Outstanding American Gardens: A Celebration
Edited by Page Dickey with photographs by Marion Brenner. Stew-

MANY OF THE most culturally significant gardens in the Unit-
ed States would not be open to the public today without the
efforts of the Garden Conservancy. Founded by Frank and
Anne Cabot, the Conservancy has "helped to preserve some
one hundred private American gardens." This book celebrates
25 years of the organization's work by spotlighting eight of
them, including the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek,
California, with its extraordi-
inary collection of succulents.

This garden was the impetus for the organization's formation
and its first preservation project.

Among the other featured preservation gardens are the
Japanese Stroll Garden in Mill Neck, New York, which is
one of the few traditional Japanese gardens in the East; and
the gardens of Alcatraz in San Francisco, transformed by
prisoners from barren landscape to a lush preserve.

The Garden Conservancy is also known for its annual
Open Days program, when exceptional private gardens across
the country are opened to the public one or two days a year.
The book gives readers a glimpse of 42 of these gardens to illus-
trate the horticultural and artistic achievements of gardeners
in all parts of the United States. For each garden, a few de-
scriptive paragraphs provide an amuse-bouche to the visual feast
provided by the stunning photographs by Marion Brenner.

One of these, Duck Hill in New York’s countryside, belongs
to garden designer Page Dickey, who is the book’s editor. Previ-
ously a dairy farm, the property now boasts a "series of hedged-in
gardens that are formal in outline, rather prim, but containing
an exuberant mixture of plantings." Another is Grey Gulls in
Marblehead, Massachusetts, on a promontory overlooking the
Atlantic Ocean. Despite being subjected to harsh winter winds,
a weeping Camperdown elm withstands the weather just fine,
along with artichokes, roses, and a variety of colorful perennials.

Out west, renowned landscape architect Steve Martino de-
signed the Sitelers' garden in Phoenix, Arizona, to blend in with
the surrounding desert landscape. In Santa Monica, California,
Wirtz International and local designer Lisa Zeder replaced an En-
GLISH-style garden at the Kayne property with serene green terraces
for a more modernist look.

This big, beautiful book provides a wonderful overview of the
Garden Conservancy's work so far. As it showcases some of Amer-
ica's most outstanding gardens, no doubt you'll gain inspiration
for your own garden.

—Jane Berger

Jane Berger is a landscape designer and garden communicator