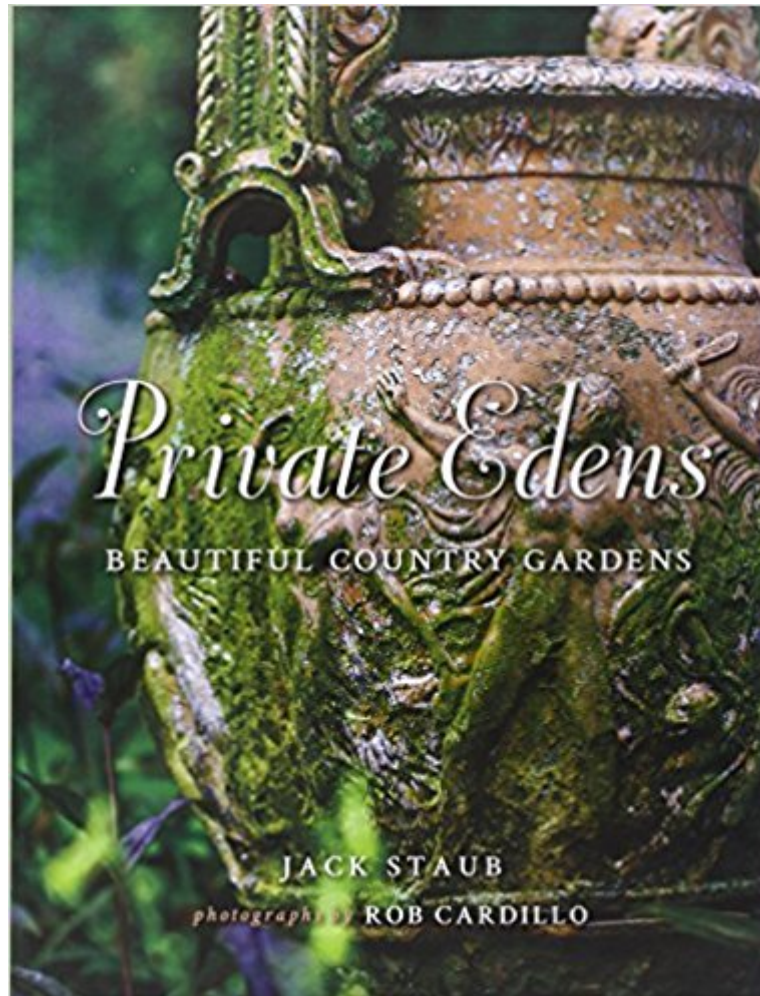




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# Private Edens: Beautiful Country Gardens



## Synopsis

Private country paradises boasting remarkable plant palettes and combinations. Garden design expert Jack Staub presents more than twenty beautiful and sumptuous private country gardens in Virginia, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Massachusetts. From a romantic garden with cottagey plantings that pays homage to the best of English garden vernacular to a splendid Eden of Maryland countryside meets Himalayan serenity, these garden paradises stand alone on their own terms but offer us examples of what we can all achieve with a modicum of respect, partnership and imagination. A passionate edible gardener and locavore advocate, Jack Staub is the author of the celebrated "75" series of edible gardening books, which includes 75 Exciting Vegetables for Your Garden, 75 Remarkable Fruits for Your Garden, and 75 Exceptional Herbs for Your Garden. With his partner, the renowned landscape designer Renny Reynolds, he is the owner of historic Hortulus Farm in Wrightstown, Pennsylvania: [www.hortulusfarm.com](http://www.hortulusfarm.com). Rob Cardillo's work appears regularly in books, magazines and advertisements. You can see more of his award-winning photography at [www.robcardillo.com](http://www.robcardillo.com).

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## Customer Reviews

In his new book, horticulturalist and garden writer Jack Staub gives readers a glimpse into a world of rarely seen, idyllic gardens. Who better than Horticulturealist Jack Stuaab to write a book on secret gardens? As the owner of the hundred-acre farmstead Hortulus Farm Nursery & Gardens with Renny Reynolds, Staub certainly knows about private Edens firsthand. Private Edens: Beautiful

Country Gardens is a lavishly photographed book that highlights personal country gardens primarily in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states. Beautifully depicted here are five New York gardens, two from Maryland, one from New Jersey, and four from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Virginia. Each garden is unique and reflects the owner's vision and plant material complementary to its particular zone. Staub often relies on the owner's own words to transport readers to the individual special site. We learn what each property was originally like, how it has been enhanced and amended, and the owner's dream of what is to come. These gardens are all very well suited to their vernacular, architecture, and individual topography. In every garden is a wonderful balance between nature and design. Trees are vital to all of these gardens, several of which have their own small orchards of assorted fruit trees. One of my favorite gardens featured in *Private Edens* is Oak Hill in Aldie, Virginia. Oak Hill is a private residence not open to the public. James Monroe inherited the land from his uncle, and Thomas Jefferson designed the home for Monroe in 1820. When Monroe retired from his second term in office as President of the United States, he lived at Oak Hill until moving to New York to reside with his daughter at the end of his life. This imposing brick home has an extraordinary Doric colonnade set on high foundation that overlooks the garden and more than a thousand acres of rolling Virginia countryside. Huge boxwoods and an allee of mature trees generously frame the handsome, redbrick facade. Just looking at the photographs of this home and garden makes my heart pine for Virginia. *Private Edens* is a gorgeous resource. It offers terrific ideas for combining plant material, working in conjunction with steep slopes, or blocking undesirable views. The varieties of handsome wooden fencing, stone terraces, and walls for dining and solace are also inspiring. Treat yourself to this extraordinary book and enhance your own Eden. (Susan S Elliott *Flower Magazine* 2013-03-22)

Another kind of curiosity – sneaking a peek at finely tended properties from the luxury bracket of the real estate listings – can be satisfied in Jack Staub's *PRIVATE EDENS: Beautiful Country Gardens* (Gibbs Smith, \$50). Not many of us are able to emulate the owner of the magnificent "farm" in North Salem, N.Y., who finishes her daily horseback ride with a walk to "check the orchard, the vegetable gardens, the forest, the backside of the lilac lair." But thanks to Rob Cardillo's sumptuous photographs, we can lean over the fence and commune with her cows, even see that her blueberries are starting to ripen. This is a book packed with stupendous vistas, wildflower meadows, boxwood-bordered garden "rooms" and water features seemingly immune to pond scum. Even the animals look buffed to a high sheen in the perfect light. (Alida Becker *New York Times Book Review* 2013-12-06)

private country paradises marry the artistry of man with the beauty of nature. Wander through twenty-one superb private country gardens in Virginia, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, each with a unique story to tell. From a romantic garden that pays homage to the best of English garden vernacular to a historic farmstead to a splendid Maryland-meets-Himalayas Eden of transcendent serenity, these garden paradises are inspirational on their own terms and together offer up the breadth and depth of what we can all achieve with a little respect for nature and a bit of imagination. Inspired plant palettes and combinations, dazzling views, ingenious water features, splendid outbuildings, artistically crafted fences and gates, and exceptional garden structures and appointments all draw us into these heavenly landscapes and, ultimately and emotionally, into the countryside of our longing.

jack staub

Jack Staub is a passionate edible gardener and locavore advocate, and author of the celebrated "75" series of edible gardening books, which includes *75 Exciting Vegetables for Your Garden*, *75 Remarkable Fruits for Your Garden*, and *75 Exceptional Herbs for Your Garden*. With his partner, the renowned landscape designer Renny Reynolds, he is the owner of historic Hortulus Farm in Wrightstown, Pennsylvania.

rob cardillo Rob Cardillo has been photographing gardens, plants, and the people that tend them for over twenty years. His work appears regularly in books, magazines, and advertisements. You can see more of his award-winning photography at [www.robcardillo.com](http://www.robcardillo.com).

I'm a very avid gardener who loves both how-to and inspirational gardening books somewhat indiscriminately. I purchased this particular volume with the primary intention of using it for photographic ideas and inspiration. This objective softened my reading expectations a great deal but I do agree with reviews that focus on the light-weight nature of the book's written content. As an alternative I'd like to suggest *Earth on Her Hands* by Starr Ockenga. The 18 American gardens and their gardeners are profiled with great care that includes garden maps and lists of the gardeners' recommended plants. The gardens are well-explored photographically and many images include informational and satisfying captions. Additionally the main blocks of text are thoughtful and meaty enough to inspire readers who value words as much (or more) than images.

To bring my review back to the topic at hand the composition of the images included in *Private Edens* is very much on point. Nonetheless I am quite disappointed in the over-saturated nature of the printing. For me it's simply too much visual overkill that's distracting enough to lose a rating star. On the plus side many of the close-up images seem tailor-made to serve as drawing references although the book's size makes it awkward to position well on my drawing desk. I can work with this book in that context but

it's nowhere close to being a stand-out as either a practical gardening inspiration or for dreaming over during our long cold New England winters. I don't consider it worth its price as a new book so I'm very glad I bought my copy from an used bookseller. Would I buy it again? Probably not. Am I sufficiently disenchanted to add it to my pile of donations for the town library's book sale? Not quite yet.

This is a very beautiful book about exclusive gardens of the North Atlantic states. It will delight any garden-lover to have a peek at these hidden outdoor pleasure-scapes. Having said that, some of the text borders on self-conscious entitlement if not snobbery. Do we really need to know that an anonymous owner is "a former partner at one of Manhattan's most prestigious law firms, where he brokered a slew of headline-making deals"? We're talking about gardens here! It is quite obvious from the scale and magnificence of most of the subject landscapes that they are enormously expensive to create and maintain. It is inspiring that some people have the means and desire to create such Edens. They deserve to be thanked for sharing their private retreats in this publication. One further note: Some of the plates exhibit over-saturated colors, a printing style sometimes found in other picture-books printed in China. But this is a matter of taste, and should not ruin the genuine pleasures of the book. It must be said that the photography and layouts are simply superb.

I own just about every garden photography book published in the last 20 years, and "Private Edens" is the absolute best. First, I have never seen such consistently magnificent photos, with stunning clarity, color, composition. It is clear that the photographer himself has a highly developed garden aesthetic and is able to capture the textures, colors, panoramas, and intricate details of these gardens with great insight, originality, and technical photographic precision. For each and every garden, there is a PERFECT photographic balance of scale and perspective--from wide views to narrow details--and each garden is SUBSTANTIALLY represented in photos. (So many of the books have an inadequate representation of many gardens--one or two mediocre photos.) I virtually gasp with sensual and aesthetic pleasure as I turn each page; for the first time ever, looking at a garden photography books parallels the actual pleasure and delight I experience when meandering through a fabulous garden. There is wonder, surprise, and gratification around every turn and every page. Also, the text in "Private Edens" is eloquent, insightful, and just the right amount. The author informs and inspires without over-indulging in minutia that might bore a reader. If you are looking for the "best ever" garden photography book, or are buying your first garden photography book, look no

further: "Private Edens" sets a new bar for quality.

Good service

Nice coffee table book. Photography is good but that's the extent of it. Featured plants in photos are not identified. If you are a landscaper or gardener wanting to learn something you are SOL.

I had seen the book I ordered at the home of the owner of one of the gardens in the book. The gardens and the book were so beautiful that I had to have a copy for myself. I have read thru the book at least three times since I received and leave it on the coffee table to guests to see. The delivery time was exactly as promised and I will shop on .com again, for sure.

A beautiful book. It is on my coffee table. Great customer service.

pictures were ok and not alot of gardening info cover picture sells book

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