

Books to help you make your New Mexico garden grow

YARD FULL OF SUN

Scott Calhoun
Rio Nuevo Publishers
192 pages, \$22.95

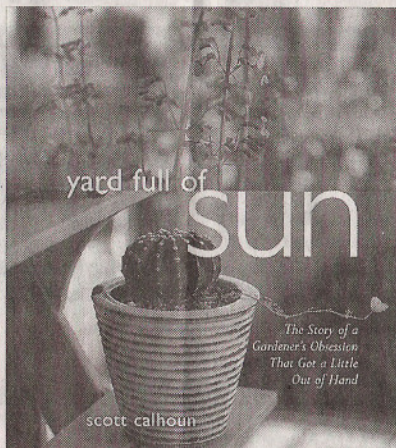
NEW MEXICO GARDENER'S GUIDE, REVISED EDITION

Judith Phillips
Cool Springs Press
240 pages, \$24.99

About this time every year, I start dreaming of the color green. I stare at gray, lifeless trees in the hope that, by will alone, I can force them to burst into vivacious beauty. I spend long, cold winter nights fantasizing about my garden. Snowy afternoons are often spent lusting over the bright photos in the now rapidly arriving seed and bulb catalogs.

Scott Calhoun's *Yard Full of Sun* gave me the fix I needed to survive the last, few desperate days of February. His colorful narrative takes us through the process of developing a truly unique home and garden inspired by the small communities found in Mexico's Sonoran desert.

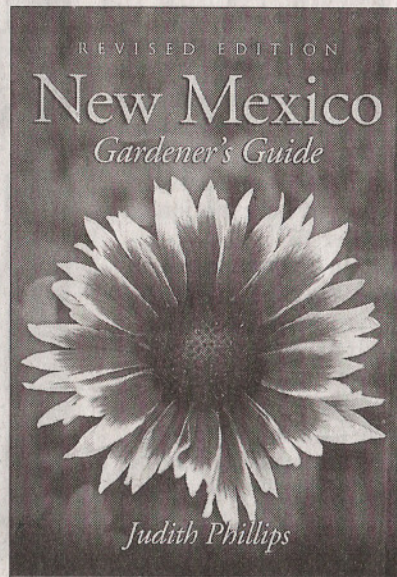
A Tucson resident, Calhoun understands the value of water conservation and also why so many of us long to plant more than



just sagebrush, juniper and the occasional butterfly bush in our dusty, gravel-filled back yards.

Calhoun leads us through the creation of his desert sanctuary, from designing the initial blueprints for his house to adding the finishing touches to his garden oasis. He touches on landscape design, native plants, gardening resources, water conservation, wildflowers and plant selection with a talent that makes the book both easy and fun to read.

He also brings to light a number of gardening possibilities that, until now, my drought-clouded mind had never imagined. I was especially delighted to come



across a section devoted to the white desert garden, and — though Calhoun found his soil did not provide ample drainage for many of his selections, which is not a problem in my little yard — after reading it a few times, I think I might finally have the courage to try one of my own this year.

The book's colorful photos, supplied by the author and his wife Deirdre, capture the true feeling of a Southwestern summer. The bright pinks, purples and yellows

of countless desert blooms stood out vividly and made the book a portable garden unto itself. This book is a must for green- and black-thumbed gardeners alike.

Judith Phillips' revised edition of the *New Mexico Gardening Guide* takes on a similar topic in a far more clinical manner.

Although the *Gardening Guide* lacks the colorful narrative of Calhoun's *Yard Full of Sun*, Phillips more than makes up for it with more than 100 color photos and precise, easy-to-read basics on flowers, decorative grasses, groundcovers, trees and shrubs. One section is entirely devoted to the cultivation of roses. The book also contains a few surprises: Pomegranates do well in the Southwest and are even well-adapted to drought conditions.

A well-known New Mexico gardener, landscaper and nursery owner, Phillips' includes in her book specific instructions on pruning trees and shrubs, advice on growing and caring for plants, and information on more than 180 different selections.

I can't wait 'til Spring!

Melissa Martinez

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