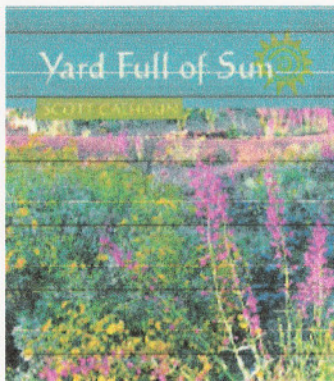


Publisher's Weekly (PW) Review 1-17-05



Yard Full of Sun: The Story of a Gardener's Obsession That Got a Little Out of Hand

Calhoun, Scott (Author)

ISBN: 188789666X

Rio Nuevo Publishers

Published 2005-02

Paperback, \$22.95 (196p)

Essays; General

Reviewed 2005-01-17

PW

Memoir and how-to work side by side to excellent effect in this chronicle of a family's horticultural odyssey. Calhoun--an accomplished gardener, manager of a Tucson nursery and fourth-generation Arizonian--was determined to create a garden using native plants, a space that would serve as a "response to a powerful sun moving across a big sky." Beautiful, bright photos complement the author's loving descriptions of the plants' attributes and origins. He shares the methods he and his wife used to brainstorm their garden's layout, feel and contents, and offers detailed supply lists as well. Calhoun's sometimes unorthodox methods of acquiring flora and fauna make for good copy; the prairie zinnia escapade (in which he decides to appropriate wildflowers growing across the street from a police department) is one winning example. Though detail is plentiful, from rainfall statistics to prickly pear varieties, the text maintains a balance between practical and personal. Calhoun's apparent affinity for similes adds personality; for example, "Mesquite trees are as promiscuous as a single mother of six kids with different fathers making an appearance on Jerry Springer." Though most useful for readers living in the Southwest, the book's humor and autobiographical aspects broaden its appeal. (Feb.)