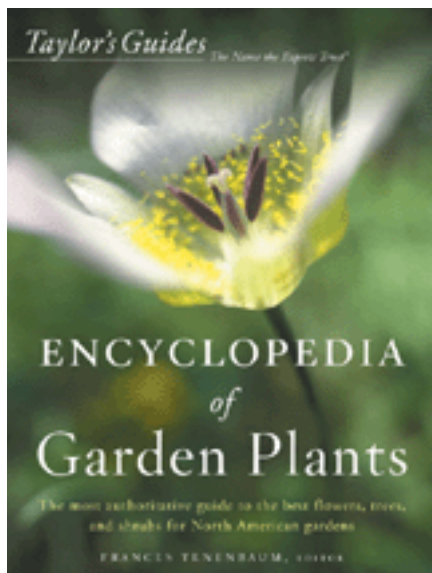


Press Release



Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants

edited by [Frances Tenenbaum](#)

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"Concise, easy to read, attractively laid out, and packed with information." — *Library Journal*, starred review

"Bears the Taylor trademark of reliable information imparted in an entertaining but usable manner . . . DESTINED TO BECOME A TIME-HONORED RESOURCE FOR NOVICE AND EXPERIENCED GARDENERS ALIKE." — *Booklist*

About the Book

Since 1936, when Houghton Mifflin published famed botanist Norman Taylor's first *Encyclopedia of Gardening*, Taylor's Guides have been the most trusted name in gardening for backyard novices and horticultural experts alike. The tradition of excellence that is synonymous with the Taylor's name continues this fall with the publication of *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*, the new, definitive guide to the best flowers, trees, and shrubs for North American gardens. This authoritative volume is edited by one of the country's most respected gardening editors, Frances Tenenbaum.

Compiled from the completely updated line of Taylor's Guides to trees, shrubs, roses, perennials, annuals, bulbs, and ground covers, *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* is the most authoritative, comprehensive, and up-to-date garden reference ever published. Packed with descriptions of more than a thousand species, dozens of line drawings, and 1,200 color photos, the encyclopedia is organized alphabetically by botanical name with a common-name index, making it an accessible, easy-to-use reference for any reader.

Every garden, regardless of size, location, and the gardener's level of experience, begins with finding the right plants. *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*, the only plant encyclopedia on the market focusing exclusively on garden plants of North America, supplies in a single essential volume all the information necessary for growing, propagating, and maintaining the best species for every sort of garden, climate, and growing condition. If it

isn't in this book, it probably won't grow here.

Over the past decade, Frances Tenenbaum has proved, with the updated Taylor's Guides, that practical gardening references can be attractive and pleasurable to read and use. Horticulturally accurate, beautifully designed, and easy to follow, *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* is a fitting culmination to the series. It belongs in the library of every gardener, nursery owner, and landscape professional and is sure to prove a classic favorite for gardeners of all stripes.

About the Editor

Frances Tenenbaum inherited her green thumb from her mother, whose bible was Norman Taylor's original *Encyclopedia of Gardening*. It wasn't until she moved into her first home, though, that Tenenbaum became passionate about gardening — and garden writing. Trained as a journalist, Tenenbaum wrote her first gardening book, *Gardening with Wild Flowers*, in 1973, and began editing books at Houghton Mifflin shortly thereafter.

During her nearly thirty years at Houghton Mifflin, Tenenbaum has edited some of today's most popular and beloved garden writers, including William Cullina, Mac Griswold, Tovah Martin, Rita Buchanan, and Henry Mitchell. For the past decade, she has served as series editor for the updated line of Taylor's Guides, and in 1997 she wrote the *Taylor's Dictionary for Gardeners*. She is a fellow of the Garden Writers of America.

In 2000, sixty-four years after Norman Taylor was awarded a gold medal by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for his original *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening*, Frances Tenenbaum earned her own gold medal for her re-launching of the Taylor's line over the past decade, a feat that would surely make Norman Taylor proud.

Tenenbaum lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and on Martha's Vineyard, where she keeps a seashore garden.

Praise for Taylor's Guides

"Original books of excellent quality." — *Horticulture*

"The best, most authoritative, and intelligently organized guides on the market . . . Series editor Frances Tenenbaum keeps a steady hand on the tiller." — *Garden Design*

"Among the most-thumbed reference books in many a gardener's library." — *Country Living Gardener*

"Every gardener should have a set of Taylor's guides to gardening." — *South Bend (Indiana) Tribune*

"Stellar resources for gardeners." — *Jacksonville (Florida) Times-Union*

"The best and most comprehensive books on gardening." — *Virginian Pilot/Ledger Star*

"One of the country's most distinguished gardening series." — *Fitchburg Sentinel*

"The Taylor's Guides are legendary among gardeners." — *Salisbury (Maryland) Times*

"Long considered the most reliable garden guides." — *Newark Star Ledger*

Who was the Taylor behind Taylor's Guides?

Irony played a considerable part in Norman Taylor's history. One of the leading botanists of the first half of the twentieth century, he dropped out of Cornell in 1901 after a year because, he claimed, his eyes were too weak. It was his first and last stint in academia, but the beginning of a distinguished career as a botanist. He worked first at the New York Botanical Garden, where in 1904 he became assistant curator of plants, and then, from 1911 to 1930, as the curator of plants at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Whether or not his eyes were weak, in his lifetime he wrote dozens of books and many more articles and was the editor responsible for 33,000 botanical definitions for the legendary second edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary*. He described his fields as "systematic botany," the identification of plants, and "ecology," the study of organisms in relation to their environment.

In his day he was noted for the many books he wrote about gardening, but he was too busy working, traveling, and writing to have a garden of his own. In later years he had a beautiful farm that was named after the wrong tree.

In addition to writing, he was a noted plant collector. On his first collecting trip to Santo Domingo, his very pregnant wife helped preserve the plant specimens by changing their protective papers four times a day. After the birth of their first child, he continued his exploratory trips alone — always traveling by freighter — to fifteen countries in Central and South America.

Among the many books he wrote was *Flight from Reality*, in 1949. Subtitled *The Pleasant Assassins*, the book dealt with the history of marijuana, hashish, opium, morphine, and heroin. Fifteen years later he wrote *Plant Drugs That Changed the World*. He was an expert on the tree that produces quinine, used to treat malaria. His many books for gardeners covered such subjects as herbs, fragrance, wildflowers, and fruits.

But of all his writings, none could compare with *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening*, which was originally called *The Garden Dictionary*. First published by Houghton Mifflin in 1936, it earned its author the gold medal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society that year. (Sixty-four years later, the Taylor's Guides earned its current editor the same gold medal.) By the time the fourth edition of the encyclopedia was published in 1956, it had grown to 1,330 pages and, according to newspapers of the time, was considered the "bible" of the landscape gardener. The *Baltimore Sun* gave its sales figure as 250,000, although Houghton Mifflin can't confirm it.

By that time Norman Taylor was living with his fourth wife — numbers two and three seem to have been what a botanist would call "ephemerals" — in a winter apartment on West 10th

Street in Manhattan. His granddaughter Claire Layton-Taylor remembers him as a very tall, charismatic man with a slight stoop from ducking to go through doorways. She recalls delightful visits with him and his wife. He was an excellent storyteller, and the apartment was full of interesting artifacts brought back from his many trips. The food was always good and often reminiscent of the foreign lands to which the couple traveled by freighter. He was noted for serving a lethal martini, with a drop of glycerin added to the gin and a small amount of vermouth.

When Taylor bought a summer home on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, an eighteenth-century grand manor house on a 325-acre farm overlooking the Manokin River, it was his expressed intent to grow flowers and relax. But as the *Baltimore Sun* noted in 1957, "He hasn't gotten around to the flowers in the ten years he has lived there." Instead, he wrote approximately one book a year and started raising a "few" chickens, until he was selling four thousand broilers four times a year. After the chickens came hogs, until the market dropped, and then Aberdeen Angus cattle.

If visitors to Elmwood, the Taylors' home, were disappointed not to see any flowers, Taylor was amused to note that no one who came would ever see an elm tree, either. Ironically for a botanist, his home had been named for the wrong tree. Elms did not grow on the Eastern Shore; the tree that did was the hackberry.

Norman Taylor died in 1967 shortly after returning from a four-month round-the-world freighter trip.

By 1973 *Taylor's Encyclopedia* was ready to be revised and updated, and on my first visit to Houghton Mifflin to talk about a job, Austin Olney asked me to take a look at the book. I was familiar with it, since it was my gardening mother's beloved reference. A revision was impractical, and ten years later, a contract was signed with a packager to take the plant information in the *Encyclopedia* and create a series of full-color books called Taylor's Guides. The first of these came out in 1986. A few years later the entire Taylor's publishing program was moved back to Houghton Mifflin, where it had started sixty-seven years ago with Norman *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening*.

Now it seems only appropriate that the last book in the Taylor's Guide series is our forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*.