if you like to revel in 'garden pornography' then you need to receive a subscription to Gardens Illustrated. This magazine is not to be shared, the exquisite photography, well written articles and just plain substance are reserved for the very serious individual, or those that wish to become such. That said, even the non gardener will find this magazine hard to put down, as they are transported to the great gardens of the world or enraptured with the perils of Victorian plant collecting. Do not take this magazine to read in the bathroom that is a serious offence and they will revoke your subscription if they find out.



www.bbcmagazines.com

Annuals are the perfect remedy for bald spots in the garden, but it is just bad taste to fill these spots with common annuals such as Calypso Petunias. In fact I believe it is now considered plain illegal to plant this Petunia. To dazzle your neighbours you need a good reference book that will explain how to grow that rare and exotic Curcuma. Armitage's Garden Annuals will give you that and more. The author, Alan Armitage is considered a garden guru himself and a leading author on the subject. Full of great pictures, concise and exacting information this book will have you plant hunting just like the Victorians did, however we have the advantage of minivans.



Available from www.timberpress.com
\$49.95 US in hardcover

I have my British Racing Green watering can at the front door, a pair of Felco Pruners reserved especially for the kitchen drawer, Gardens Illustrated magazine casually placed on the kitchen table, and Garden Annuals open to page 38. Here lives a professional horticulturist.

Michael Pascoe NDP.,ODH.,CLT.,MSC

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