

Five good gardening reads for winter weather

Nicole Sanchez

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With snow and single digit temperatures predicted this week, gardening is low on the agenda as preparations for both a holiday and winter weather commence. Once all the feasting, dish washing, family visiting, and weatherizing is done, however, the gardeners' mind is likely to drift towards next spring, possibilities, and gardens of the future. Reading is a great place to start future gardens. The books described below are new: each addresses in depth a gardening topic of importance to Klamath Basin gardeners. Based on questions coming into our plant clinic, the following books would make good cold- weather reading for our local home gardeners.

Growing Shrubs and Small Trees in Cold Climates. Lonee et. al, 2011, University of Minnesota Press. Not every tree or shrub is well suited to short growing seasons and harsh winters. This book contains an incredible amount of detail about the expected size, performance, and suitability of trees for cold climates. Cold hardiness, special considerations for trees in harsh winters, and common issues are all addressed. True plant nerds will enjoy reading about tree groups in detail. More gardeners will appreciate the opportunity to read up on specific trees in their yards, in order to learn how best to care for them. Those seeking to install new trees or shrubs in the yard, especially those unfamiliar with gardening in the Klamath Basin, will find this book indispensable for making good plant choices. Because woody material grows more slowly in our climate, many gardeners find themselves investing in larger plants to make up for slower development. Such an investment is worthy of a little research into the best tree for the job.

Fresh from the Garden: An organic guide to growing Vegetables, Berries, and Herbs in Cold Climates. Whitman et. al, 2017, University of Minnesota Press. Like the book above, this reference is in the collection of the Klamath County library. The cold- climate specific growing information is invaluable: so much of what is found on the internet is for warmer climates. Even Oregon-specific information is often more applicable to the coast than the eastern interior. There are entire chapters devoted to seeding, transplanting, and caring for the plants. Harvesting tips are especially helpful for new growers, who aren't always sure how to tell when to harvest. The organic focus is helpful, providing less toxic pesticide options for when problems arise. Each vegetable and herb is treated in great detail, with recommendations for the varieties likely to perform well in our climate. This detailed text is well written, and an easy read. Those with experience growing vegetables in other climates will find this text especially helpful for transitioning to our climate.

Pruning Simplified, Lewis Hill, 1979, Garden Way Publishing. Any of the editions of this classic pruning text will be helpful to those mystified by deciding what, and when to cut. While it's certainly not time to prune now (save that for late winter and spring), it is easier to see the "lines" of a tree once leaves have fallen- providing insight into where to cut when it's time. This book makes the art and science of pruning easier to understand. Conifers are treated separately: they do not respond to pruning in the same way deciduous trees do.

Bugs in the System, May Berenbaum, 1995, Helix Books. An entertaining and educational read, this book provides insight into the intersections of insects and people like no other. In the last few years,

interest in pollinators has dramatically increased. Berenbaum proved that insects were plenty fascinating long before pollinators were “cool”. Insect stories are told with skill and humor; the reader doesn’t realize they’ve gotten an education in entomology until it’s too late.

The Big Book of Gardening Skills, Garden Way Editors, 1993, Storey Publishing. New to gardening? Overwhelmed by all the choices and techniques out there? This book covers all the basic gardening skills in an easy, approachable way and is recommended for new gardeners and first time home owners with a first yard to take care of. Covering everything from soil to harvest to lawns to tools in small, easy chunks, this book uses lots of charts and illustrations to cover lots of information concisely. There is some information on plant choices, but the focus is on general gardening knowledge and skills.

Another great source of reading material is the online library of Extension publications provided by OSU. Gardening publications can be found here: <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/topic/gardening>. Some of these publications are not applicable to gardening in our area, but there are many helpful options. One benefit of using Extension publications is confidence that they are based on research and science. Don’t see a publication on an important topic? Contact KBREC to suggest one!