

Are You a Gardener?

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There is something about the first breath of spring, or the first glimpse of a forsythia bush that stirs the soul of man to aspire to membership in that closed corporation known as "Gardeners." If any gardener chances to read what I have to say on the subject, I hasten to add in all humility that my only qualification is that I love flowers! Nothing would please me more than to be able to TELL some one the name of a flower, rather than to always have to say: "What's THAT?" Because I think that more people belong to my category than to the select group of gardeners, I am suggesting a few books to read which may fool some people into thinking that you know what you are talking about when you drop a few punch lines as: "House plants are often difficult to care for in summer, particularly during vacations" or, "The nettles have no attractive flowers and are not desirable for cultivation from any standpoint." (Always remembering, of course, to add them at the most appropriate time!)

The first book I picked out, **Lilies for Every Garden** by Isabella Preston, (Aronge Judd, 1947) asked the question: "What is a lily?" Now if I had asked such a stupid question I don't believe my friends would be very understanding, but it seems that it is a good question because for years people have been calling plants lilies that weren't lilies! In glancing over this book I think you would need to be a lily lover to begin with, as it seems to be difficult to grow lilies, but it should be consoling to know that a greenhouse is not really necessary.

Three wonderful books on rhododendrons made me determined to encourage my friends to plant them. (It

is really quite an accomplishment to even spell rhododendron.) I did feel a bit smug the other day when a newcomer to Oregon announced that she had never even seen one in bloom—at least I know what one looks like. The **Handbook of Rhododendrons**, published by the University of Washington Arboretum Foundation (1946) tells how to grow them, and also azaleas, in a small garden, about diseases and pests and lists the species that grew the best in the Northwest. **Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Magnolias, Camellias and Ornamental Cherries**, by A. T. Johnson (London, 1948) is very inclusive and describes a blue rhododendron, which I haven't seen. (Are there any in Oregon?) And it says that azaleas are, properly speaking, rhododendrons, which was a new idea to me. A third book on this subject, by F. Kingdon-Ward (Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1950), suggests that the amateur can experiment in inaugurating a romantic marriage among the flowers and patiently await the results. "Some of the finest hybrids have been raised by amateur gardeners as opposed to nurserymen." He goes on to say that rhododendrons do not like the sun, which is one reason that they flourish so beautifully in Oregon (I might add that my sentiments are not those of the rhododendron.

A very nice little book, **Success with Wild Flowers**, by Frank C. Pellett (A. T. de la Mare, 1948) would appeal to all naturalists. One chapter which I read was filled with new ideas on "plants of poisonous qualities," but I didn't know that lady-slippers were almost as bad as poison oak. Signs should be posted to warn animals not to eat larkspur or delphinium, lupin, lily of the valley, but-