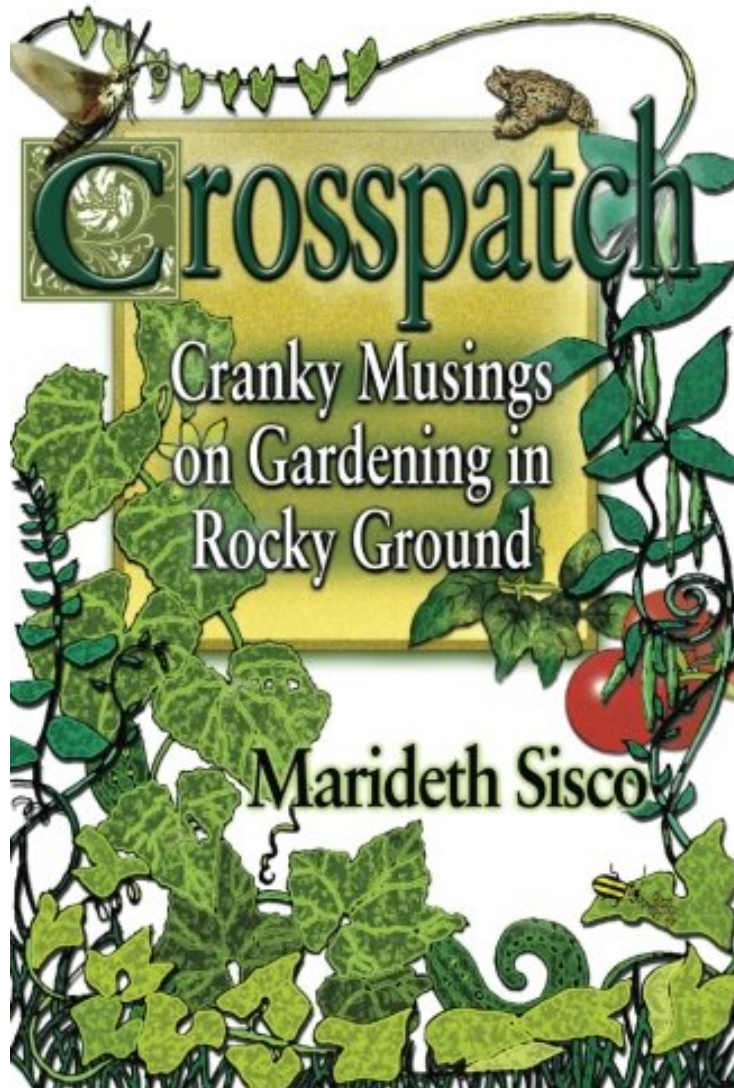


Crosspatch: Cranky Musings on Gardening in Rocky Ground

Marideth Sisco

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Marideth Sisco : Crosspatch: Cranky Musings on Gardening in Rocky Ground before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crosspatch: Cranky Musings on Gardening in Rocky Ground:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Finding Philosophy in Gardening and Gold and God in the DirtBy Fred PfisterMaredith Sisco's sentences and the organization of her curmudgeonly observations "Crosspatch" are like a newly planted onion set, each perfectly formed, individual, and containing the optimistic promise every gardener must have. The short, orderly musings from a lifetime of grubbing sustenance as well as philosophy from our rocky Ozarks

soil are told in her folksy, down-to-earth style that we have come to expect from her KSMU program, "These Ozarks Hills." You may have heard These Ozarks Hills on KSMU, National Public Radio with a voice like a rusty double shovel first pulled through a rocky garden in spring. But rocks and our cherty soil polish as they also wear away our plows and machinery, garden tools anything with an edgeriver banks and gravel bars, customs, old-time culture and superstitions, and people. However, that wear and polish can make that gruff and raspy voice become sweet in song, as evidenced by her singing with Blackberry Winter in the ground breaking movie, "Winters Bone." She may not be as good-looking as the movies star, Jennifer Lawrence, but she has as much grit and character as the young character Lawrence portrayed, a quality intensified by age and her shock of white hair. Her book of gardening essays is jam-packed with thoughts, notions, some wee bits of wisdom and loads of odds and ends on gardening as the valuable, healing meditative expression of hands in dirt and head in the clouds a uniquely human effort that feeds both body and soul. If some of its 254 pages seem vaguely familiar, you may have heard it on These Ozarks Hills, and Marideth gives the date so you listen her relate the story in her gravel-y, yarn-telling voice. Most are drawn from her long-running gardening column in the West Plains "Daily Quill." Selections are arranged in chapters of the months of the year. Not all are about gardening, and the topic can wander like a row of beans planted by a drunk, but you always get to the end of that row. Whether radio or print essays, all have that front-porch sittin, story telling quality, and you can almost hear her read it. Marideth, like most Ozarkers who garden, is a survivor: Her parents survived the dust bowl droughts and the starving times of the Great Depression; she and her parents survived the drought of the early 50s (by gardening, canning, curing, hunting and trapping, and cutting brush for the cattle to eat, and when some farmers couldnt even afford gas to drive their suffering livestock to market, nor get a decent enough price to drive home, and so shot some cattle to end their suffering, in hopes the rest would have enough to stay alive); and she has survived cancer. She knows she wont survive old age, but she is adapting. She is using raised beds (prevents bad back aches), trying new varieties of tomatoes and lettuce, nutrient rich soil additives, and intensive cultivation. She (and I) are old enough to remember those hippies who wanted to get back to the Garden and came to the Ozarks and California colonized Eureka Springs, Branson, and remote corners of other towns and counties. Many of them didnt find their Eden and starved out. Those that survived had taken advice and sustenance from their Ozarker neighbors. Now, a second round, millennials, are doing the same thing, with fancy, painted chicken coops on wheels, copper-topped bee hives that look like little homes, and talk of becoming sustainable, buying local, and getting off the grid admirable ambitions and goals. The hard times were awful enough that we hope never to repeat them. One would hope such experiences would teach us to be frugal instead of profligate with our resources. To care for what we have. And to be generous with our neighbors who have it worse than we do. For that is the way of the Ozarks in which I grew up. In another essay, she remarks, It took me decades to understand why my grandmother said every year, with a satisfied smile, over the mounds of produce that poured from our own garden. Enough is enough, she proclaimed, and then never failed to add: And too much is plenty. Gardening in our rocky, worn-out soil makes philosophers of us all, but with her hands in the dirt and head in the clouds outlook, your heart will find meaning of life. The world changes, and so do we. Gardening practices may also change, but Sisco would agree with George Bernard Shaws observation: If you want to find God, dig for him in the garden.

Collected essays from the best of Marideth Sisco's garden columns published in the West Plains Daily Quill, along with selections from essays on gardening originally published in audio format on public radio KSMU-FM, Springfield, Mo., all by author, singer, songwriter and unrepentant gardener Marideth Sisco.

About the Author Marideth Sisco is a veteran journalist, teacher, author, musician and student of folklore whose focus is on stories relevant to Ozarks culture and history. She holds a BFA degree from Missouri State University and an MA from Antioch University. She currently is host of the public radio show, "These Ozarks Hills" on KSMU and is putting finishing touches on a novel in which the Ozarks is featured prominently. Sisco spent 20 years as an environmental writer for the West Plains Quill and was well known for her gardening column, Crosspatch. Her most recent accomplishment was as music consultant and featured singer in the award-winning feature film Winter's Bone as well as musical consultant for the Ozarks-based documentary Stray Dog: The Movie. She lives in the Southern Missouri Ozarks.