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Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants: Cool Ways to Add Hot Colors, Bold Foliage, and Striking Textures (Gardener's guides) (Paperback) - Common

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(author) Nellie Neal : Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants: Cool Ways to Add Hot Colors, Bold Foliage, and Striking Textures (Gardener's guides) (Paperback) - Common before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gardener's Guide to Tropical Plants: Cool Ways to Add Hot Colors, Bold Foliage, and Striking Textures (Gardener's guides) (Paperback) - Common:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not perfect, but the best tropical plant book I've foundBy Andrew ChandlerI have about 8 tropical garden design books, and this one is probably the most helpful as far as helping one with the details of a design. Its not perfect, but it contains some information that was missing from virtually all of the other tropical design books I have. Typical of garden books, this book has a few chapters giving an overview on tropical gardens subjects and then a longer section on various specific tropical pants. The first section covers topics such as container gardening, indoor plants, pests and disease, and plant propagation. The last two items are things not often covered in other books. This book does not provide a lot of complete garden photos (so one can get a sense of how to combine multiple plants), nor does it give standard design principles about layering low, mid, and tall plants. These would be appreciated, but it does discuss color theory, as well as mixing plant texture, with great examples on leaf shape. The section that discusses specific tropical plants are usually uninteresting because every book has the same

information: plant size, hardiness zone, growing tips, etc. However, this book adds to the standard format. It provides a full page to each plant (instead of a small paragraph), so it is able to detail location/sun needs and growing tips. For plant size, it mentions size differences when planted in a pot vs in the ground. Perhaps best of all, it has a paragraph for companion planting and design aspects- what to plant with a particular plant. I found this very useful because it helps simplify all aspects of soil/sun/water requirements and texture/color theory into a simple recommendation. The only thing missing from here is no mention of the zone hardiness of each plant. Since the book contains several hardiness zone maps, I do not think this information was eliminated by accident. Rather, I think that specifying a hardiness zone is challenging when there are actual several zone maps, the maps are constantly changing, and certain plants will be an annual in a given zone, deciduous in another zone, etc. Applying a zone number to a plant can be misleading in essence. Still I wish one had been given. There is one additional gripe I have with the book in this section. You can only mention so many tropical plants, and the book for the most part does a good job of listing standard tropicals (like bird of paradise) along with less known but great options. However, sometimes the author chooses to discuss a variant of a common plant, with virtually no mention of the common plant and how to incorporate it. For instance, the book takes a page discussing a red banana (ensete), yet doesn't even mention the standard banana plants (musa), which in my region are more common and cold hardy. Likewise, instead of discussing common ginger-like shell ginger or butterfly ginger, only the red alpinia ginger and curcuma (hidden ginger) are discussed. Again, it's great that lesser known tropicals are given top bill, but I wish the descriptions had broadened to discuss how the hardier, easier-to-find varieties can be incorporated into the garden. The final section of the book at first glance seems to be just extraneous lists, but it's another thing that makes this book different than other tropical garden books. Its lists of plants for special sites. Many of these lists detail plants for specific light and soil conditions (dry soil, moist soil, wet soil), which is a great way to reduce the number of prospective plants down to ones that will thrive in your specific yard conditions. I have seen similar lists before, but not in such detail (sunny dry vs sunny drought tolerant vs sunny moist vs sunny wet for example). It also contains lists for tropical plants with specific traits, like evergreen leaves, or leaves with unusual colors, or flowers that are extremely fragrant. From experience, these lists really help with the plant selection process. Overall, the book gets 5 stars even though it's not perfect. I still have to consult other books/internet for zone hardiness, and I have to get inspirational landscape photos from other sources as well. But with this book and the internet, I wouldn't see the designing of my tropical landscape as a daunting task.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Solid information to get started. By AC enjoying a good read Basic info: just what I was looking for when I ordered this book. The photos are generally close up and don't show entire plants, making it difficult to sometimes know what a plant looks like. For example, I saw a beautiful flowering plant that was unfamiliar to me at a nursery today. I asked, and was told it was a medinilla. When I came home, I looked for it on the internet before looking in this book. On the internet, I figured out that the plant I had seen was *Medinilla magnifica*. When I looked in this book, I found enough information to encourage me to add this plant to my garden. The book is well organized and the table of contents at the back allowed me to quickly find the information I was looking for today.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Must have reference for the tropical gardener By So Cal Mel I started a tropical container garden a year ago so I'm just learning. I wish I had this when I first started so I could have better chosen which plants are best suited to which locations. This book is now my most trusted reference. Aside from having a very complete listing of tropical plants with complete location and care instructions it also has a really handy reference list at the back that is divided into locations such as "sunny dry" or "shady wet". Though I have highlighted the plants that I either own or wish to buy this little guide at the back lets me quickly access a list of the right choices for whichever spot I'm trying to fill. I would say this will be the container garden book I reference most.

Now gardeners can bring an exotic flair to their gardens by introducing the color, textures, and fabulous foliage of tropical plants. Not just for hot climates anymore, bromeliads, orchids, bananas, palms, birds of paradise, elephant ears, canna, and more can bring a touch of the tropics to any garden. Gardener's can choose from more than 150 plants featured in this book, each chosen for the visual...