

Final Paper: Gardening Books at the Tolland (CT) Public Library

Rosanna M. Longenbaker

ILS 519 S70 Collection Development

Dr. Bielefield

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This is a review of the horticulture books at the Tolland Public Library. All 30 books have the call number 635. I selected the first 30 books on the shelf for use in my final paper.

In order to determine which books should be deselected, I relied on the “MUSTIE” guidelines from the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. Also, I looked at suggestions for deselection from *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*. This manual pointed out that circulation is an important factor in discarding gardening books (2008, p. 59). Because I am not an employee of the Tolland Public Library, I did not have access to circulation records. I have noted that the circulation of some items should be checked before decided to replace or discard them.

Books Reviewed

1.

635

ALL

Allaway, Z. & Leendertz, L. (2010). *How to grow practically everything*. New York: DK Publishing.

The book contains many photos to help with explanations. The book would be useful to patrons because it gives very basic step-by-step instructions. The one drawback is that the book was written and originally published in the United Kingdom. The plants shown in the book are not necessarily native to Connecticut. That may or may not be a problem. Some non-native plants are invasive, spreading quickly and easily throughout a garden. In Connecticut, it is illegal to purchase and plants that are on the state’s official

invasive list. Some of the vocabulary was different from the words I am accustomed to. I think this is because it was not written in the United States. The list provided in the book names only suppliers in the United State and Canada. The book gives plans for several gardens, even recommending plants by their Latin names. That way there is no confusion about what you are buying. It is in very good condition. The book is very current because it encourages gardeners to avoid the use of chemicals. It also encourages cleaning tools. Some products mentioned might not exist in the United States.

Keep (current)

2.

635

BAC

Ryrie, C. & Halpin A. (Ed.). (2011). *Back to basics: Traditional garden wisdom: Time-tested techniques for creating a natural, sustainable outdoor space*. New York, New York: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc.

The book is well constructed. It will stand up to a lot of usage. The pictures are high quality illustrations. While photos might have been better this book is still very well done. I was surprised that the book did not make any mention of temperature zones. It lists many plant suggestions in a chart format that is easy to follow. It gives very specific instructions for all tasks. The book is up-to-date. I did have a few concerns. The book suggests using old fencing or siding to make a compost bin. My understanding was that when making a compost bin you are not supposed to use pressure treated lumber because of the chemicals with which it has been treated. Also, the nutrient recommendations do

not seem very scientific. A gardener cannot add manure each year and expect the garden to be fine. It is possible that plants are doing poorly due to too many nutrients. The book does not address this.

Keep (current)

3.

635

BAL

Bales, S. F. (1991). *The Burpee American gardening series: Vegetables*. New York: Prentice Hall Gardening.

The information in this book is still up-to-date. It provides a question and answer section in the back, which could be better handled by the Internet or a local Master Gardener office. It would be an enjoyable basic read for a gardener. Common diseases are listed, but no pictures of the diseases are provided. The first and last pages appear as though they are about to fall off the book. The binding is starting to wear. The inside front and back cover are very sticky as though it was not repaired correctly at some point.

Discard (Due to sticky cover.)

4.

635

BAK

Baker, J. (1983). *The impatient gardener*. New York: Ballantine Books.

The book is quite yellow on the edges of the pages. I would recommend that it be discarded based on its appearance. The illustrations are all very basic black and white prints. The author makes recommendations for many chemicals to kill insects. He recommends spraying lawns with a mixture of beer, Epsom salt, ammonia, liquid soap, and Listerine (Baker, 1983, 5). I am not sure if this would harm or help the plants, but I would be wary of keeping a book with this type of advice with no scientific explanation. He also recommends a sealant spray for trees in the winter.

Discard (Poor Appearance, Age, Outdated)

5.

635

BOI

Boisset, C. (1992). *The plant growth planner*. New York: Prentice Hall.

The dust jacket is slightly discolored. The book is in excellent condition as though it has never been used. It gives basic fertilizer recommendations, but does not name brands. Even though this book is 20 years old I hesitate to discard it. The book contains color illustrations showing the growth patterns of many trees and shrubs over a number of years. That would be very useful for garden planning. I have not seen anything like them before. If records show that the book still circulates regularly I would recommend finding an updated edition. If circulation records showed that the book really had not been used in 20 years, I would recommend discarding it. I find it hard to believe that this book is being used based on its near perfect condition.

Discard (Due to suspected lack of use, not good fit for community, fertilizer recommendations could be out-of-date)

6.

635

BUC

Buchanan, R. (1994). *Better Homes and Gardens step-by-step vegetables*. Des Moines, Iowa: Better Homes and Gardens Books.

Despite being paperback the book appears to be in very good condition. The information is up-to-date. I like that it pointed out that you could have a soil nutrient test done by your state for a low cost. The photos in the book are not quite as high quality as photos produced today would be, but the difference is not dramatic. The clothing styles depicted are slightly out of date, but people tend to wear old clothing when gardening so that is not a large concern. Sections of the book are illustrated, but the illustrations are color and high quality. This book contains contact information for companies that sell materials for people who want to grow vegetables. I imagine that the list is out of date. It also recommends the Seed Savers Exchange at the beginning of the book. The address for that group could also be out of date. I imagine that the book has had very low circulation due because it is in such good condition.

Discard (does not seem to be used, addresses) I would keep the book if it still circulates regularly because the information is still up-to-date.

7.

635

BUC

Buckingham, A. & Whittingham, J. (2008). *Grow vegetables*. New York: DK.

The book is beginning to show signs of wear. It is paperback and the first 10 or more pages turn very easily. The material presented is up-to-date. Chemical herbicides are presented for use only in certain circumstances. Specific brands are not names. This is good because it allows the user to find the chemicals that are legal in their state. The pictures are very nice and the charts explaining when to harvest and plant certain crops are clear and easy to read. Addresses for gardening companies are provided these can change.

Keep (up-to-date)

8.

635

BAR

Bartholomew, M. (2006). *All new square foot gardening*. Nashville, TN. Cool Springs Press.

Square foot gardening seems like a fad. The book is showing some signs of wear, but it is still in good enough shape to stay on the shelf. The book is paperback. The author of the book is definitely a salesman for his method. That is shown in the repetition of his photo in the book. There are also testimonials throughout the book. Nothing that the author suggests seems to be harmful. I imagine that his method works for some people although it might not be as simple as suggested. A big advantage to the garden frames

recommended in this book is that the frames can be elevated so that people in wheelchairs can use them. The book contains a list of addresses for garden supply stores that can become out-of-date.

Keep (the book seems new enough still)

9.

635

BET

Schrock, D. (Ed.). (2010). *Better Homes and Gardens ask the garden doctor: 1,200 cures for common garden problems*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The layout of this book is unusual in that it is a list of gardening questions with the answers provided. The questions relate to common plants and frequently asked gardening questions. The information is up-to-date. Perhaps the question and answer style would be better suited for a website. This book would be useful for people who are not comfortable with a computer and do not want to contact a local Master Gardener office with all of their questions. It could be faster to find an answer with this book than to look for a website. The photos and maps are of good quality.

Keep (good condition, up-to-date)

10.

635

BUB

Bubel, N. (1992). *52 weekend garden projects*. Emmaus, PA. Rodale Press.

The book looks old from the outside. The drawings are high quality. They are done in black and white except for the cover. The book contains suggestions for gardening related craft projects in addition to tips for growing certain plants. The spine is slightly twisted, but it is not so bad as to discard the book. I was surprised by that legal notice at the beginning of the book from the publisher. This book contains a chapter on eating flowers. It has lists of flowers that are edible and flowers that are toxic. It contains a list of garden suppliers and gardening books. I imagine that the list is out-of-date. The book is for experienced gardeners. I would keep this book only if it is still circulating regularly. The inside cover has some sticky remnants.

Discard (old appearance)

11.

635

BUC

Buczacki, S. (1988). *Cocran's basic book of home gardening: A complete guide for the first-time gardener*. New York: Viking.

The book is very well done. It makes recommendations for strong insecticides, including Sevin. Which pesticides can be legally used varies by state. The cover is starting to tear off on the inside even though it is hardback. The edges have white showing where the color has worn away. The illustrations are black and white with one color printed. They look out of style. The photos are decent in spite of their age.

Discard (This book is worn out.)

12.

635

CHA

Chalker-Scott, L. (2008). *The informed gardener*. Seattle, WA. University of Washington Press.

This book is a collection of articles that the author originally published in Washington and also distributed online. The author has a Ph.D. in horticulture and teaches university classes. The book addresses common misperceptions about gardening. It is well done and could be used by an experience gardener, yet it may still be of interest to a beginner. The only downside is that the book has a slight bias towards Washington, which the user would need to keep in mind since Seattle has a different climate than Tolland. There are no pictures that relate to the text.

Keep (It is current.)

13.

635

COU

Courtier, J. (2011). *Fast, fresh garden edibles: Quick crops for small spaces*. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Creative Homeowner.

The book has nice photographs. It makes suggestions for gardening with containers or in a garden. The photos are somewhat trendy since they feature large pillows and old cooking pots to put plants in. The book discusses both chemical and non-

chemical pesticides. It contains a list of store where the user can purchase gardening materials.

Keep (Current)

14.

635

COU

Coulter, L. (2006). *Gardening with heirloom seeds*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

This book is for advanced gardeners. It has nice color photos of heirloom vegetables and gives descriptions of heirloom plants. Also, it gives gardening tips. The end of the book has a list of places where you can visit heirloom gardens or obtain seeds. One disappointment is that the Latin names are given for very few plants.

Keep (Current)

15.

635

CRE

Creasy, R. (1999). *The edible Italian garden*. Boston, MA: Periplus.

The book contains interviews with people who work with Italian vegetables. It also has recipes and a listing of Italian vegetables. The material presented seems up-to-date. No recommendations are made for strong pesticides. The book is showing some signs of wear since it is a paperback. Some of the photos appear dated due to people's

clothing or poor quality. The pages are beginning to discolor slightly at the edges and there is sticky residue on the last page.

Discard (due to wear) I would keep this book if it turned out that it still circulated regularly.

16.

635

CRE

Creasy, R. (2000). *The edible Asian garden*. Boston, MA: Periplus.

The book provides an interview with someone who has an Asian garden. The pictures are still nice. People's clothing does not make them look out-of-date. The book contains a listing of Asian vegetables along with tips for planting them and cooking with them. There are recipes to cook Asian vegetables in. The book does not recommend strong pesticides. It is up-to-date. The pages are beginning to yellow slightly on the edges. There are a few food stains in the book. The book is paperback.

Discard (due to food stains) I would keep this book if it still circulates regularly.

17.

635

DON

Don, M. (2003). *The complete gardener*. New York: DK.

The book has many photos of the author and includes his comments. The book contains a chapter on organic gardening. It also discusses tools and many different plants.

My only concern is that this book was written in England. The climate there is somewhat different than in Connecticut. This book is for an experienced gardener.

Keep (current)

18.

635

DOU

Douglas, W. L. (1987). *Hillside gardening: Evaluating the site, designing views, planting slopes*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

The dust jacket was originally lavender, along the spine it has faded to blue. The spine is pulling away from part of the book as though it was stored on a shelf that was too tight for a long period of time. The bottom of the book has rub marks. The book makes reference to famous hillside gardens. The photo quality is not as good as in a book printed today. The book presents design ideas that could be out of style.

Discard (Poor appearance, Poor condition)

19.

635

DAM

Damrosch, B. (2008) *The Garden Primer*. (second ed.). New York: Workman Publishing.

The book is paperback. The cover is beginning to pull away slightly. The illustration are grayscale, but they are well done. The book suggests when to do something yourself and when to contact a professional it is organic gardening. It has a

listing of plants with notes on caring for them. There is a list of associations in the back to contact for different plants. The list might be becoming out-dated.

Keep (current)

20.

635

ENC

Schrock, D. (Ed.). (2005). *Miracle-Gro encyclopedia of plant care*. Des Moines, Iowa:

Meredith Gardening Books.

The book presents up-to-date information. It is in fairly good condition although it shows signs that it has been used. The pictures are of good quality. At the beginning of the book there are many pictures of Miracle-Gro products. It bothers me that a book is blatantly advertising, but it is not enough to justify getting rid of the book. The listings of house plants, ornamentals, and vegetables could be a great help if you wanted ideas of plants for your garden and could help with very basic plant identification. Even though plant guides are available online, it can still be much faster to look up plant information in a book. It is hard to describe what a plant looks like in specific enough key words so that it can be found with Google. I am concerned that this book includes plants that are considered potentially invasive in Connecticut.

Keep (current) I would check for an updated edition if the book circulates regularly since it recommends specific products.

21.

635

Greenwood

Greenwood, P. (1995). *The new gardener: The practical guide to gardening basics*. New York: Dorling Kindersley.

The photos and color illustrations are enjoyable to look at. The book is for a beginner. It does recommend using herbicides, but only in the section for restoring neglected gardens. The author notes that a gardener should wear protective clothing while using weed killers. The book appears to be up-to-date. It suggests many gardening projects, has pictures of common plant problems, and gives a chart comparing different vegetables. The spine of the book is damaged. The top of the spine is slanted, while the bottom is straight. It looks like something heavy was dropped on it.

Discard (Due to damage. Much of the information is duplicated in newer books.)

22.

635

GRE

Greenwood, P. (1996). *Gardening hints & tips*. New York: DK.

The book is paperback, but of the type with a double layer cover. There is some damage to the spine and the cover has indentations. The spine is slightly discolored. This is not enough to warrant discarding the book. At several times in the book weed killers are recommended although the importance of proper clothing is always mentioned. No specific weed killers are named, which is good because it allows the reader to find what is legal in their state. The book suggests building your own outdoor barbecue. The author

points out that you can burn trash on the concrete base in the barbecue during the winter (p. 23). Trash burning is illegal or requires a permit in many places. The book uses some of the same photos as the other book by the same author. The color photos and illustrations are nice.

Discard (a newer book in the collection covers the same material)

23.

635

JUS

The Editors of Garden Way Publishing. (1993). *Just the facts!/: Dozens of garden charts thousands of gardening answers*. Pownal, VT: Storey Communications, Inc.

The book is in good condition overall. There is some wear on the spine and the cover is slightly discolored, but it is definitely still usable. The information in this book is still useful. It contains charts of gardening related information. The charts list things such as plant height, preferred temperature and more. There is also a section on different types of mulch. The book suggests biological controls and natural pesticides. Some information in this book is repeated elsewhere, however the layout of the book and the level of detail were not repeated in the libraries collection. The “USDA Hardiness Zone Map” and other maps in this book are difficult to read because they are printed in grayscale. The information is available in other books. The Tolland County Master Gardener Office also owns a copy of the book.

Keep (The format is different than any other book and it is not out-of-date.)

24.

645

MCH

McHoy, P., Berry, S. & Bradley, S. (1997). *The complete book of practical gardening: The definitive step-by-step guide to planning, planting and maintaining the perfect garden*. New York: Hermes House.

This is a large format book. The spine has separated from the outside cover. It is in good condition other than that. The book contains suggestions for garden designs. It also has a listing of plants that that authors recommend for certain light levels and pH levels. It is contains photographs and illustrations. They are of good quality. There are suggestions for transplanting houseplants and constructing hanging baskets. The information in this book seems to be repeated elsewhere in the collection. It could easily replace both books by Greenwood. At the same time, it could be replaced by a combination of *How to Grow Practically Everything* (2010) and *Miracle-Gro encyclopedia of plant care*. (2005). The library owns both books. It is nice that there are not pictures advertising Mirale-Gro. This book is for a gardener with some experience, but not much.

Discard (There are newer books available on the same topics.)

25.

635

NEW

The New York Times. (2003). *1000 gardening questions & answers*. New York: Workman Publishing.

There are a few stains on the top and bottom of the book on the pages. The spine is showing signs of use. The book is still in usable condition.

The book contains a list of questions and answers related to plants, gardening, and composting. The information appears to be up-to-date. However, many of the answers to the questions could be found online. It is very convenient to have them all in one place instead of searching multiple websites. It seems that this book should have been discarded when the library acquired “Better Homes and Gardens Ask the Garden Doctor: 1,200 Cures for Common Garden Problems,” which was published in 2010. Perhaps the library kept the book by The New York Times because it goes into much greater detail than the Better Homes and Gardens book. This book contains black and white illustrations.

Discard (The library owns a newer book following the same format.)

26.

635

PAV

Pavord, A. (1996). *The new kitchen garden*. New York: Dorling Kindersley.

The book is showing signs of wear. The spine has pulled away from the cover and the pages are slightly pulled away from the glue. The book shows samples of kitchen gardens for both the city and the country. It has nice photos of all of the plants covered by the book and quality color illustrations of the garden plans. The book lists fruits,

vegetables, and herbs, giving suggestions for where what type of soil they need as well as how to care for them. Many recipes are listed as well. This material in this book is not covered in this level of detail elsewhere in the collection. My major concern with the book is that it was originally published in England. Some of the suggested fruits and vegetables I have never heard of before or have only encountered in Europe, for example: celeriac (p. 96). I wonder if these plants will actually grow in Connecticut. There is a list of garden suppliers and gardens in the back of the book. I expect that it is out-of-date.

Discard (due to wear) It should be replaced with a new copy of the same book or a different book on kitchen gardens.

27.

635

PLA

Toogood, A. (Ed.). (1999) American Horticultural Society plant propagation. New York: DK Publishing, Inc.

The book is very worn. There is large stain from a spilled liquid on the right side of the pages. There is a smaller stain at the bottom of the pages. The spine is curving instead of being rectangular when it is viewed from the bottom of the book. The cover has a small tear at the bottom. This book is for an advanced gardener. It recommends organic pesticides and reminds gardeners that “if you choose to use a stronger chemical control, exercise caution (p.46). The book seems up-to-date, but it is above my level in gardening so I cannot be sure. The pictures are high quality and information is neatly organized. I recommend discarding this book because the copy is worn out. It should be

replaced with a new copy of the same book or one that will meet the needs of the same patrons because this is the only book on plant propagation that I have encountered in the collection. The circulation of the book should be checked to make sure it is worth replacing.

Discard (due to wear, out-dated) The Texas State Library recommends discarding books about plant propagation after 10 years (2008, p.60).

28.

635

PLE

Pleasant, B. (1999). Gardening essentials. Minnetonka, MN: National Home Gardening Club.

The book is in very good condition. The only damage is to the cover where it looks like an old label was ripped off. This is a gardening book for beginners. It covers a wide range of topics including soil, lawns, and gardening for children. The photos are in color and they are high quality. There are a few photos where people are wearing clothing that is now out of style. The Tolland County Master Gardener Office has the series that this book is from in its collection. The book is up-to-date. I like that it recommends alternatives to chemicals, but points out that herbicides are sometimes necessary. The author notes that herbicides would be necessary to kill poison ivy since people cannot touch it (p.173). This book seems to repeat a lot of the same information that is elsewhere in the collection. I would check the circulation to see if it is being used because it is still in such good condition.

Discard (There are newer books in the collection with the same information.)
However, if the book circulates regularly I would keep it since it has good information and is still in good condition.

29.

635

PLE

Pleasant, B. (2010). *Starter vegetable gardens: 24 no-fail plans for small organic gardens*. North Adams, MA: Storey Publishing.

The book is in very good condition. Most of the book is on glossy paper with high quality pictures. The pages at the end, which are text-only, are on plain paper. The book gives specific instructions and colored diagrams showing the layout of each garden. Some gardens are shown for a three-year period. The book lists expected harvests. This book would be for beginning gardeners. It gives tips on how to set up trellises or other supports for plants. The main idea of the book is similar to that of *All New Square Foot Gardening* (2005), but I would not consider it as a replacement since *Starter Vegetable Gardens* does not include flowers and there is no gimmick.

Keep (current information)

30.

635

ORT

McKinley, M. (Ed.). (2001) Ortho's home gardener's problem solver. Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Books.

The book is in very good condition. This book has great photos of plant problems. We have a copy of an older edition in the Tolland County Master Gardener Office to help with diagnosis. (Master Gardener's in Connecticut cannot recommend chemical use so we ignore many of the recommendations in the book and just use the pictures, which is how we can get by with an old edition.) Even though a lot of plant information is now available online a physical book can be useful. It is much easier to flip through a book filled with photos than to try to describe the physical appearance of a plant disease in Google. Since the book was produced by Ortho, it recommends a variety of pesticides and herbicides by name. The book makes it clear that gardener's should following the labeling on chemicals. This is good. I would check the circulation of this book before deciding to keep or discard it. It is in such good condition for a paperback after 11 years that I wonder if anyone is using it. It may be a poor fit for the community. Also, since chemical regulations can change I would check to see if a new edition has been written. This book balances the collections since it has chemical use.

Replace (chemical recommendations are likely out-of-date) I would replace it with a new edition if there is one available and if circulation warrants it.

Recommended for Purchase

I was going to recommend the following two books for purchase based on the reviews that I found in various databases using EBSCO. The book titled *Grow, Cook, Eat* would have been a good replacement for *The New Kitchen Garden* as well as the two worn books by Creasy. When I searched the Tolland Public Library's catalog I

discovered that they already own a copy of the book, which is checked out. The second book that I had intended to recommend was *What's wrong with my vegetable garden?* I thought that it would add variety to the collection since many of the books that I looked at were general gardening books. It is also owned by the Tolland Public Library, but was checked out during my review.

Galloway, W. (2012) *Grow cook eat: A food lover's guide to kitchen gardening, including 50 recipes, plus harvesting and storage tips*. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books.

Deardorff, D. & Wadsworth, K. (2011). *What's wrong with my vegetable garden?: 100% organic solutions for all your vegetables, from artichokes to zucchini*. Portland, OR: Timberline Press.

More Suggestions for Purchase

There were three other books that I had thought would be good additions to the collection based on their topics. However, they were too specific to be included in under the call number 635 that I was reviewing. The Tolland Public Library does not own any of the books so they might prove to be good additions based on the larger collection.

Clausen, R. R. (2011). *50 beautiful deer-resistant plants: The prettiest annuals, perennials, bulbs, and shrubs that deer don't eat*. Portland, OR. Timber Press.

I thought that this book would be useful to town residents because Tolland is a somewhat rural area. There are many deer here that eat plants in people's yards and gardens.

Ogden, L. S. & Ogden, S. (2011). *Waterwise plants for sustainable gardens: 200 drought-tolerant choices for all climates*. Portland, OR: Timber Press.

This book seems useful because some people do not like to water their plants frequently. More specifically, it would be useful in Tolland because most residents use wells to get their water and some of the wells can be emptied from over use. This could help that issue.

Rushing, F. (2011). *Slow gardening: A no-stress philosophy for all senses and seasons*.

White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Pub.

This book sounded like it would be good for people who did not have a lot of time to garden.

Replacement

I was attempting to find a replacement for the worn out copy of *American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation*. A new edition is not available. There are several books on plant propagation listed at Amazon.com, but I have not found reviews of these books on outside sites. They were printed in 2012 so it is possible that reviews will still be forthcoming.

Conclusion

The Tolland Public Library has many useful current books about horticulture cataloged as 635. The section needs to be weeded though. Garden books from the 1980s are not useful at this point and many of them are worn out or yellowed. During this assignment I began to feel as though I was looking at the same book over and over. I believe this was because there was a lot of repetition in the collection. It appears that while new books have been purchased, the old books that they might have been intended to replace were not discarded.

References

Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. (n.d.) Weeding. Retrieved from:

<http://www.azlibrary.gov/cdt/weeding.aspx>

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Charles, J. (2012). Waterwise plants for sustainable gardens: 200 drought-tolerant choices for all climates. *Library Journal*, 137(1), 122.

O'Brien, S. (2011). 50 beautiful deer-resistant plants: The prettiest annuals, perennials, bulbs, and shrubs that deer don't eat. *Library journal*, 136(14), 124.

O'Brien, S. (2011). What's wrong with my vegetable garden?: 100% organic solutions for all your vegetables, from artichokes to zucchini. *Library Journal*, 136(20), 139.

Slow gardening: A no-stress philosophy for all senses and seasons. (2011). *Publishers Weekly*, 228(20), 68.

Texas State Library and Archives Commission. (2008). *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/sites/default/files/public/tslac/ld/pubs/crew/crewmetho d08.pdf>

What's wrong with my vegetable garden: 100% organic solutions for all your vegetables, from artichokes to zucchini. (2011). *Publisher's Weekly*, 258(45), 64.

Walker, K. (2012). Grow, cook, eat. *Organic Gardening*, 59(4), 72.