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## **Essex Meadow: Astonishing Books on Astonishing Annuals.**

To help you spark up your own horto-spectrum, here are some two-thumbs-up thumbnails of some of my favorite books that dote on annuals.

Thank you once again for your interest and enthusiasm. Don't hesitate to stay in touch if I can provide further information. Feel free to email me at [Louis@rgardening.com](mailto:Louis@rgardening.com).

***Victorian Gardens***, Brent Elliott, Timber Press, 1986. Explore the previous Great Age of Annuals, an era when "brighter, darker, deeper, and more exotic" were all positive attributes, incapable of excess. To compete in such well-hued times, our famous modern plant retailer would have had to have called itself Purple Flower Farm.

***The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds of Small Extent***, Frank J. Scott, 1870. Not yet back in print (I don't believe), but usually available in design and horto-libraries, e.g., Massachusetts Horticultural Society in Boston, and RISD in Providence. Scott's confident design advice and unselfconscious misogyny are both engaging and unsettling by turns. A hilarious, horrifying read—and the origin of much of today's classic suburban landscape.

***Hot Plants for Cool Climates***, Susan Roth & Dennis Schrader, Houghton Mifflin, NY, 2000. A sensation when it first came out—and by now, in this fast-changing field, a classic—***HP for CP*** shows you how to welcome to your northern garden tropicals that can be held over from year to year, not just annuals that are tossed at the end of each season. Celebrates the welcome trend of the 90's toward warmer colors and heat-friendly species, to the benefit of August and September gardens everywhere.

***Garden Flowers from Seed***, Christopher Lloyd, Timber Press, Portland, OR, 1994. In his endearingly gossipy and confessional style, Lloyd and his co-author explore hundreds of species, many of them annuals, that self-respecting gardeners may well want to grow from seed. (And because so many unusual annuals don't tolerate transplanting, growing your own is a necessity.) Best bits: When the two authors disagree if a plant is a gem or trash. It's liberating to know that even the experts can't see eye-to-eye.

***Annuals***, Martyn Rix et al. Random House, NY. 1999. Annuals have come of age: Finally, the long-awaited companion to Rix's definitive series, ***Shrubs, Perennials 1 & 2, Herbs, Roses, & Bulbs***.