

Slow Gardening: A No-Stress Philosophy for All Senses and Seasons

Felder Rushing

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Inspired by the Slow Food movement, which embraces home cooking as a way to celebrate local food and the traditions that surround it, garden writer Felder Rushing proposes a new approach to gardening. In his book *Slow Gardening*, Rushing inspires readers to enjoy the fundamental tasks of gardening and take pause throughout harvest to savor their results.

According to Rushing, gardening should be about pleasing yourself in your yard, whether your inclination is bottle trees and a flock of pink flamingoes (as is the case for the author) or a neatly curved stone path through vibrant green groundcover. Slow gardening, the author encourages, is about knowing yourself and using your talents and inclinations to have fun and make your garden a place you feel reluctance to leave. The key tenets that he espouses are Take It Easy, Get 'er Done, and Get Together, for gardening should be about slowing down, working and not worrying, and sharing both the knowledge and fruit of one's labors with others.

Whimsically designed to catch a reader's eye, *Slow Gardening* contains fun illustrations, often wacky captions, inspirational quotes from voices as diverse as Frank Zappa and Eudora Welty, and helpful sidebars. Most original to this book are the many philosophical and psychological principles that Rushing explores as they relate to gardening. From Maslow's hierarchy of needs to *schadenfreude*, the author makes readers realize that just about everything can be learned in the garden.

Felder Rushing's offbeat approach to gardening makes this book a delight to read and is balanced by a slew of practical tips. Throughout his text, Rushing introduces readers to green methods in gardening (many of which have been around for ages and lately rediscovered), such as how to make a rain barrel and how to compost. But what's refreshing is his emphasis on simplicity, stressing that there's never only one way to do things. Sure, the author admits, there are ideal ways to compost, but if you pile vegetable waste and leaves and mix them around every so often, you've got compost! Gardening, in Rushing's world, is a mix of practicality, ingenuity, and personality.

Slow Gardening is the perfect book for beginning gardeners afraid that they don't know enough, just as it's the perfect book for advanced gardeners who crave new perspectives. There are few authors who could appeal so widely as Felder Rushing does, with a voice that stands far out from the typical gardening crowd.

JENNIFER FANDEL (July 27, 2011)

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