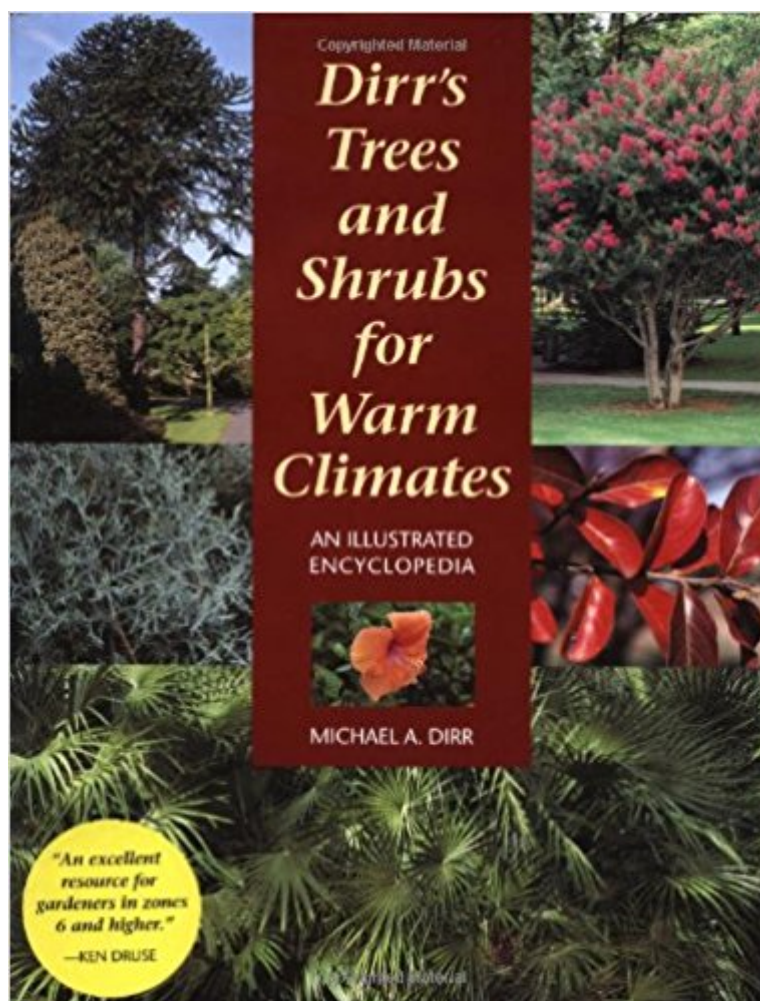


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Dirr's Trees And Shrubs For Warm Climates: An Illustrated Encyclopedia



Synopsis

Following the phenomenal success of Dirr's *Hardy Trees and Shrubs*, written for gardeners in the climates of USDA zones 3-6, this companion volume is a superlative photographic encyclopedia of trees, shrubs, and vines for "warm temperate" zones. In North America, these areas (zones 7-11) stretch from the Mid-Atlantic states to the South, include most of Texas and the Southwest, and encompass the entire West Coast, up to western Canada. Many parts of the British Isles, Australia, and New Zealand experience similar conditions. In a nutshell, any gardener who lives in an area where average winter temperatures do not fall below 0° Fahrenheit (-18° Celsius) will want this book, and curious gardeners in colder zones may well want to test these select plants in their local microclimates. This remarkable volume shows both the habit and details—flower, fruit, bark, fall color—of more than 400 species and describes hundreds more cultivars and varieties. Certain genera offer myriad hybrids and selections, and photographs of many of the best of these are included as well—nearly 40 named crapemyrtles, a dozen teaolives, and 11 loropetalums. In all, more than 1400 photographs join with the authoritative text to bring the plants to life. From *Abelia* to *Ziziphus*, gardeners will encounter many new and unfamiliar plants that thrive in warmer climates. Dirr gives special attention to hardy palms that can survive outside the subtropics. The book also reflects the author's inimitable personality, which holds nothing back when a plant deserves outright acclaim ("If prescriptions could be written for perfect garden plants, this species would come close to filling the order"), backhanded praise ("Use for accent, for novelty, or to drive visitors loony"), or frank condemnation ("Splays to the point of no redemption with time"). The book concludes with useful lists for selecting plants for a variety of conditions or for ornamental characteristics, such as flower color and fragrance, fruit, and fall color.

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Customer Reviews

A professor of horticulture and the author of ten books, including the well-known *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Dirr (Univ. of Georgia) here presents an encyclopedia with more than 1400 beautiful photographs, personal observations of over 400 species, and hundreds more cultivars and varieties of trees, shrubs, and vines that grow in the temperate zones of the Southeast. Intended as a companion volume to Dirr's *Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, this new book will be useful to landscapers, garden designers, horticulturalists, and home gardeners located in the South, as well as the West Coast through British Columbia. Dirr also includes a section on cold-hardy palms that will survive in growing zones 7-11. What sets this book apart from many other botanical encyclopedias is the author's personal writing style, which breathes life into the text. Each plant is described in detail, showing flower, fruit, bark, fall color, and any other distinguishing characteristics. Easy-to-read entries may also include the author's individual experience with the plant, recommended cultural requirements, and growing habits. This practical and comprehensive work indicates whatever unique features a plant has to offer in the garden, both aesthetically and economically. Useful appendixes aid in selection of plants by their various characteristics. Dirr's encyclopedia is strongly and unhesitatingly recommended as a basic reference resource for both public and academic libraries, especially in the relevant growing zones. Deborah Anne Brooker, Georgia Perimeter Coll., Dunwoody Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Dirr's previous book, *Hardy Trees and Shrubs* (1997), has proven to be such an invaluable guide to selecting garden specimens that his latest merits special attention. The same excellent format is repeated; in this case, nearly 1,500 photographs illustrate species and cultivars for southern and West Coast gardens. The accompanying text melds equal parts savvy counsel and accessible, enlightening descriptions that promise to steer gardeners at all levels to making informed choices when picking out trees and shrubs for a given space or habitat. Bark, berries, and blooms are pointed out, along with each plant's form and foliage, and plant lists provide handy references for specific characteristics. No other writer on gardening speaks to the subject with Dirr's experience, acumen, and ability to instruct. Simply indispensable. Alice Joyce Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Having learned a great deal from Dirr's other books while living in the midwest, it was with great anticipation that I recently opened a new copy of Dirr's *Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates*. Much to my dismay, the first 3 familiar trees I looked up weren't in the book! In my yard I have a wonderful 20', evergreen, cold-hardy *Xylosma* tree: not covered. Having propagated dozens of beautiful *Myoporum*s in Santa Barbara, surely I could learn of their cold hardiness for northern California: not covered. Currently I'm considering a 'marina' *Arbutus* hybrid for my zone 9b front yard, a popular tree in local nurseries: not covered. While Dirr has supplied a lot of great information about the species he's chosen to cover in a high quality format, he clearly has not done his homework on many of the most important cultivars, and has excluded them from this book. Also, his lists for specific landscaping situations are helpful, but could be far more useful if other variables were included in tabular form, such as size, climate zone, etc. If you're involved in important landscaping decisions, you'll need other sources to make an informed decision. I hope Mr. Dirr will publish an expanded and revised edition of this book.

I had read reviews that were not that favorable, that this book was substandard for Dirr but I disagree. Having formerly lived in the Northeast and now in the South, I needed a reference for all things (trees, shrubs, vines) that thrive in my new environment. *Trees and Shrubs for Warm Climates* completely fills the bill. Like *Hardy Trees*, *Warm Climates* is full of detailed pictures, text that informs as well as amuses and Dirr's frank opinions about which plants are many faceted, beneficial additions to the garden and which are better voted off the program. A bonus for me was the addition of photos that show the beginning of Dirr's own home garden through to maturity and expansion. In an area which seasons summer, summer, late summer and fall reign, this book is a must for the gardener's home library.

In this book, our leading expert on woody plants gives brief descriptions and excellent photos of many of those suited for warm climates. As noted by another reviewer, the selection is more complete for the humid Southeast (of the U.S.) than it is for California and other Mediterranean climates. However, I expect that all warm-climate gardeners will find much of value. It is important to note that this book complements Dirr's two other major efforts on woody plants: his *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* and a photographic volume (similar to this one) called *Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs*. The *Manual* provides more detailed taxonomic and cultural information (including info on propagation), but has line drawings of foliage only. The two photographic books cover most

woody plants suited to the U.S. There is no overlap between the photographic books, which is why redbud and dogwood aren't found in this volume, as noted by a previous reviewer. They are hardy, and they are in Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs. This book is invaluable for seeing what mature specimens of these plants will look like and for Dirr's always interesting comments on suitable uses and culture. Highly recommended.

Another great reference guide from Michael Dirr.

Dirr's is an industry standard reference that anyone in the business or hobby should have. Well laid out, detailed information, excellent visuals.

I found the photos very good in the various stages of the trees. The write up was a bit technical but my basic bio 101 kicked in and I have used this book several times to ID trees. The planting zones were most helpful and I have selected several trees/shrubs on Dirr's advice. Highly recommend for the serious gardener.

One of the best!

As a plant ID student this book is must-have.

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