BOOK REVIEWS


As noted on the jacket: "Ceanothus, with so many plants that tolerate sun and shade, that thrive in arid conditions and thus conserve water, that bear a profusion of beautiful, fragrant flowers, deserves a book that will bring more of them into gardens and encourage greater appreciation of them in the wild, and this is that book." Plenty of color photos of these spectacular shrubs and small trees. Statements of the geographic ranges are given; the only thing I can think of in improvement of this book, "The Compleat Ceanothus," would have been generalized range maps. The text is divided into two substantial and readable sections (chapters in parenthesis):

Ceanothus in the Garden and Landscape
(Natural Distribution; History of Cultivation; Growing Ceanothus Disease and Pests; Culivar Development; Propagation; Ceanothus Species and Cultivars for the Garden and Landscape [94 pages], and Ceanothus Selection Guide).

Ceanothus in the Wild (an evolutionary and taxonomic overview)
(Ecological and Geographic Distribution; Form and Function in Ceanothus; Ceanothus Species [85 pages, with keys and descriptions], and Other Ceanothus names)

—Guy Nesom, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4068, U.S.A.


A guide to the genus Buddleja, oriented primarily toward gardeners, with plenty of detailed information. "Buddlejas are the most accommodating and rewarding of garden plants: their acceptance of challenging soil conditions and climate extremes and their resistance to pests (including deer, hares, and rabbits) are legendary." The genus includes about 100 species — the author lists and discusses 58 species of them (noting that he is concerned only with the woody species, vs. the herbaceous perennials). A middle section provides beautiful color photos of most of the 58, along with many of the distinct cultivars of B. davidii. The super-hardy B. davidii (butterfly bush) is commonly used by breeders because of its abundant and nectar-rich flowers. "The major downside of the species is its ability to colonize inhospitable wasteland sites; the tiny winged seeds, blown far and wide, are capable of germinating wherever they settle, be it old tarmac, rubble, or a crevice high on a wall. During World War II it became known as the bombsite plant in Britain, as it was always the first plant to establish itself after an attack." The North American natives B. marrubifolia and B. utahensis are included in the book but not B. racemosa, B. scandioides, and B. sessiliflora.

Chapter 1. Species
Chapter 2. Hybrids and Cultivars
Chapter 3. Care and Cultivation
Chapter 4. Propagation
Chapter 5. Wildlife Attracted to Buddlejas

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