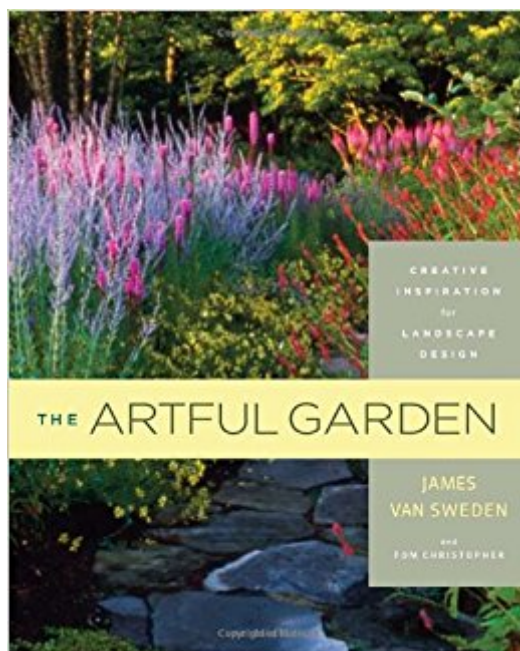


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# The Artful Garden: Creative Inspiration For Landscape Design



## Synopsis

“I want to put the mystery back into the heart of garden design, where it needs to be. It’s what lures you in through the gate, keeps you moving through the landscape, and fills you with excitement along the way. The sense of mystery is what turns a mere display of plants, paths, and ornaments into an adventure.”

• James van Sweden

Guided by world-renowned landscape architect James van Sweden and horticulture expert Tom Christopher, any gardener can learn the secrets of the gardener’s art and absorb the essence of inspired garden design. In their gifted hands, creating your own perfect garden, with its own alluring mysteries, turns out to be not only easy but a delight. Whether it’s a ten-foot-square city terrace or a ten-acre expanse, the same principles apply: the intelligent use of positive and negative space, of form and scale, of light and shadow, of rough and smooth textures. Do you want a garden you can immerse yourself in? A garden you can smell and listen to as well as observe? An exuberant garden or a contemplative garden? In this elegantly written and visually stunning book, van Sweden reveals the secrets of famous gardens around the world and encourages you to find inspiration in the arts—in painting (from America’s classic regional artists to the abstract expressionists), music (from classical to jazz), sculpture, even dance. He introduces you to famous artists who share how their art has influenced the design of their own gardens, and teaches you to think not in terms of borders and beds or even paths and meadows but of a tapestry woven from sky, trees, rocks, vines, flowers, grasses, and space. Richly illustrated throughout with magnificent photographs, *The Artful Garden* both tells and shows, sharing with beginning and experienced gardeners a wealth of inspiration and practical help.

“What’s my message?” van Sweden asks in conclusion. The wise answer: “Don’t squander the potential for surprise and wonder.” This beautiful book guarantees everyone who reads it a priceless store of gardening wisdom.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A revolutionary pioneer of the naturalistic New American Garden style, van Sweden (*Architecture in the Garden*) explains how gardeners can glean inspiration and borrow effective techniques from the arts. Whether the muse is painting or jazz, mystery novels or modern dance, van Sweden offers practical advice on how thoughtful examination can help the amateur gardener understand and control color, line, volume, light, and movement in the garden. He encourages the gardener to think in terms of composition, orchestration, rhythm, and pattern, and shows how these are employed successfully in his own award-winning gardens. One need not be a connoisseur to benefit from this advice. Less important than whether one has cultivated taste is whether one can understand why one's preferences are personally appealing. Van Sweden offers straightforward advice for translating that idiosyncratic understanding into an assured garden design. Particularly illuminating are his conversations with artists, including painter Robert Dash and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, about how their artistic visions find expression in their private gardens. Like the author's classic *Bold Romantic Gardens*, this is a refreshing, innovative source of inspiration. 98 photos. (Feb.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

The nexus between lasting art and landscape architecture is not as amorphous as one might think. Whether it's the music found in the rustling of ornamental grasses or the rhythm in the way colors repeat across a mixed border, the same principles that inform each artistic genre can, and should, according to van Sweden, be applied to the equally creative art of garden design. One of the founders of the contemporary style known as the "New American Garden," van Sweden brings his own passion for art in all forms to bear when contemplating new commissions, and encourages homeowners searching for fresh ideas to look no further than their local art gallery or CD collection for similar inspiration. As he illustrates the way sculptor Henry Moore's negative use of space can be translated to the shaping of garden beds or how artist Georgia O'Keeffe's majestic use of color can influence the selection of perennials, van

Sweden imparts a distinctive approach to garden design in this impassioned and insightful examination. --Carol Haggas

This is not a how-to garden design book. Rather, it is much more exciting - the process behind "a voyage of discovery" in which you "turn your dreams loose". To this end after an introduction in which the author spells out his *raison d'être*, he considers in separate chapters space and form - in which he introduces the concepts of positive and negative space such that all material is removed so that it reduces to "that form designed in the artist's mind" - light and shadow, making the scene, rhythm and movement, texture, and layering for mystery and enticement. The creative process is not viewed in terms of the garden alone. Rather, parallels are drawn with painting, sculpture, photography, literature and music. Not, I would add to show how clever the author is. Instead he uses examples to illustrate and clarify the point he is making. To this end he has interviewed and includes excerpts from the interviews of sculptor Robert Adzema, painter Roberty Dash, landscape architects Lawrence and Anna Halprin, the musician Yo Yo Ma and landscape architect Julie Moir Messervy who emphasises the importance of feeling to those of form and function, plantsman and landscape architect Piet Oudolf, fabric artist and designer Jack Lenor Larsen and landscape architect Martha Schwartz. Partially to reveal the result of the creative process he makes reference to a number of gardens, especially his own garden at Ferry Cove on Maryland's eastern shore and another home in upstate New York. This is a book that will cause you to reflect on the process of creation long after you have put the book back on to the shelf.

I have always admired the creative talents of James van Sweden. This book is a light read and there is no question that JVS was born with a talent and eye for color and plant design. He shares some personal observations about landscaping and there are many outstanding photos included in the book. These photos are a true testament to the vision and beauty he executed throughout his life. His landscape firm in Washington DC is a reflection of his tremendous abilities that live on in the design world!

In this beautiful book James van Sweden considers garden design as a four dimensional art form. He starts by considering three dimensional space and form giving special attention to the importance of negative space. He then incorporates the forth dimension of time as he considers light and shadow and the constantly changing garden experience from moment to moment and season to season. He incorporates a painters eye as he discusses concepts of color, pattern, unity

and beauty in creating a painterly garden composition using paintings of highly differing styles to illustrate the concepts discussed. He continues by considering rhythm and movement into garden design gaining inspiration from music and dance. He continues with a discussion of the use texture in the garden to create the illusion of depth incorporating textiles, fabric sculpture and other art forms in the discussion. He concludes with the use of layering to create an element mystery and suspense into the garden. The challenge for any gardener is to organize the myriad of elements that one must consider in garden design into a coherent whole. In this book James van Sweden challenges the reader to go beyond basic garden design and to consider garden creation as an art form voyage of discovery. He has written a wonderful book that will excite and inspire you to begin or continue your journey. Bon voyage!

That being said, the book was well written and presented in a very organized manner. Easy to read. The author shared his philosophy and ideas and I could almost feel some passion until I'd come across a painting which I guess he thought conveyed a sense of art or beauty or ??? At that point he totally lost me and my interest. Truthfully, this book didn't float my boat. However, since I spent the money for it and it was more than I've spent on a book from to date, I will find a way to glean creative points from it. Right now, I'm grinding my teeth because I spent so much on a book I don't like. I apologize to the author, I know many years of experience, training, etc., went into the book and I'm just one little western woman, but it sure wasn't what I was looking for in a book about creative garden design. I do have an art background, I do paint. Different strokes for different folks. Just wish I'd been warned of the very Contemporary nature of the author's approach.

Nice photos and descriptions, covers interesting gardens by others. It would have been helpful to have more analysis of specific plant types and horticultural requirements.

On a first read, I was pretty disappointed in this book. On a second read, I can see how some of the ideas would be helpful. I think I was hoping this book would be on a scale that a small gardener could use, but the book seems mostly aimed at people who have a lot of money to completely redo their landscape, and there are fewer pictures of gardens than I would have liked. The text does not take up as much room on the page as it could, so the book has a lot of "white space" versus other garden books. Most of the pictures feature art IN the garden rather than demonstrating applications of how to apply inspiration from art, as the title suggests. In short, not enough instruction, not enough that's directly applicable to a home gardener, and too few pictures for me.

Great book with inspirational pictures and ideas. I am a seasoned gardener and I would recommend this book. It's a great book to get lost in when it is cold outside and I am not gardening.

Everything about "The Artful Garden" is fabulous. The layout and illustrations are beautiful and the prose is easy to understand and full of awesome ideas. This is a must read for anyone interested in landscaping/creative gardening.

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