

Give a gift of garden ideas

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Wouldn't you like to have some fresh ideas, month after month, for projects and plants to try in your garden or home landscape? All sorts of garden magazines offer color photographs of model gardens, articles on topics ranging from specific plant profiles to general how-to advice, and plenty of sources for decorative elements and needed supplies.

If you're trying to think of holiday gifts for gardening friends and relatives, subscriptions will deliver a year-round present. Look for special holiday offers.

Here are some favorites:

"Horticulture: The Art & Science of Smart Gardening." www.hortmag.com. Glossy photos and well-known writers make some interesting reading. William Cullina's feature on native grasses in a recent issue is insightful.

"The Herb Quarterly." www.herbquarterly.com. This publication, with cozy watercolor illustrations and photos, has been published since 1978. Herb and edible-flower growing, recipes, use and lore, and garden reviews are included. A recent issue's feature "African healing herbs" covers unusual plants including neem and nutmeg.

"Fine Gardening."

www.finegardening.com. Its Web presence is amazing. It includes blogs, contests and a discussion forum, and there are how-to videos, including how to prune conifers, and an audio-based pronunciation guide for Latin plant names. The savvy, in-the-moment feeling extends to the print magazine.

"Flower Magazine: Enriching Your Life Through Flowers." www.flowermag.com. This relatively new publication is about the art and pleasure of floral design for a "you can try this at home" crowd. This fall's "light green" issue has a story about Lady Bird Johnson's Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, and some creative ideas for vessels, including spice tins and plastic ware, for arrangements.

"Back Home: Your Hands-On Guide to Sustainable Living." www.backhomemagazine.com. This bi-monthly magazine is filled with "why didn't I think of that?" ideas. You can learn about creating art by "flower pounding," coping with wildlife damage and black-bird cacophony, and building a cheese press and making your own cheese.

Flickr garden tours

Flickr, a searchable, online array of photos, covers the world, with images taken

and shared free by members.

Want to see some gardens? Go to www.Flickr.com and search for them. Find portfolio series, such as "Geneva's garden" on Gratz Park by Louis Bickett; or Larry Daughtery's "Kentucky images" of beasts and butterflies, which takes you on a nature tour by computer.

Once you're oriented to the Web site, you can upload your own photos. It's a great way to keep the winter blahs at bay and spend some time learning about the wonders of the world around you.

Living with plants

As our population ages, issues involving quality of life and personal choices for controlling living space arrangements are coming to the forefront. Researchers at the University of Exeter in England, along with [Ambius](http://www.Ambius.com) – the world's largest commercial environment plant provider – have conducted studies that show that nursing home residents feel happier and healthier when they can influence their communal surroundings with choices in artwork and plants.

"According to psychological theory, residents in a senior living home who believe that it is within their power to make a difference to the appearance of their living space should feel more empowered, thus leading to more positive feelings toward their fellow residents, the caregivers in the home, and the home itself," said principal researcher Craig Knight.

