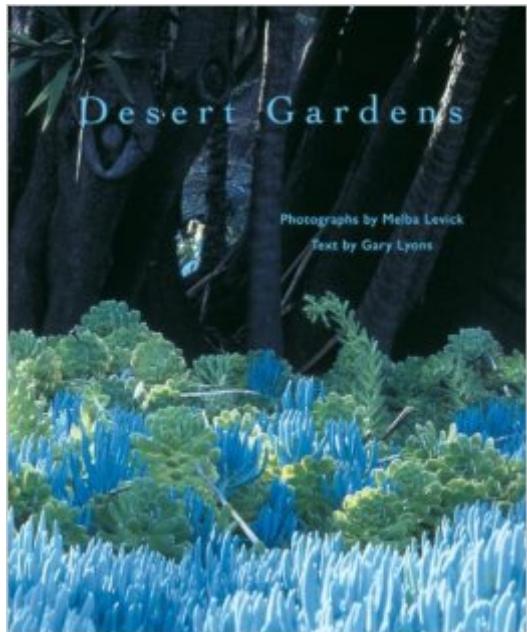


The book was found

# Desert Gardens



## **Synopsis**

Whether explosive displays of columnar cacti and brilliant wildflowers cascading down sun-bathed hillsides, meditative, botanical expressions of an organic, spine-laden geometry set within the quiet, earthen walls of a Spanish colonial mission, or twilit, verdant groves evoking a prelapsarian topography this book captures the numinous light and beauty of 18 unique and rarely photographed private and public desert gardens between San Francisco and San Diego. Featuring the most important desert garden in the world at the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, as well as the Moorten Botanical Gardens in Palm Springs, Balboa Park in San Diego, and many exquisite private gardens, the volume celebrates the sculpturesque charms of cacti, aloes, and other succulent flora that have adapted to the extreme conditions of the desert. Combining spectacular garden views in idyllic settings and ravishingly beautiful images of particular specimens, with text by the renowned desert garden expert Gary Lyons that balances the poetics and technical aspects of this garden genre, the book serves as an inspirational guide to these horticultural treasures. Because interest in desert gardens continues to grow dramatically, the book also includes the addresses and visiting hours of gardens open to the public, and provides a bibliography of what one needs to know in order to create one's own.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

My husband has a decided dislike of any plants in the "out to get you" category, and since I share his loathing of thorns we have neither cacti nor roses in our garden. That being said, if you think

"desert garden" means little more than prickles and sand let me assure you that this beautifully-illustrated book will change your mind. As Melba Levick's stunning photos so clearly show, gardens composed primarily of low-water plants can be beautiful and, more perhaps importantly, can be touchable as well. Although great care needs to be taken with many of the cacti (especially those species with barbed spines), there are supple succulents with no dangerous protrusions, and other user-friendly plants combine to great advantage in the 18 gardens shown. Occupying a relatively narrow area of coastal Southern California (with just a few exceptions), these private and public gardens showcase the passions of their owners. I've visited a number of them and find the descriptions of those to be both accurate and evocative, with their successes and shortcomings (in the author's view) both pointed out. Author Gary Lyons shares with these gardeners a love of things spiny and weirdly twisted (his own garden is one of the 18 featured), and he makes clear his belief (which I share) that plants should be allowed to grow in a setting which suits them best and not primarily used in an overly-controlled manner (as in the new Getty Museum gardens). I especially liked reading about the gardeners and how they came to develop their passions for these particular plants, and it would have been especially nice if a small photo of each gardener was included.

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