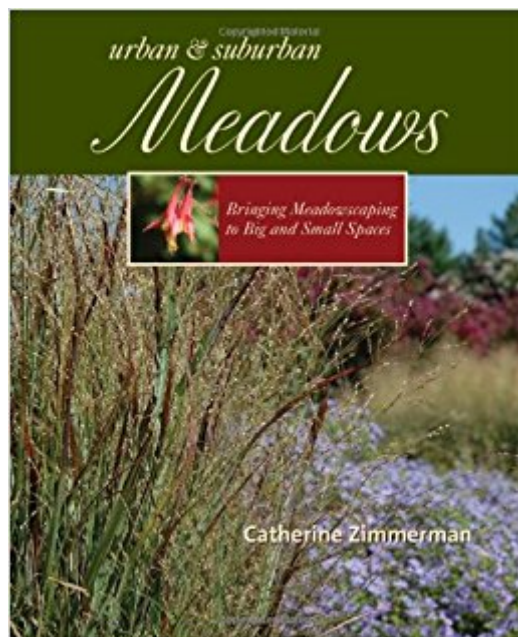




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Urban And Suburban Meadows: Bringing Meadowscaping To Big And Small Spaces



Synopsis

Urban & Suburban Meadows, Bringing Meadowscape to Big and Small Spaces is an enticing introduction to meadowscaping. Author and photographer, Catherine Zimmerman, combines her expertise in photography, storytelling, environmental issues, horticulture and organic practices to offer meadowscaping as an alternative to reduce monoculture lawns. Zimmerman crafts a guide that provides step-by-step instructions on organically creating and maintaining beautiful meadow gardens. Four experts in meadow establishment lend their knowledge for site preparation, design, native plants, planting and maintenance. The book provides plant lists and resource sections for nine regions across the United States along with local sources to assist the meadow creator in bringing diversity back to urban and suburban landscapes. Meadows can be big or small, short or tall. However large, the benefits are great. Meadows sequester carbon, retain water, filter pollutants, eliminate the need for fertilizers or pesticides and provide habitat for wildlife. Reduce your carbon footprint. Improve your neighborhood. Enjoy a meadow in your backyard! Now available, the 60-minute companion video!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This skillfully crafted guide is a wonderful resource providing the gardener with concise step by step instructions on how to meadowscope existing lawns into easily managed, pesticide free, native meadow gardens that provide all-season beauty while protecting and providing for nature." --Steve Castorani, North Creek Nurseries "This is a great book - beautiful and useful. It is totally organic in

approach and gives step-by-step instructions (with pictures) for several different organic approaches to meadow establishment. It stresses the use of native plants and lays out the environmental benefits of meadows - providing habitat and food for wildlife, controlling erosion and restoring a natural water cycle, as well as the cost benefit of much reduced maintenance after establishment.

The list of regional resources for creating meadows is a gold mine of information for meadow enthusiasts across the U.S. And, it has gorgeous pictures of meadows on practically every page."

--Sarah Little, Ph.D. NOFA Organic Land Care Committee, Chair "Before manicured lawns, with their chemicals, mowers, and blowers, there were ecological meadows, with their butterflies, birds, and bees. Catherine Zimmerman's *Urban and Suburban Meadows* reintroduces readers to the beauty and biodiversity of the meadow and reminds them of the intricate connections between wildlife and native plant communities that serve as both food source and habitat. Whether restoring a small urban pocket garden or reclaiming an acre of suburban lawn, this beautifully photographed book will compel readers to plant these living landscapes. Zimmerman provides both the inspiration and the thoughtfully developed and comprehensive practical steps necessary for success." --Penny Lewis, Executive Director, Ecological Landscaping Association "*Urban and Suburban Meadows* by Catherine Zimmerman (Matrix Media Press, 2010) is a practical compilation of information collected from Zimmerman's background growing up on a small farm in the 1950s and '60s and her training and certification in horticulture and organic gardening. She captures the enjoyment of having a meadow garden and takes you through the steps of how to create one for yourself. Zimmerman writes about meadows vs. monocultures and how to prepare the sites, and she provides 70 pages of contacts across the country. This how-to guide offers the most up to date information for succeeding at meadow gardening in urban and suburban settings. Available now at TheMeadowProject.com and www.themeadowproject.com; June 1, at major bookstores. This 272 page paperback has more than 200 color photographs." --Joel M. Lerner, Washington Post, Green Scene: Books to help plant gardening ideas"THE CONCEPT of a meadow garden is simple: wildflowers, grasses, butterflies, and minimal maintenance. In reality, meadows are complex ecosystems that require some know-how to create. Enter horticulturist and landscape designer Catherine Zimmerman and her new book *Urban and Suburban Meadows*. Chock full of concise information, this book enables readers to envision meadows and prairies as achievable, low-maintenance gardens that offer a viable alternative to lawns. Imbued with Zimmerman's passionate commitment to sustainable gardening, this well-researched book starts off by building a convincing case for meadow ecosystems versus monocultural lawns, complete with charts comparing costs. (On average, meadows are twice as expensive to install but half as expensive to maintain over time.)

Integrating advice from a handful of experts, Zimmerman leads readers step by step from conception to fruition. Chapters cover topics such as site preparation, design, establishment, and maintenance, enhanced by plenty of color photographs, illustrations, and sidebars. A plant key presents recommended regional wildflowers and grasses grouped by soil moisture requirements. The chapter on maintenance, with its dramatic photographs of raging conflagrations, may put a few readers off. While burning is the best way to maintain grasslands, it isn't always tenable due to community ordinances, spatial concerns, and the expertise required to conduct a burn. That said, the book presents alternatives such as annual mowing, which are more practical for the home gardener. It is difficult for any book to cover an entire continent, though this volume makes an attempt. The book's overall focus is clearly east of the Rockies, yet a large number of pages are devoted to other regions, including brief descriptions of 84 eco-regions with diverse floras that are excluded or glossed over by the plant key. And because, as Zimmerman puts it, "finding local resources, such as nurseries, providing plants native to your area is a key element in the successful outcome of your meadow or prairie planting," there is a section listing these resources for various regions around the country. Despite the book's ambitious scope, any reader considering a meadow, as a landscaping alternative will find it contains a wealth of information and clearly articulated step-by-step methodology for meadow making." --C. Colston Burrell, *The American Gardener*: The American Horticultural Society magazine

Catherine Zimmerman, an award-winning director of photography, has over 30 years of experience in documentary filmmaking with an emphasis on education and environmental issues. Environmental videos she has worked on include global warming documentaries for CNN Presents and New York Times Television; Save Rainforest/Save Lives, Fresh Farm Markets, Wildlife Without Borders: Connecting People and Nature in the Americas, and videos for Discovery Creek Children's Museum. Catherine is also a certified horticulturist and landscape designer, based in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. She is accredited in organic land care through the Northeast Organic Farmers Association and has designed and taught a course in organic landscaping for the USDA Graduate School Horticulture program. In writing *Urban and Suburban Meadows*, Catherine has created a stunning and enticing introduction to meadowscaping that will inspire her readers to do away with pesticide-ridden, manicured lawns and return their land to a beautiful, natural habitat for native plants and wildlife. She hopes that her project will start the movement toward making natural landscapes the new landscaping norm.

When designing a native meadow or prairie, it is critical to have locally appropriate information both with regards to what is native to your state, but also what will thrive at your site (dry/wet or sun/part-sun). This book is worth buying for the plant lists alone which are indexed by region, state, and site. But it goes a step further and has a several page summary of each of several major regions of the continental US, making this book truly useful to anyone in the lower 48. I also discovered a very helpful web site from the local resource lists in the back. Most chapters are inspired by an interview with a meadow expert from a different state, giving the book both a broad geographic appeal, but also some very different points of view, as each of the people interviewed has a different focus. There is a wonderful chapter on burning, which I have never seen detailed so well before. Zimmerman also mentions a few critical tips I hadn't heard anywhere else, like the desirability of wild species over hybrids due to hybrids being chosen for bloom size and color over vitality, nectar production, and forage value for native wildlife. Also she does a good job of showing multiple ways of accomplishing the same goal so that you can choose instead of saying, "you must do it this way" and indicates which factors might influence your decision. The pictures are beautiful and the layout is attractive, clear, and easy to follow. I'm only giving it 4 stars instead of 5 because the editing was poor enough to be distracting. It looked like it shipped before the final edits were incorporated. In particular, steps 7 and 8 on page 97 are both essentially "water what you planted." After reading it a few times, I can see that the first means "water well when you plant" and the second means, "Every week thereafter, check and water as necessary, especially larger plants." Not horrible, but distracting. I must have noticed a half-dozen misspellings, and I'm not one to notice those things. Also, some of the chapters just sounded like notes from an interview strung into sentences. Great information, an interesting point of view, but they didn't quite gel from a literary perspective. Most frustrating was that not all pictures were captioned with the place and the species used. There are several beautiful pictures (e.g. p.150 and the top of p.61) that evoked an, "I want that" response from me, but without the species names, or the location where such a scene would thrive, I can't have it! Maybe there is a web site for the book that contains errata so I could look it up? Two tips I felt were absent from this book: 1.) When a newly planted container plant wilts but the soil is still wet, adding more water won't help. Cover it with something porous (I use coarse burlap) to shade it for a couple days until it recovers. If it wilts badly, cut the plant down to 1/2 or 1/3 of its original height before covering. It may not bloom that year, but at least it will live to bloom the next and should be quite healthy thereafter. 2.) If the soil is so bad that the ground is bare and nothing is growing on it (compacted/eroded/poisoned), add at least a 1/2 inch of compost and break it up before you plant in order to jump-start it back into action. I like to add 3 inches of compost/mulch for

good measure, but that's not practical over large areas. Use weed-free compost or cover it with 2-4 inches of shredded bark mulch to prevent being overrun by annual weeds. In spite of all my criticisms, this has become my favorite book on establishing a native meadow. I always have an eye out for seeds/plants from the species list in this book and have had success with several of the recommended techniques including burning. I would highly recommend this book to anyone trying to start their own native meadow. If there is a second edition by the time you read this review, I'd expect it to be much better than the first, because my criticisms are mostly editorial.

You don't need to have any background to get started with a meadow creation job! Catherine provides simple steps and great photos of each with supply lists too. I used this to do a school yard demonstration garden and highly recommend using this to turn more lawns into habitat for birds and butterflies!!!

Catherine's book (and accompanying DVD) provide examples and recommended steps to creating a meadow in both rural and urban settings. Practical knowledge is enhanced by photographs and supported by extensive regional lists of plants recommended for different areas of the US. Great resource! A wonderful time-saver for those looking to create meadows of their own.

I'm following the instructions for meadow building from the bare ground up, using seed. Lots of hard work. This book describes how to do it, avoiding weed regrowth in an old farm field without chemicals. The pictures and descriptions are very clear.

There are few if any photographs in this book of the small- to medium-sized plots that most urban and suburban meadow gardeners have to work with. Most of the lots pictured are so large they might as well be rural. We never see a small front-yard meadow surrounded by the neighbors' traditional lawn-and-shrub yards either. The photographs focus instead on individual houses with meadows, leaving out all the surrounding areas. This creates the illusion of a rural setting--the very thing that suburban and urban meadow gardeners don't have. So the book skirts one of the main problems most urban and suburban meadow gardeners face: how to make a meadow look appropriate in a non-rural setting, the lawns of suburbia. If you're looking for a meadow book that goes beyond the talk-to-the-neighbors-first cliches, this isn't it. The book is not really about meadows at all. "Meadow" is a broad term. It may include almost any combination of grass and flowers growing in a naturalistic way, including many exotics and plants considered to be weeds. The focus

of this book is much narrower. It takes a hard-line, all-natives approach. It's about simulating native grassland habitats of North America in a garden setting. The title should reflect this. There are other problems with the book. With the exception of the "reflections" at the beginning, it's written in a dull, didactic style. The section on growing flowers in existing turf--one of the best ways of making a meadow in many situations--is extremely weak. She basically has someone plant a couple of purple coneflowers in an overgrown patch of lawn. The author devotes many pages to burning meadows when most gardeners working in a truly urban or suburban setting are not allowed to burn. She also spends a lot of time on mechanical sowing--complete with pictures of farm tractors. This is useless for most people creating a meadow in the suburbs or city. Nearly half of the book is devoted to plant lists and resources lists. The plants lists are not easy to read and are too general to be useful. There are many better books out there about meadows. See the books of Sara Stein, Christopher Lloyd's "Meadows," Stevie Daniel's "The Wild Lawn Handbook," the work of Lady Bird Johnson, just to name a few. "Urban & Suburban Meadows" does have lots of pretty photographs of prairie-style plantings in rural or rural-like settings. It also has some good pictures of urban common area prairie gardens and a rooftop prairie planting. This book could be an okay intro to prairie gardens for someone who knows almost nothing about the subject or gardening in general.

Extremely helpful for anyone interested in starting their own meadow . Offers clear steps and wide selection of plants. Great read.

Great read!!

This book is very comprehensive with excellent photos, step by step directions and overall excellent insight into the natural horticulture of meadow landscaping. A must have a for someone interested in more local, natural landscapes.

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