



## **Rejuvenating A Garden**

Stephen Anderton

SOMA Books

978-1-57959-057-4

(August 31, 1999)

“Never believe all that nonsense you hear about old gardens being romantic and timeless. Time is what has made them, and time is what is running out on them. Life in an untended garden is not so much a gradual slippery slope to disorder as a battle between plants. And, of course, there are casualties. The winner takes all, and in the end, it is usually a sycamore.” While in many areas the winner is likely to be something other than a sycamore, an old garden, if neglected, will in time become overgrown and in need of rejuvenation. In *Rejuvenating a Garden* Anderton provides some logical procedures for turning an untended, overgrown wasteland into the garden of your dreams. This is not a book about garden design, though there are general design tips sprinkled throughout. It is, rather, an informative and inspiring book about how to go about cleaning up a neglected garden, and then rebuilding it, in whatever form that may take.

The British origins of this book are apparent throughout (it was originally published in the United Kingdom in 1998). The text and photographs may at first seem a little foreign and of questionable relevance, but the information and procedures are applicable to any overgrown garden. Even if one doesn't have a 200-year-old yew hedge or a crumbling manor house wall to contend with, one can apply these principles to that overgrown spiraea hedge in the side yard or the arborvitae next to the back door.

The book is divided into three sections. Part I, *Where to Start*, covers the necessary steps involved in evaluating what one has to work with, deciding what the garden's objectives are and determining what style of garden is wanted. In Part II, *Doing the Job*, Anderton thoroughly covers the practical matters involved in clearing out the old garden and installing the new. The third part is an extensive, plant-by-plant guide to rejuvenative pruning. If one has been wondering what to do with that overgrown viburnum in the front yard, look in this section and find out the best season to prune it and how much to cut it back without killing it.

While there may be some information superfluous to readers on this side of the pond, the book is full of good advice for getting through what can be a very daunting task.

*Dean Connors*