A finely produced and beautifully illustrated look at Repton's career. Scholarly yet readable, it's a must-have book for any enthusiast of garden history.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

This book is late: the Repton bicentenary celebrations were two years ago. But no matter – this is the best general study of the Regency designer available, and stands as a complement to Stephen Daniels' book, published some 20 years ago.

The opening chapter is a brilliant summary of the career and influence of a designer who is generally considered to have been the heir to 'Capability' Brown. Tom Williamson describes the ways in which Repton diverged from the Brown style – chiefly in his emphasis on flowery terraces and shrubbery lawns around the house – and how his personality was entirely different. Brown was a businessman and fixer, whereas Repton thought of himself as an artist and a gentleman.

The author places due emphasis on another key area of difference: the fact that Repton published a great deal in his lifetime, whereas Brown wrote nothing. In fact, Repton stated in 1803 that he wished his 'fame to be established' on his 'opinions in writing' rather than his works on the ground. Repton's books and his theories around what the author calls 'the psychology of landscape' are discussed, although the influence of these ideas – especially in America – is perhaps underplayed. The originality of the theories is also not adequately questioned in the context of the number of theoretical works on drawing (and later watercolour) produced during the craze for the Picturesque from the 1780s.

It was always going to be difficult to say anything new about Repton's Red Books – with those celebrated before-and-after views of properties - but there is originality elsewhere. The work of John Adie Repton, the designer's son and collaborator, is analysed seriously for the first time and the influence of the French designer René de Girardin is advanced as being of even more consequence than that of Brown. Overall, the book's tone is scholarly yet accessible, and mercifully jargon-free.

Uprooted: A Gardener Reflects on Beginning Again by Page Dickey is essential reading for any gardener looking for inspiration and encouragement be they embarking on a new project or just reminding themselves of the art and process of garden making.

The book charts the triumphs and occasional travails of starting from scratch in your seventies, or, in the case of Page's husband Bosco, whose presence is fondly felt throughout, in your eighties. Instead of heading south for the sun they opted for New England with a garden around the house that they can manage with minimal help, surrounded by meadow pastures and woods.

"In the years I have left I simply want to savor the outdoors and garden for the joy of it. A joy that is liberally imparted to the reader. From seed sowing to woodland ecology, Dickey distills a lifetime's knowledge and observation into this masterpiece of garden and nature writing."

It doesn't matter if your garden isn't in the climatic equivalent of USDA hardiness zone 5. Dickey deftly weaves anecdotes with precise recipes for the best way to garden in any climate. This is a book liberally yet lightly laced with universal horticultural truths. Thanks to Dickey I can now discern between Athyrium and Dryopteris ferns and will never forget that 'sedges have edges' as a way of distinguishing them from grasses.

Any of us feeling complacent about making changes or weary but hesitant about a big leap forward in our gardens can take heart from Page and Bosco's bravery at grasping more than the nettle and heed an old maxim Dickey shares preaching patience toward newly planted shrubs or perennials: 'Sleep, creep, leap.' Ngoc Minh Ngo's glorious photography is a mirror to Dickey's prose.

Practical and poetic this paean to nature is an epicurean adventure of a horticultural life well lived.