

A5. A Perfect Cottage Garden - Book Reviews on Design

The picturesque front-garden of this Georgian home is a breath taking tapestry of color throughout the summer season. Over the past 24 years, the owner has transformed her yard from a grassy, shrub lined plot, into a traditional English garden that attracts both butterflies and hummingbirds, with equal success. White picket fencing, combined with boxwood hedges establish clear lines within this garden, thereby defining four quadrants around the large central fountain that serves as a dominant focal point in the design. Two more fountains complete the scene. The carefully selected plants offer a melodic



progression of color throughout the season with knockout roses, clematis and mandevilla vines providing outstanding vertical elements when combined with the wide assortment of perennials. Formal planters with annuals and perennials liven up the garden with consistent color throughout the summer.

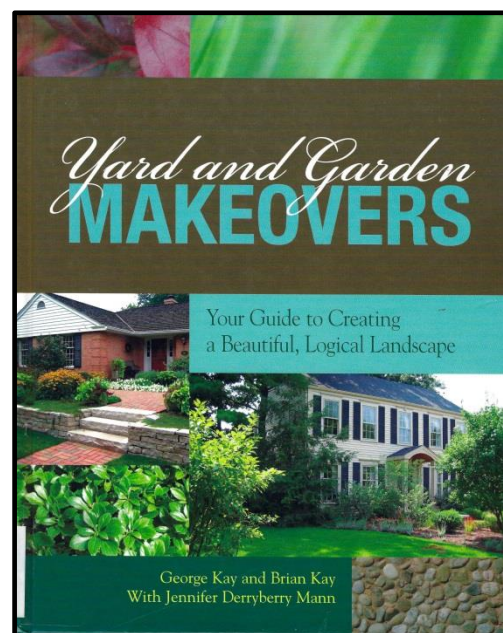
The overall impact of this design has been years in the making.

But where do you get started? To try your hand at designing a garden for the Chicago area, our Chicago Public Library has a large number of excellent garden design books. A few are reviewed here.

BOOK REVIEW 1: Yard and Garden Makeovers - by George and Brian Kay (from Chicago)

This small, easy to read book, was written by two Chicago area designers who offer great insight for our area. Their book features city - suburban sized lots, offering sketches for a variety of home landscapes to help you visualize the overall layout of the design. They discuss key points about each design, while providing great tips on how to address challenges we often face in the Chicago area.

This book is the perfect size to begin your journey in learning about garden design. While small, this two part book guides you with an introduction to the principles of garden design, taking you through the necessary steps of assessing what you have, addressing both the front and back garden with concrete examples of before and after gardens and finally creating a master plan to rework an existing garden in part 1. Part 2 helps you



identify and work with a professional designer, learn about the importance of structural elements in a garden, and provides the ever important plant recommendations for OUR AREA. This is a real key reason to check out this book! Most others are written by designers from other areas. This is a great book to start reading and learning about how you can transform your garden into the perfect garden retreat for you and your family in Edgebrook. It's smaller size does not overwhelm you, and promises to inspire with many great examples of reimagined local Chicago gardens.

BOOK REVIEW 2: Gardentopia - Design basics for creating beautiful spaces

This larger, more in-depth book is a great choice for winter reading. Gardentopia offers a blend of landscaping as an art, with the technical knowledge of how to compose a well-designed landscape. This book offers inspirational ideas and concepts to help you achieve the landscape of your dreams. It has 5 parts that range from design concepts and accents, to key design concepts related to patios, steps and walls, to theme gardens and the effective use of colors in a garden. It ends with a section on plant selection.

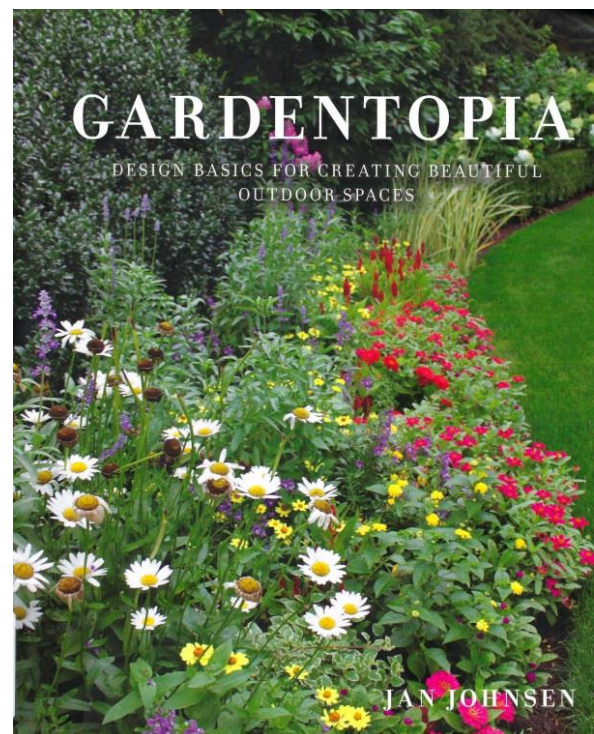
While the author uses examples from the northeastern United States, the concepts apply in any area. This book offers concrete measuring aids, alignments of components in a garden, to discussions on adding attractive elements such as gates, water features and well thought out stairs.

Learn how hardscape elements that comprise the bones of a garden, impact the overall design and are fundamental to every space. This book presents paving options, designs, edging and other elements of the hardscape. As these are hard to change once installed, careful planning is critical.

This informative and helpful book is a great resource and tool for the new and established home gardeners.

While the plant and seed catalogs start arriving in January, you can be ready to add them into your newly developed plans to change, update, or entirely redesign your home sanctuary for the upcoming year!

Dream Big!!



These two are just an example of the gardening books available in the Chicago Public Library system. With some winter reading, you can begin next year's gardening season with a vision and a plan for your reimagined Chicago landscape!!