

BOOK REVIEW: ROSEMARY VEREY'S GARDEN PLANS

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I don't know whether you have noticed, but when celebrity gardeners are asked what their favourite or most used books are, they are usually ones published twenty or more years ago; books like Christopher Lloyd's *The Well-Tempered Garden*, Graham Stuart Thomas' *Perennial Garden Plants* or Beth Chatto's *Dry Garden*, etc. So the book I am reviewing is also an old one, published over twenty years ago. Why? Well, I do not profess to be a garden designer, so I need all the help I can get. All the good designers I know are also very talented artists, and I was no good at art at school, or anywhere else come to that. Therefore, any book that gives me good, clear ideas of how plants go together and how they might be set against each other is like gold dust to me.

I fell in love with this book as soon as I started reading it. It gives watercolour sketches of the planting plans that Rosemary Verey used in various gardens, has useful photographs of the actual garden or key plants and clear accompanying text. The descriptions are of 23 actual gardens that Rosemary Verey laid out, including her own and those belonging to Princess Michael of Kent, Elton John and the Marquess of Bute.

The range of garden types is amazing. There are plans for a large border or garden where it is possible to envisage how part of a plan could be translated to a smaller garden. But there are also plans for a small rectory garden, a potager garden, a knot garden, a walled garden, and a small town garden that she did for the Chelsea Flower Show; the list goes on. I was particularly interested in the 'minimum upkeep' garden. I get excited every time I read this book or dip into it, and I'm sure you will be too if you haven't already read it.

There is another book, entitled *Rosemary Verey's Good Planting Plans*, which contains exactly the same chapters, and both were published in 1993, so don't be tempted to buy both.

Rosemary Verey's Garden Plans (1993) Frances Lincoln Ltd. (Hardcover). [Out of print but there are used copies in good condition available at a very reasonable price.]

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