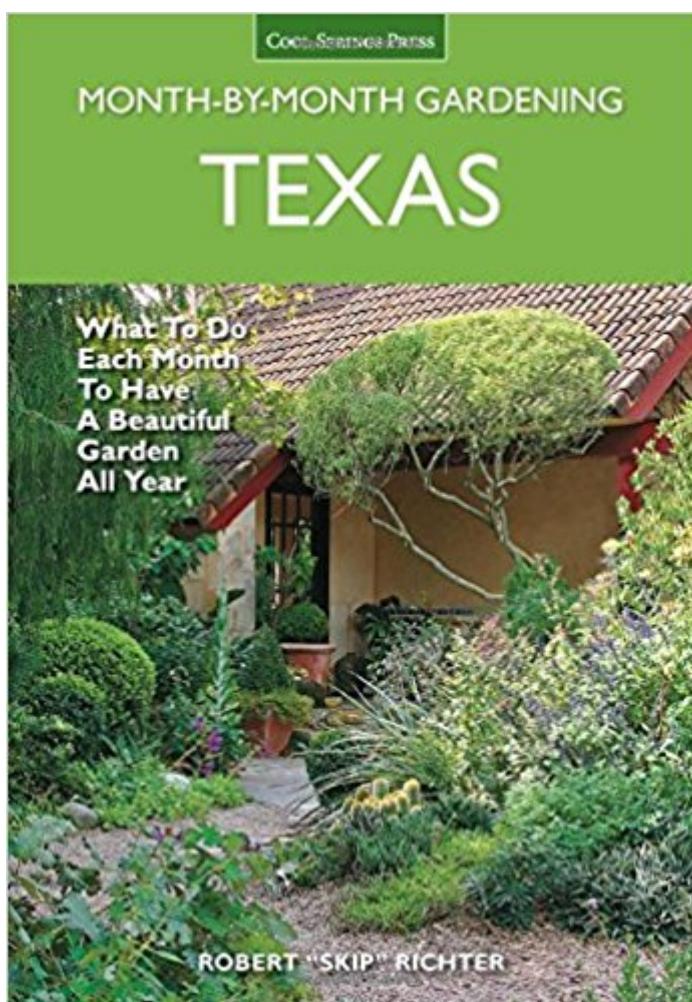


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# Texas Month-by-Month Gardening: What To Do Each Month To Have A Beautiful Garden All Year



## Synopsis

One of America's biggest and most diverse landscapes begins in your yard. There's no way around it: Texas is huge. The state dials in at well over 250,000 square miles, housing most of the United States' power grid, arguably all of its delicious food, and almost every kind of environment imaginable: formidable mountains, rolling hills, flat plains, and coastline. If you're a home gardener, knowing what to do when can be overwhelming--that's where Texas Month-by-Month Gardening, the companion book to our Texas Getting Started Garden Guide, comes to the rescue. Inside, Houston horticulturist Robert "Skip" Richter makes it easy with a in-depth month-by-month breakdown of what to plant, when to plant, and how to take care of it in order to have a beautiful Texas garden all year round. During each month, you'll learn to plan, plant, care for, water, fertilize, and troubleshoot in-season annuals, bulbs, lawns, natives, perennials, roses, shrubs, trees, vines, and groundcovers. As with all of our renowned gardening books, you're treated to gorgeous full-color "here's how" and plant photography and USDA zone maps. Plus, you'll get a detailed introduction to gardening specifically in the Lone Star State. So have no fear: from the red buckeyes in Dallas to Sunshine roses in Abilene, you'll have the best little garden in the biggest state around. For our full introduction to gardening in Texas, we also recommend companion books Texas Getting Started Garden Guide and Texas Fruit & Vegetable Gardening.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Robert "Skip" Richter (Houston, TX), author of Cool Springs Press's *Texas Month-by-Month Gardening* (due to publish in 2014), is a horticulturist, gardening educator, garden writer, and avid horticultural photographer. Skip received his master's degree in horticulture from Texas A&M University and has gone on to manage Master Gardener programs in Montgomery, Travis, and Harris counties, where he currently coordinates over 250 volunteers. He helped develop a variety of environmental gardening programs, including the Extension's Don't Bag It yard waste recycling programs, the Composting for Kids educational web page, and the Grow Green environmental education program. Skip serves as a contributing editor for Texas Gardener magazine and has appeared weekly on the Central Texas Gardener television program for over a decade. He has gardened in the brush country of south Texas, the rocky hills of the Missouri Ozarks, the acid sands of the East Texas piney woods, the semiarid climate and high-pH soils of central Texas, and the humid, hot climate and black clays of southeast Texas. YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/skiprgarden](http://www.youtube.com/user/skiprgarden)

This book will not spend a lot of time on the shelf. You will find that you are using it regularly as you plan your gardening activities for each month. It is a valuable resource for the beginning gardener but even experienced gardening addicts will find it useful. The information is very user friendly and not so technical that it is boring to read. I am a long time fan of the author and miss having his wise council as our county extension agent, but he has written a book that gives us all we need to know about Texas gardening in every region.

[Author's foreword: Not to boast, but to show why I think I should review this book. I'm a longtime 'serious hobbyist' gardener who majored in Horticulture. I'm one of the primary growers for our semi-annual plant sales benefitting our community library's summer kids' reading program, and have served as treasurer and president for our garden club. I've installed two large xeriscapes in our hot front yard, one 60 feet long and the other 30 feet, complete with rock walls and rockwork throughout the growing areas, as demonstration gardens for the community to see that deserts can be beautiful while conserving water. A lifetime member of Seed Savers Exchange, my article on seed starting in the home appeared in Texas Gardening magazine.] I also know there's always more to learn about gardening in Central Texas, which is where Skip Richter's month-by-month gardening book comes in. For each of the 12 months of the year, Richter tells you just about everything you need to know to succeed as a Texas gardener. The first section each month is planning, the foundation upon which every successful

garden gets built. For example, he suggests you use the cold weather of January to create a better system for keeping track of what you planted and how it performed. Next, he talks about what to plant during that month. For example, he discusses what vegetables to plant in February, based upon your USDA hardiness zone. The third section every month discusses care. For example, in March he discusses hilling up potatoes for better production. Next he discusses watering needs for the month, which of course varies as it gets hotter or colder. For example, in April he mentions that rainfall is usually adequate for sustaining lawns. The next section is fertilizing. For example, in May he discusses how to fertilize annual flowering plants in order to keep up the bloom show. The sixth and final section covers problem solving. For example, in June he discusses spider mites. Within sections 2-6 each month, he has sub-topics covering annuals, edibles, lawns, perennials & ornamental grasses, roses, shrubs, trees, and vines & groundcovers. The planning section covers these, and also includes a sub-section called "All About Planning" where he discusses general planning topics that pertain to all plants, like drip irrigation, plant selection, and record keeping. There are a few editing issues common to many first-edition gardening books I've read over the years, beyond a few typos. The book is missing half of the Texas hardy groundcovers. Apparently, the publisher didn't add an overflow box, so when the list filled the one text box provided, the second half went into the ether. (I emailed Skip and he replied with the entire list. Since he is a public extension agent, he is relatively easy to contact.) Each month, there is a box discussing some relevant task. For example, in October Richter discusses how to divide perennials. The downside is that he often refers to "Here" in the text, which is How to Protect Landscapes from Deer in the July chapter. This means you must leaf through the book to find the relevant topic, since there are no page numbers attached to them. This problem could be cleared up by installing all the "Here" topics in their own appendix in the back. This appendix should have its own table of contents, so you can quickly find what you are looking for. The main text should then refer to the appendix so that readers get directed to one place consistently throughout the book. All this leafing back and forth wears out the book faster. There are beneficial appendices in this edition. For example, there are spring and fall planting guides that tell you when to plant various crops. There is a county-level chill hour map, so you can choose the best fruit trees for your location. The glossary explains all the common gardening terms for beginners. The book

isn't specific enough regarding cold hardiness zones in the spring/fall planting guide appendices. On page 13 is a county-level map, including the A and B zones.

It's easy for you to locate your county and therefore your cold hardiness zone. For example, Zone 8B (Travis County) gets down to 15°F, while Zone 8A (Burnet County) can reach 10°F. Some monthly planting discussions focus down to the A and B zone levels, but not all. While the planting guide appendix breaks out zone 9 into A and B, it doesn't do this for zones 6-8, and it should. I've found this extensive topic-by-topic, month-by-month coverage invaluable, and keep this book out for nearly daily reference. This is a reference that will help both novice and expert gardeners alike.

The layout is kind of weird. I can't explain it but I kept going back and forth while trying to find out what I was suppose to do each month. The information looks like it just repeats itself. I can't explain it. Borrow it from the library first and see if you like it. I wouldn't recommend it.

Excellent reference book.

Good info for gardeners.

There have been some very helpful reviews of this book already. I will suffice it to say, if you live in Texas and enjoy gardening, this book is a must! Well written and easy to understand. So glad I purchased it!

Skip Richter's Month-by-Month guide is by far our favorite gardening book! Thank you for the excellent resource.

Great Book

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