

Latin for Gardeners—A useful, surprising, and beautiful resource

October 22 2012



This sample page spread from the new book *Latin for Gardeners* shows the quick-reference dictionary style as well as a special feature box that explores the etymology, history, and characteristics of a plant, in this case the dramatic *acanthus*. Credit: University of Chicago Press

Mastering a small amount of Latin provides a big benefit for gardeners. Not only is it empowering to walk into a nursery and speak like an expert but, without it, they could buy a *Hellebores foetidus* and be unprepared for its fetid smell, or a *Potentilla reptans* with the expectation that it will

stand straight as a sentinel rather than creep along the ground. Understanding the naming conventions can unlock a wealth of information as the Latin names give clues to color, shape, fragrance, taste, behavior, functions, and more.

Latin for Gardeners is both a beautiful gift book and a practical reference with reliable tips advice from seasoned experts. Its [dictionary](#)-style format makes it easy to navigate for quick answers, but the special profile pages and "Latin in Action" sections will engage readers wishing to browse the book to find the next fascinating fact. For example, fennel (*Foeniculum*) was once placed in keyholes to ward off ghosts, or that the official naturalist of the Lewis and Clarke expedition was none other than Meriwether Lewis himself?

Harrison's lush color illustrations and nearly poetic descriptions accompany the entries, making the book as beautiful as it is useful.

Provided by University of Chicago

Citation: Latin for Gardeners—A useful, surprising, and beautiful resource (2012, October 22) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-latin-gardeners-a-beautiful-resource.html>

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