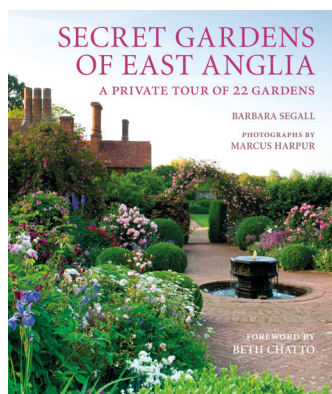


# Book reviews



## **SECRET GARDENS OF EAST ANGLIA**

by Barbara Segall,  
photography by  
Marcus Harper  
Frances Lincoln, £20

ISBN 978-1856233019

*A private tour around 22 largely unknown gardens in East Anglia that is sure to tempt any garden lover to visit the area.*

*Reviewer Henrietta Courtauld is one half of The Land Gardeners.*

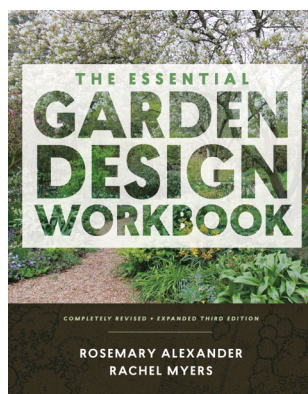
The use of the word 'secret' in the title conjures up the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, in which Mary Lennox discovers *The Secret Garden* hidden behind old brick walls. In this book Barbara Segall allows us to discover a largely unknown selection of gardens in East Anglia, most of which are open to the public at some point during the year.

A foreword by the brilliant plantswoman Beth Chatto states so appropriately that 'each of us, in our own gardens, are artists', and these highly personal gardens reflect the varied personalities of their owners. It is fun to see photographs of the owners, allowing us to guess at the style of their gardens in the pages that follow. I was especially taken by Lady Fairhaven's pea-green jacket and Lord Fairhaven's immaculately creased trousers, only to turn the page to discover the unsurprisingly generous

swathes of colour at Kirtling Tower, Cambridgeshire, where waves of blue camassias stretch out into the fields.

Marcus Harper (an East Anglian himself), has captured beautifully the varied gardens of his locality. At times I yearned for larger photographs so I could really soak up the atmosphere, but the advantage of a plethora of pictures is that there are wonderful close-ups of individual plants.

Barbara Segall has written informative passages on what makes each owner tick and included useful gardening tips. The book has tempted us to visit more gardens in this area. I long to see the roses at both Wyken Hall and Helmingham Hall in Suffolk, and the restored walled garden and Elizabethan herb garden at Raveningham Hall, Norfolk. I am also intrigued by the gardens at Hemingford Grey, Cambridgeshire, setting for the Green Knowe children's novels.



## **THE ESSENTIAL GARDEN DESIGN WORKBOOK (3RD EDITION)**

by Rosemary Alexander and  
Rachel Myers  
Timber Press, £25

ISBN 978-1604696615

*An essential guide to designing gardens, aimed at prospective professionals and anyone wishing to design their own.*

*Reviewer Camilla Phelps is a garden writer.*

The book takes you step-by-step through the process of designing a garden, from detailed site survey through to the final plans and aftercare – all from the perspective of a new or aspiring designer. The attention to detail at every stage is fantastic. As someone who trained in garden design nearly 20 years ago, reading it felt like I was on an inspiring refresher course.

Of course you would expect nothing less from Rosemary Alexander. When she founded the English Gardening School in 1983, there were few other places to study garden design. Now there are many to choose from, but anyone thinking about a career in garden design should read this book.

It gives you an overview, not simply of the design process, but also of running a business. It looks at dealing with clients, contractors and suppliers and all the aspects of working as a professional in the field. Design

styles and a top 50 of the best garden plants are included, as well as how to cost up your design, plus a range of plans, templates, and drawings.

This is the third update to Rosemary Alexander's original book. It was first published in 2004, and in this edition she collaborates with Rachel Myers, fellow tutor at the English Gardening School. The latest uses of technology are covered, but it is great to see such a detailed guide to hand-drawn methods.

There is no glossing over the less glamorous sides of the job, or the difficult situations you might encounter. So you really will come away feeling well prepared.

Even if you don't want to be a designer, it is a book worth having. It will guide you through designing your own garden and help you to understand the process and the costs, should you wish to employ someone else.