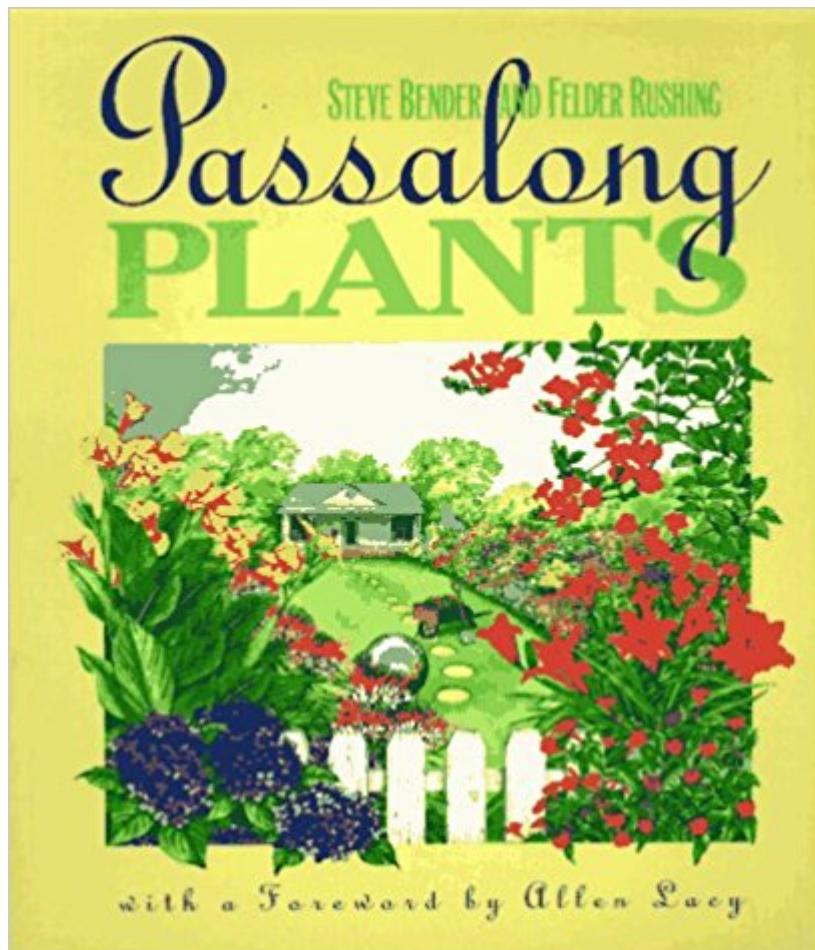


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# Passalong Plants



## Synopsis

Passalongs are plants that have survived in gardens for decades by being handed from one person to another. These botanical heirlooms, such as flowering almond, blackberry lily, and night-blooming cereus, usually can't be found in neighborhood garden centers; about the only way to obtain a passalong plant is to beg a cutting from the fortunate gardener who has one. In this lively and sometimes irreverent book (don't miss the chapter on yard art), Steve Bender and Felder Rushing describe 117 such plants, giving particulars on hardiness, size, uses in the garden, and horticultural requirements. They present this information in the informal, chatty, and sometimes humorous manner that your next-door neighbor might use when giving you a cutting of her treasured Confederate rose. And, of course, because they are discussing passalong plants, they note the best method of sharing each plant with other gardeners. Because you might not spy a banana shrub or sweet pea in your neighborhood, the authors list mail-order sources for the heirloom plants described. They also give tips on how to organize your own plant swap. Although the authors live in and write about the South, many of the plants they discuss will grow elsewhere. from the book Amid the clamor of press releases touting the newest, improved versions of this bulb or that perennial, what keeps people interested in old-fashioned plants? Nostalgia, for one thing. It's hard not to feel a special fondness for that Confederate rose, night-blooming cereus, or alstroemeria lovingly tended by your grandmother when you were a child. Such heirloom plants evoke memories of your first garden, of relatives and neighbors that have since passed on, of prized bushes you accidentally annihilated with your bicycle. Recall the time you first received a particular plant, and you'll recall the person who gave it to you.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What's a passalong plant? Something not always easily come by in garden stores, catalogues, and horticultural centers, and instead passed along by one aficionado to another, sometimes over the fence dividing lawns, beds, or yards. Declare the coauthors, "To a gardener all other gardeners are friends," and if true, this is fortunate, as Bender and Rushing, both Southerners, survey the field for passalongs in their region, and come up with stories to keep their information company: the butterfly bush, for instance, was discovered by a missionary and a reverend, and zinnias have also been known as "old maids." This compendium is designed with clarity in mind and illustrated with small but precise color photographs. Headings are cute to a fault, however, and seem to get worse as the pages turn: "Holy Satisfactory," for example, is followed by "Wherefore Art Thou Deutzia?" Also provided is advice on how to get all the passing-along begun. First serial to Countryside. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Two established authors and gardeners reintroduce plants that gardeners pass along to one another but that are hard to find in commercial outlets. While the focus is on the South, where the authors have firsthand knowledge, Northern gardeners will still find this book useful as many of the plants are hardy. Writing in a humorous, casual style, Bender and Rushing describe 117 "passalong" plants, including trees, shrubs, vines, annuals, and perennials, as well as plants that are fragrant, invasive, weird, or garish. They devote a page or two to each plant, giving history, propagation, their personal experience, and--briefly--size, hardiness, origin, light and soil needs, and mail-order sources. About every third plant has a photo, but many lesser-known plants are not illustrated. The humor ranges from heavy-handed to hilarious, as in the tongue-in-cheek chapter on kitsch as garden art. Useful in large gardening collections, especially in the South.- Sharon Levin, Univ. of Vermont Lib., BurlingtonCopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I was tempted to buy this book years ago when I became interested in heirlooms. The fact that it was about "southern" passalongs discouraged me from doing so. New Jersey is one growing zone north of what is considered "southern". There are classic southern plants that can be grown here in

sheltered locations but all it takes is a colder than normal winter and those delicate immigrants succumb. Thanks to global warming, my zone 6 garden is now closer to zone 7, the northern-most "southern" growing zone. Colder than normal winter temperatures are rare now. I am more open to the idea of growing plants that are considered borderline in zone 6. I got out a pad and pen, ready to take notes as I dove into a whole new world of plants via "Passalong Plants". The authors, Steve Bender and Felder Rushing, have chosen to tell a story about each plant rather than just describing it. Southern gardeners and their gardens come alive through their anecdotes. The reader comes away from the book with much better "pictures" of these old-time favorites than any photograph (which are supplied in abundance throughout the text). The essays can be read in any order. They are helpfully arranged according to the characteristics of the plants so that, for instance, if you are looking for fragrant plants, there is a section on those alone. There are also groupings of essays on plants that are aggressive spreaders, the most common "passalongs", plants with strange characteristics (such as "naked ladies" and walking iris), plants with garish colored flowers and bare root shrub passalongs that are commonly sold in nurseries. By far my favorite section was on yard art. I don't "get" bottle trees but plastic animals, painted rocks and especially tire planters took me back in time to my childhood in largely rural upstate New York. The book ends with a chapter devoted to organizing plant swaps for your own passalongs. I finished the book and realized that my pad was empty. I had been too caught up in the stories to stop and take notes. It's on my bookshelf now, waiting for winter when I am making decisions about what to plant next year. I will page through it again in my constant quest to plant something new.

This book is simply a pleasure. After borrowing a friend's copy, I had to have one of my own. It reads almost like a novel, or more like a book of short stories that will touch your heart. Not only is it chock full of valuable information for the care of plants, botanical names, etc, but each plant has its own story, or a memory is shared by the authors. The book will be not only a valuable resource, but entertaining as well.

I love this book. Have had a copy since the 90's and I still love reading it. Have given a new copy to several friends who share my passion.

This book is taking its place among my top 10 gardening books of all time. A wonderful read filled with down-home Southern humor, it tells the stories of over 100 plants that Southerners have loved and passed along for generations. This is not a how-to-grow it book, it is more of a why-to-grow-it

book, although there are growing tips scattered throughout; this plant likes some afternoon shade, this one fertile soil, etc. As for the plants themselves, I have been gardening in the South for 35 years so I was familiar with most of the plants, but there were a few I had never even heard of and quite a few I now intend to add to my garden. That, of course, is the danger of this book; after reading it you'll want almost every plant in it! I have already ordered and planted the Kwanso daylilies and I intend to find and order the Golden Glow soon. Steve Bender and Felder Rushing are both excellent garden writers, but I must admit that I thought Bender had a much more natural sense of humor than Rushing. Several times during my reading my husband came to see what I was laughing about, and it was always one of Steve Bender's stories. How can you not love an entry called Stuck on the Needles of Your Love, Bender's hilarious story about his experience pruning a trifoliate orange. If you are a Northern or Western gardener, this book would still be funny and some of the plants would grow in your area, but it is of most value to those of us living and gardening in the South. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves the South, its people, and its plants.

I bought this book after having borrowed and read it just because it is a splendid keepsake. The two authors take turns relating informative stories about various plants and shrubs; and, more than that, they do so with wit and humor to create something very entertaining. I trust in their experiences and feel like they give me a real feel for their subjects. At a time when you can read the exact same cookie-cutter descriptions of plants in four places on the web, and you are not sure what any source really knows, you should appreciate somebody actually telling you they really enjoyed the fragrance of Four O'Clocks growing next to their porch with their family every evening in Georgia.

Currently, I'm on my third copy of *Passalong Plants*. The first two were loaned out to fellow Southern gardeners and when their reactions were so enthusiastic, I gifted the books to them and bought myself another one (on, of course). Being a Southern gardener, raised by Southern gardeners who rarely purchased a plant for their extensive collections, this book truly struck home. I laughed myself to tears at points in the book, remembering similar incidents with my own grandmother, mother, aunts, cousins, and neighbors. When my grandmother passed, one serious point of contention between the relatives was who would be digging up the peonies and the lily of the valley! Besides being very informative about Southern plants and gardens, it's just great entertaining reading! This is another very affordable volume to keep handy when you're being taught a lesson in patience and have to sit somewhere waiting on someone who thinks their time is

more valuable than yours!

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