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Palm Springs-Style Gardening: The COmplete Guide to Plants and Practices for Gorgeous Dryland Gardens

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Maureen Gilmer, illustrator
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"The great illusion of the desert is that it appears barren, but there is life and beauty visible only to the keen eyed beholder," the author writes. Maureen "Mo" Gilmer is one of these keen eyed people; she has been gardening for the past thirty years and sharing her expertise in "YardSmart," a nationally syndicated column in Scripps Howard News Service newspapers across the country. She also appears on the DIY Network, hosting and designing for the show *Weekend Gardening*, and she is the author of fifteen books on gardening and the environment. All of this experience is put to good use when teaching the Southern gardener. Because of the hostile climate—heat, sun exposure, wind—gardening in places like the Coachella Valley can be a tricky endeavor. Indeed, many plants stop performing photosynthesis due to the stressfully high temperatures.

Based on years of trial and error, Gilmer has gathered the do's and don'ts in an easy-to-follow book for people at all gardening levels. Beginning with an overview of desert-tolerant plants, she discusses the effects of heat, light frosts, and wind that often sideline beginning gardeners. Presenting outlines of the two main Coachella Valley growing seasons: fall and winter, she covers ideal planting times, watering schedules, and relocation plans for cold nights. Incredibly helpful and informative "Mo Tips" are distributed throughout the book in sidebars. At the end of each chapter is a wrap-up section called "This Chapter in a Nutshell," that highlights key elements. Beautiful photographs of different plant species at different times of the year aid the reader's visualization of their own desert project. Highly organized and informative, this book is a great tool for desert gardeners. (December) *Rhiannon Ross*