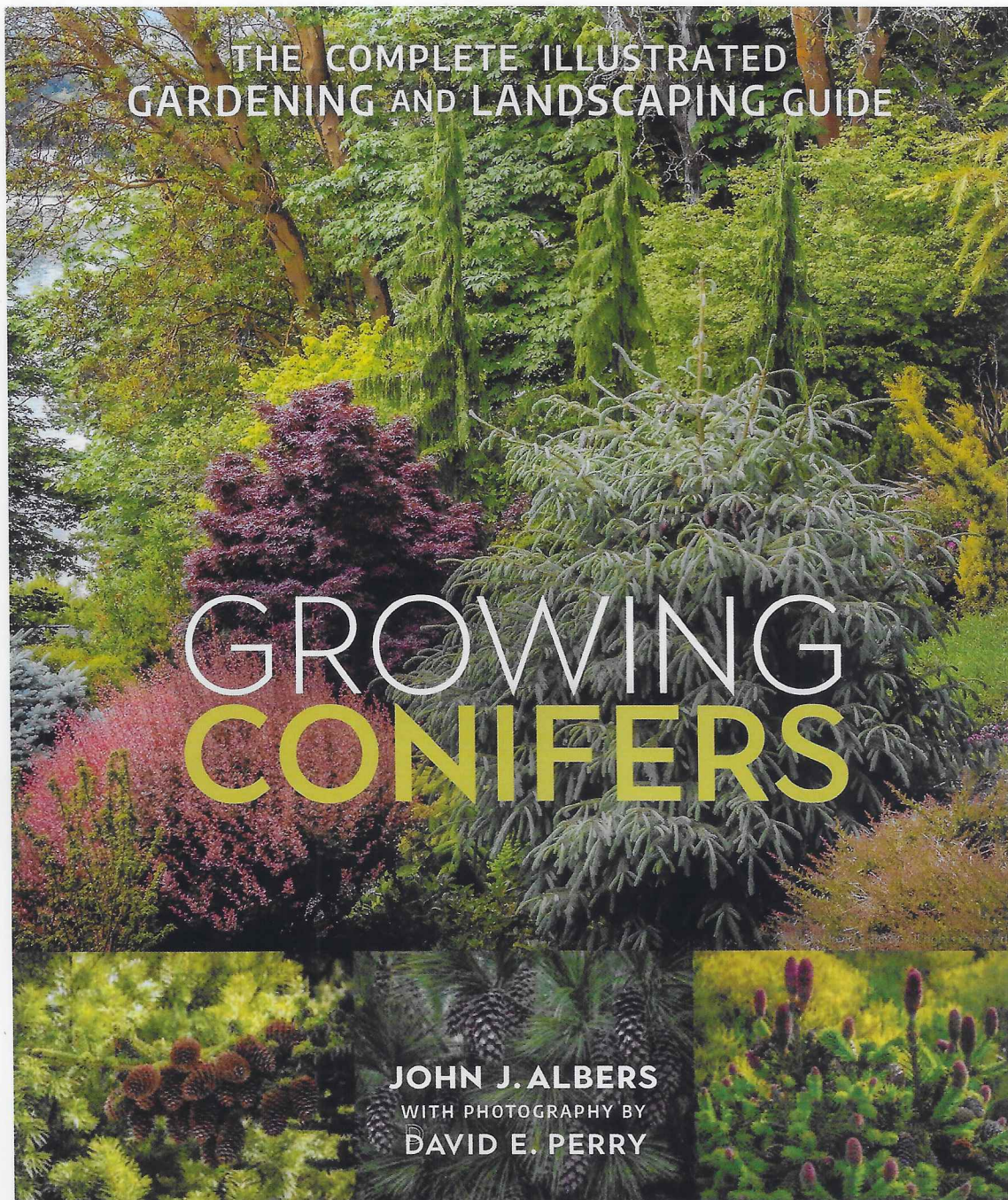


Growing Conifers: The Complete Illustrated Gardening and Landscaping Guide

Dr. John J. Albers, Photography David E. Perry

Review Dr. Ronald J. Elardo



It's all about science! That pretty much sums up the essence of Dr. John J. Albers's *Growing Conifers*, which is far more than just a run-of-the-mill conifer book. It is a complete guide to designing a conifer garden that starts with basic knowledge of conifers and ends with creating a sustainable conifer landscape. In between is the accumulated

knowledge of a conifer lover, who knows how to explain everything in language that guides the beginning gardener toward becoming a master conifer gardener. Each chapter is a book in itself, full of indispensable information. *Growing Conifers* is published by New Society Publishers and will appear in May 2021.

To know the author is to meet a renaissance man, who worked in microbiology and immunology and taught those subjects to students in medical school; wrote approximately 400 scholarly publications; trained doctors, dentists and nurses; and was, all the while, taking nearly every horticulture course that the University of Washington offered, on his way to becoming a Master Gardener. In 1999, the author created Albers Vista Gardens in Washington State, a four-acre, botanical garden *and* laboratory, that now includes 130 conifer species and over 400 conifer cultivars.

The buyer of this book will be the happy recipient of a professional lifetime of scientific and gardening knowledge, all rolled into one.

Growing Conifers is jam-packed with knowledge and educational information. The chapter headings give insight into the author's method. Dr. Albers begins with conifer basics: what are conifers, and where do they fit in the evolution of Earth's flora? How do they grow? He covers all the things you need to know about conifers, whether you are a taxonomist or a novice.

He describes the shapes and colors of conifer families, their botanical nomenclature, and even the kinds and shapes of their needles. Dr. Albers shows you how to evaluate your garden and how to choose conifers appropriate for your garden and your USDA zone. He answers the question, what are the benefits of growing conifers? In cities, for example, they mitigate the effects of "urban heat islands" and remove harmful pollutants, year-round.

Albers advises that your garden should mimic nature, as you lay it out. Do you want to shade a certain area or to use low-growing conifers as ground covers? Choosing the right conifers with the right sizes for the right spaces will allow you to create a multi-layered garden palette, attractive to the eye and functional in the environment. Soil types and planting recommendations, use of

certain conifers to perform a desired function such as wind blocks – it's all there. As a quick reference, there are tables helping you choose conifer species and cultivars that will work in your zone.

Growing Conifers is a wonderful compilation of education, research, and scholarly resources. Dr. Albers even gets down to the nitty-gritty of how and when to plant, depending on the origin of your conifer. Was it grown in the ground, in a pot, or in a container? He even teaches you how to propagate conifers.

The message of *Growing Conifers* culminates with sustainably caring for conifers. The reader learns how important it is to create a conifer garden that saves and replenishes the Earth and its resources. It may seem like a lofty goal, but this book gives you a step-by-step process on how to achieve just that.

Growing Conifers may affirm what you know about conifers, but it will definitely open new avenues of understanding on how best to make these gymnosperms work.



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