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Gardening

Gardening Vertically: 24 Ideas for Creating Your Own Green Walls
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The initial inspiration for Gardening Vertically: 24 Ideas for Creating Your Own Green Walls is the work of French research botanist Patrick Blanc. Blanc's "green walls" are large-scale architectural landscapes and, as such, must be very carefully planned, engineered, and maintained. His building technique is also protected by copyright and cannot be duplicated except for home enjoyment. Noémie Vialard provides detailed plans and instructions for the ambitious do-it-yourselfer, along with repeated warnings of risks and a realistic assessment of the maintenance required. (Blanc's green walls have important height and weight restrictions and require irrigation and fertilization on a daily basis.)

The first third of the book is devoted to Blanc's grand urban projects, and the ideas presented in this section of the book are inspiring (if, at times, somewhat daunting) and plentifully illustrated with drawings and photographs. The remainder of Gardening Vertically is given over to smaller-scale ideas for the home gardener/landscaper, and here lies most of the practical value for the devoted amateur. These sections include training and attaching plants to trellises, creating living fences with espaliered trees, growing plants in clay pots attached to walls, and creating indoor "walls" of plants with racks of shelves set against windows. Detailed instructions and techniques for each project are, again, generously provided in text form, lists, and illustrations. The author also gives specific plant recommendations for each type of project, along with light and maintenance requirements and expected lifespan for each plant. Also provided are clear indications of final desired results, both with close-up photographs of specific plants and photographs or drawings illustrating overall designs.

Gardening Vertically will appeal to lovers of houseplants as well as outdoor ornamental gardeners. It also has ideas geared to the kitchen garden—for instance, new ways of growing

fruit trees and berry plants, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, peas, and strawberries, along with many herb plants—although the primary focus of the book is ornamental gardening. The gardener concerned with space limitations, landscaper looking to add the appeal of vertical components, and amateur eager to try new growing ideas will all find something of interest in this book.

One caution: Many addresses for products and suppliers of products named in the book are listed in French, but at least one American resource has been included in the “Useful Addresses” text under each heading.

Pamela Grath