



Vintage Wisconsin Gardens: A History of Home Gardening

Lee Somerville

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As Wisconsin's population moved from farmsteads into villages, towns, and cities, the state saw a growing interest in gardening as a leisure activity and source of civic pride. In *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens*, Lee Somerville introduces readers to the region's ornamental gardens of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, showcasing the "vernacular" gardens created by landscaping enthusiasts for their own use and pleasure.

The Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, established during the mid-nineteenth century, was the primary source of advice for home gardeners. Through carefully selected excerpts from WSHS articles, Somerville shares the excitement of these gardeners as they traded cultivation and design knowledge and explored the possibilities of their avocation. Women were frequent presenters at the WSHS annual meetings, and their voices resonate. Their writings, and those of their male colleagues, are a remarkable legacy we can draw on today—learning how Wisconsinites past created and enjoyed their gardens helps us appreciate our own. Filled with period and contemporary images, recommended plant lists, and garden layouts, *Vintage Wisconsin Gardens* will interest those curious about the history of the state's cultural landscape and inspire readers to restore or reconstruct period gardens.

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