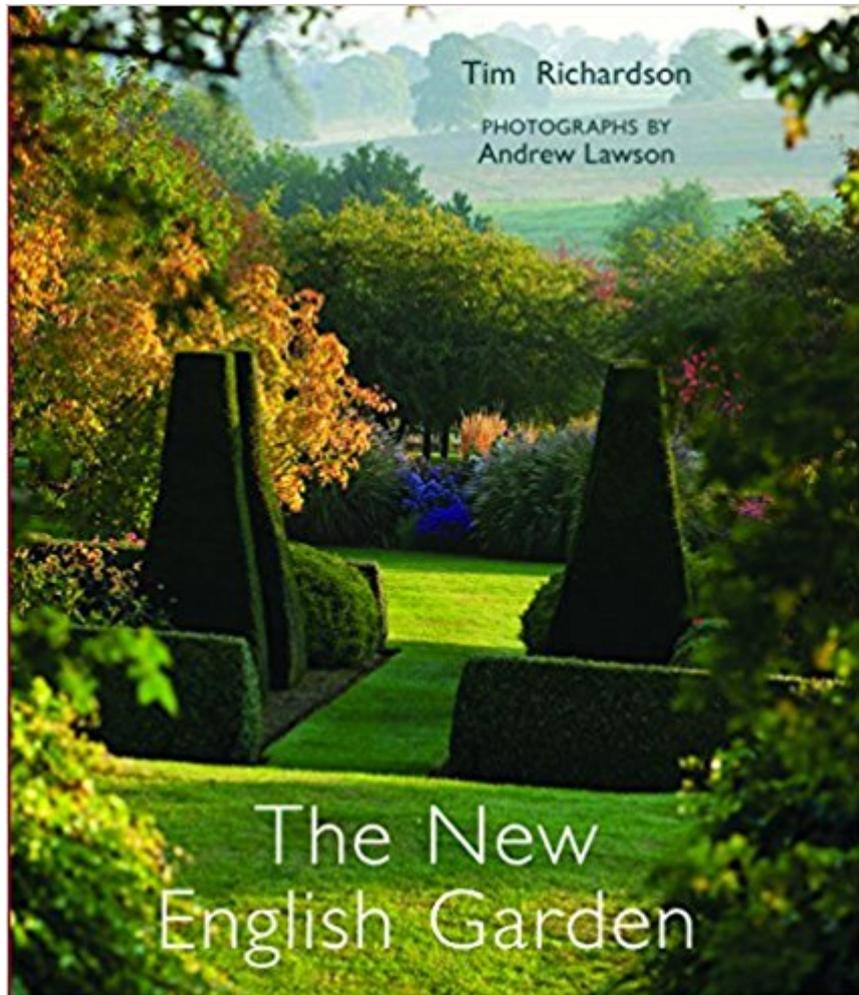


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The New English Garden



Synopsis

A comprehensive overview of the contemporary English garden scene, by the dream team of Tim Richardson, most perceptive and insightful of contemporary writers on gardens, and renowned garden photographer Andrew Lawson. The past ten to fifteen years has been an exceptionally rich period in English garden design, and for this book Tim Richardson has selected twenty-five gardens which have gone through an intense phase of creativity and innovation during this time span. The gardens chosen (most of which are open to the public), cover the wide range of styles flourishing in English garden design today and range from the Prince of Wales's garden at Highgrove, through Trentham Gardens (a 'Capability' Brown landscape imaginatively reworked for the twentieth-century by Piet Oudolf, Tom Stuart-Smith and Dominic Cole), Arabella Lennox-Boyd's own garden and 'laboratory for design ideas' at Gresgarth and Dan Pearson's Gardener's Cottage to Christopher Bradley-Hole's Modernist garden at Crockmore House, Kim Wilkie's astonishing Orpheus Landform, and Alasdair Ford's truly original garden of sculptures and poetic inferences at Plaz Metaxu.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The New English Garden" by Tim Richardson might easily be mistaken for just another lushly photographed coffee-table book describing well-designed gardens, the "garden porn" that gardeners love to curl up with during the cold winter months when they dream of spring. But "The New English Garden" differs from and is superior to most other books portraying gardens in two ways. First, author Tim Richardson is a knowledgeable garden historian who chose the gardens in

his book to illustrate a larger story of the direction in which British garden design has been moving in the past decade or so. This aspect alone places his book a level above the standard "portrait of a garden" collections which simply showcase beautiful gardens of a region or type. However, this book is different in another, even more important way: Richardson is part of a new movement in Britain that is attempting to move gardening from its status as merely a hobby or technical profession to a more widely respected art form, on a plane with visual art, music or writing. This movement insists that for gardening to be taken seriously as an art form, it must be subject to the same type of artistic criticism that differentiates between good and better art, the kind of constructive criticism that pushes artists to improve their work. So after Richardson describes each of the twenty-five gardens in this book and relates why he deems it significant, he then identifies both the most successful aspects of each garden, as well as any weaknesses he perceives. And this last bit is where the big difference lies.

Beauty is something universally admired by gardeners, as that is a fundamental part of their vocation, and what a supremely beautiful book this is. Written by Tim Richardson and photographed by Andrew Lawson, Jane Sabire and Rachel Warne, it is an intimate tour of 25 visually spectacular English gardens, all of which were either made or re-designed in the last ten years. Hence the *new* in the title. Weighing in at more than five pounds, it consists of 300-plus pages and is ten by twelve inches, and so is a solid coffee table book that demands to be left out for anyone interested to peruse. Each garden is covered in ten to fifteen sumptuous pages, and you could do much worse than to study one garden each day with your morning coffee, in these dark days of late fall and early winter. English gardening is, at the present moment, at a very interesting inflection point. The 1990s saw the zenith of the *tapestry tradition*, the Arts & Crafts, color-blending movement and the beginning of a less floral, more naturalistic wave, led by the Dutch and German designers. Prominent among them is Piet Oudolf, for example and his famous *Dutch Wave*, that gives greater prominence to the whole plant and its structures in all seasons, than to its floral expression at one brief moment of glory. This new style has been met and matched in England by a more relaxed English style of gardening associated with the gardening legend Beth Chatto and others, in what is called the New Perennial Movement. And recently, there has been a reaction against both of these new waves and a return to a more traditional and familiar English style and vernacular. So this book fascinatingly explores this very vital moment of design flux, that is so very rich in inspiration and possibility.

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