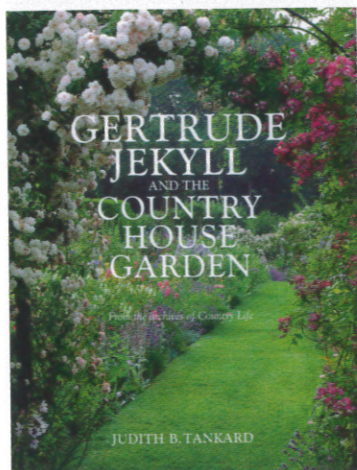


Book reviews

GERTRUDE JEKYLL AND THE COUNTRY HOUSE GARDEN

by Judith B Tankard Aurum, £30, ISBN 978-1845136246



Had Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932) been born a hundred years later she'd doubtless have a clutch of newspaper and magazine columns and a much-loved series of television programmes. Thankfully she wasn't. Instead, we have a body of printed work that continues to influence the way many people design and appreciate gardens.

In truth, Jekyll's career did begin with magazines, writing botanical notes, signed 'GJ', for William Robinson's *The Garden* in the late 1870s. But it was *Country Life*, founded in 1897 (and its now-defunct affiliated titles) that was her springboard to success.

London-born Jekyll moved to rural Surrey with her family when she was five and 'developed an enduring passion for outdoor life'. Later she admired Ruskin and Turner and studied painting at the South Kensington School of Art. She also learned carpentry, metalwork, embroidery and – most importantly – the 'new' art of photography, which allowed her another form of expression beyond words and paint, only turning to garden design with the onset of myopia. As a young woman

she travelled in Europe which, according to Judith Tankard in this wonderfully inclusive portrait, 'opened her eyes to the delights of foreign travel and landscapes'.

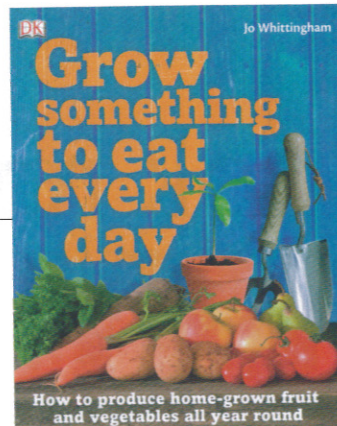
It was, though, a famed 'partnership' with architect Edwin Lutyens, whom she met in 1889, that most people associate with this thoroughly independent Renaissance woman. They made a formidable duo, working in tandem on new country house gardens right across Britain. The roll call of commissions – Marsh Court, Hestercombe, Lindisfarne Castle, Orchards, Folly Farm, the Manor House at Upton Grey – remains impressive, and the core of this book, with its illuminating array of photographs from the *Country Life* archive, reveals the full extent of her creativity and superb plantsmanship.

Jekyll's own garden at Munstead Wood near Godalming in Surrey was, however, her laboratory. Here, in a 'melding of house and garden' she experimented with colour and style, fine-tuning the herbaceous border and working with her own hands to maximise the potential of woodland and other plants.

In a book for scholars and students alike, Miss J could have hoped for no better advocate. *David Wheeler is the founding editor of the horticultural journal Hortus.*

book offer

RRP £30. Reader offer price £27 including p&p.



GROW SOMETHING TO EAT EVERY DAY

by Jo Whittingham DK, £14.99, ISBN 978-0405362276

This is a classic Dorling Kindersley book: hard working, honest and packed, really packed, full of advice.

It's taken the timeline route, so it's a month-by-month guide of how to grow, harvest and process your fruit and vegetables so that you can eat all year round. It is aimed at the beginner and is authoritative yet never bossy.

The month-by-month approach can be a tricky one when one end of the country feels so very different from another, but for the beginner it offer steady advice and you get to see exactly where you are supposed to be at any one moment.

The photography is honest and very practical. If anything I think there are a few too many pictures per page. It can take a little bit of time to hunt out the information, but it is all there.

The index is excellent. This may seem like a small point, but when the information for, say, potatoes, may be spread over several different months, it matters.

There are sections on cooking and preserving, storing, basic husbandry, compost heaps, pests, diseases and nutrient deficiencies. In short, it's got pretty much all you need to get going. *Alys Fowler is a gardener, writer and broadcaster.*

book offer

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