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Beautiful at All Seasons: Southern Gardening and Beyond with Elizabeth Lawrence

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Elizabeth Lawrence (1904–85) is recognized as one of America's most important gardeners and garden writers. In 1957, Lawrence began a weekly column for the *Charlotte Observer*, blending gardening lore and horticultural expertise gained from her own gardens in Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina, and from her many gardener friends. This book presents 132 of her beloved columns. Never before published in book form, they were chosen from the more than 700 pieces that she wrote for the *Observer* over fourteen years.

Lawrence exchanged plants and gardening tips with everyone from southern "farm ladies" trading bulbs in garden bulletins to prominent regional gardeners. She corresponded with nursery owners, everyday backyard gardeners, and literary luminaries such as Katharine White and Eudora Welty. Her books, including *A Southern Garden*, *The Little Bulbs*, and *Gardens in Winter*, inspired several generations of gardeners in the South and beyond.

The columns in this volume cover specific plants, such as sweet peas, hellebores, peonies, and the bamboo growing outside her living-room window, as well as broader topics including the usefulness of vines, the importance of daily pruning, and organic gardening. Like all of Lawrence's writing, these columns are peppered with references to conversations with neighbors and quotations from poetry, mythology, and correspondence. They brim with knowledge gained from a lifetime of experimenting in her gardens, from her visits to other gardens, and from her extensive reading.

Lawrence once wrote, "Dirty fingernails are not the only requirement for growing plants. One must be as willing to study as to dig, for a knowledge of plants is acquired as much from books as from experience." As inspiring today as when they first appeared in the *Charlotte Observer*, the columns collected in *Beautiful at All Seasons* showcase not only Lawrence's vast knowledge but also her intimate, conversational writing style and her lifelong celebration of gardens and gardening.

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