

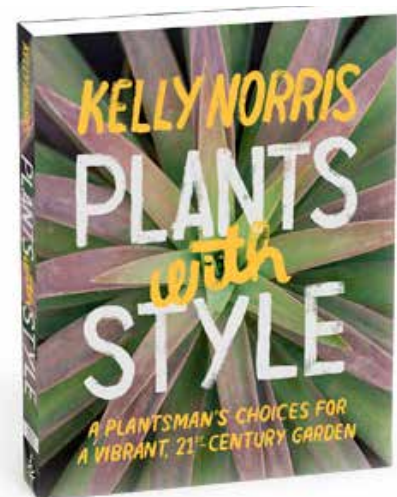
# Plants With Style

BY JUDY NAUSEEF, FAPLD

The world of landscape design and horticulture offers space for a wide range of inspired professionals and opportunities for us to learn from each other and passionately discuss ideas. Kelly Norris, director of horticulture at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, brings his passion for plants to the reader as he does in person wherever he travels. His

book, *Plants with Style* (Timberpress 2015), seeks to draw in a new generation of gardeners for whom eclectic design comes as naturally as their choices for interior environments as well as clothing.

Norris encourages all gardeners to use their sense of style to garden with a sense of place. He believes in choosing plants that call out to you through their color, form, or texture, while maintaining an ecological authenticity, understanding that “stylish gardening is about connecting with the earth.” The book might have benefitted, however, from a deeper description of sustainability in the environment, including a discussion of the additional benefits of habitat for a diverse population of birds, bees, and other wildlife.



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“ Plant combinations that thrill us when we happen upon them in a garden. ”



Norris offers a clear outline of how to form a plan and choose plants by defining structure in the garden, an approach familiar to all landscape designers. Initially, he discusses trees, shrubs, perennials, and other ground-level plants, as well as vines, providing examples of each role. Later, he explains how to add the colors and shapes of seasonal changes to the choice of plants.

A chapter on vignettes discusses what we all aspire to achieve: those plant combinations that thrill us when we happen upon them in a garden. The book recognizes that this is where gardening really becomes fun and is the reward that keeps us tweaking our plan and searching for the perfect plant. In the final chapter Norris gives us permission to include the unexplained or mysterious plant he calls a “one-off or oddity” in our gardens, just because we like it. 🐾

From left to right:  
*Clematis chiisanensis* ‘Lemon Bells’.  
*Aesculus parviflora* ‘Bottlebrush Buckeye’, leaves in autumn.  
*Trillium recurvatum* ‘Bloody Butcher’.

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