

Holiday Gifts for Gardeners

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It is relatively easy to buy gifts for the gardeners on your Christmas gift list. In a past article we discussed forcing amaryllis, paperwhite, and hyacinth bulbs as a stocking stuffer type gift. Don't stuff them in a stocking but phalaenopsis orchids and cyclamen are similar gifts.

Phalaenopsis orchids are beautiful and one of the easiest orchids to grow. They are blooming now and will bloom for another 4 months and every year thereafter if they are placed in a location where they will receive light from a southern or eastern facing window.

We use cyclamen for blooms outside in a shady bed during the winter. Placed to receive morning sun in front of an east facing window inside the house they will bloom year-round. The foliage and the blooms are spectacular. Select from red, white, pink, lavender or purple blooms. This is a \$6 Christmas gift that will please the recipient all year.

Gardeners are pleased when they receive gardening books as gifts. My recommendations include "Home Landscaping Texas" by Greg Grant and Roger Holmes, "Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens" by Pope. Odenwald, and Fryling, and "Butterfly Gardening for the South" by Geyata Ajilvsgi.

Greg Grant is an excellent horticulturist and writer, but my favorite part of the "Home Landscaping Texas" book is how the home landscape task is broken into small parts. All the components are there but with the help of the book, you can address them section by section.

Many gardeners appreciate that a landscape that attracts birds is especially enjoyable. "Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens" shows that with some minor changes in plant choice, arrangement, and management, the landscape can have more birds and be more attractive.

With the Monarch population problems, gardeners have become more aware of butterflies. We are realizing how interesting they are and how easy it is to play a role in increasing their populations with changes in your landscape management. Providing a gift such as "Butterfly Gardening for the South" will be greatly appreciated. Do you want to contribute even more to your gardener's butterfly producing efforts? Include the book "Caterpillars in the Garden (Allen, Brock, and Glassberg)" to identify the caterpillars that are eating the new butterfly food plants in the landscape. Another good gift is a Guidebook such as "Butterflies of North America" by Brock and Kaufman.

An excellent gift option for the gardener on your gift list is to purchase them a gift certificate at their favorite nursery. The gift certificate is good for several reasons.

If your gardener is improving the landscape or converting to a xeriscape with 12 months of color, she/he will be selecting some new plants. The gift certificate allows the plants to be picked up by the gardener when it is convenient for her to do the planting.

Also, half the fun for a gardener at their favorite nursery is to wander around and consider all the options before making their choices. The gift certificate supports this pleasurable activity.

If you have made the effort to identify the gardener's favorite nursery it indicates to the gardener that selecting the gift certificate was a thoughtful decision and equal to visiting numerous stores or perusing the internet for the right gift.