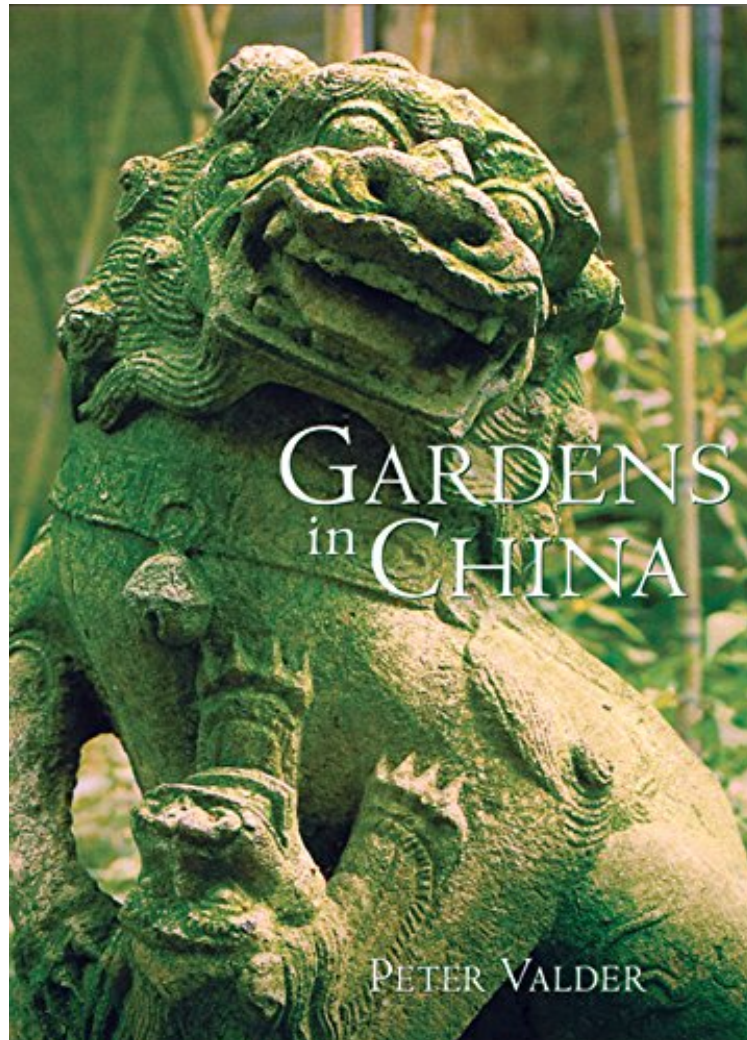


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Gardens in China

Peter Valder

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Peter Valder : Gardens in China before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gardens in China:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Garden history in China By Susan Alexander Monstrous porcelain figures; an abundance of artificial mountains, and rocks embellished with calligraphy many garden features in China are at odds with a European's concept of a garden and have led visitors to comment on a form of bad taste peculiarly Chinese and displeasing to the European eye. So why are westerners so startled by an initial view of a garden in China? Chinese gardens are the end product of four thousand years of garden history and linked to a culture with a philosophy distinct from that of the west. Traditionally arranged to express a profound view of the world and man's place in it, gardens were built to satisfy needs both for enjoyment and for social recognition by the owner, who would

proclaim his own wealth and taste, with places for receiving guests, viewing the moon, playing music, painting, writing poems, viewing seasonal flowers and holding ceremonies. Botanist Peter Valder's interest in China was fired by the adventures of famous plant-hunters of the 19th and early 20th centuries and his enthusiasm has led him to travel extensively to record and photograph gardens and garden plants. Journeying both on and off the beaten track, he set out to describe Chinese gardens in the closing years of the 20th century. Opening with a chapter on how gardens in China evolved and how they have been perceived through western eyes, Valder's quest takes him down a fascinating historical path. With wry humour, the author offers a snapshot of life in China today, and the text is rich with advice to the visitor, for example we are warned that armed soldiers will rush out if we attempt to photograph Water Cloud Kiosk, and signs in English implore us not to spit everywhere, nor to carve on the bamboo, (the penalty is 14 days imprisonment and a fine!) Gardens in China is divided into five further chapters, each dealing with the gardens in one of five regions covering a vast geographical area: centre, north, south, east and west. Valder explains that this five-fold arrangement is suggested by ancient Chinese cosmology in which each of the five elements wood, fire, earth, metal and water become symbolically correlated with everything else in the universe. Throughout the book Chinese characters have been painstakingly transliterated using the Pinyin system. In a break with conventional garden photography, over 500 colour illustrations depict the gardens as Valder found them, complete with hordes of tourists and skies grey with atmospheric pollution. Refreshingly, the author has focused on little-known gardens such as the courtyards and gardens of temples and enclosures of ancient burial grounds as well as public parks and botanical gardens both old and new. With a wealth of historical and background material, Gardens of China is a valuable source of information which will appeal to any traveller to China and those interested in garden history and Chinese culture.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Almost as good. By Gregory Missingham Rich in information, indispensable for its coverage of the diversity of Chinese garden types (particularly temple gardens), written for the same audience as his 1999 book, concentrating on plants and planting, this is a travel guide to over two hundred gardens in China (although, because of its weight and size, one that you'd leave in your hotel room). Structured similarly to the previous book, with good introductions to each section with individual verbal descriptions of each garden with 1, 2 or a few more photos (including some historical comparisons). Two disappointments: there are only two Chinese characters in the whole text (no names), reducing its utility for scholars, and there are no maps of sites, plans or other drawings that would make it more useful for designers.

34 of 34 people found the following review helpful. Simply Marvellous. By Allan C. Mc Neish Peter Valder has now established himself as one of the world's major horticultural writers with his "Gardens in China" the new companion volume to his wonderful, award winning, "Garden Plants of China". This book looks at over 200 gardens that the author has visited over a period of twenty years. It is a richly descriptive work both historically and geographically and is extremely readable, to the point that it is almost impossible to put down. The photography once again is simply stunning. Besides the famous classical gardens of Suzhou Valder gives a fascinating overview of temple courtyards, parks, cemeteries, botanical gardens and arboreta (many established since the cultural revolution) in every corner of this vast country. If you are contemplating a visit to China there could be no better preparation than reading Valder's "Gardens in China". If you are not going to China then travel there vicariously via this magnificent book. A must for every serious garden lover's bookshelf.

In this new companion book to *The Garden Plants of China*, Peter Valder describes more than 200 gardens he has visited in China. He documents temple courtyards and gardens, evocative enclosures of ancient burial grounds and imperial tombs, and public parks, botanical gardens, and arboreta, most of which have sprung up since 1949. Gardens in China is illustrated with more than 500 color photographs, many of them depicting gardens not previously illustrated in any Western publication, as well as reproductions of illustrations of historical interest. With their distinctive characteristics, the gardens of China are among the most fascinating in the world. This book is essential reading for visitors to China with an interest in gardens, garden history, and Chinese culture.

From Booklist As travel to China increases, garden lovers look to specialty tours as a way of experiencing firsthand the unique aesthetic beauty and cultural traditions of Chinese garden design. Now Valder's illuminating compilation of more than 200 gardens promises to provide the ultimate resource for future travelers, who, before embarking on a trip, can study and savor images and information on diverse horticultural realms located throughout China. Repeated visits allowed Valder to photograph extensively, resulting in a lavish record of famed Imperial gardens as well as fascinating examples of lesser-known temples, parks, and botanical arboreta. Journeying far and wide, Valder presents a breathtaking study comprised of articulate narrative, compelling historical reproductions, and up-to-date photographs documenting planting styles and the ongoing renovation of buildings and garden hardscaping. Encompassing a treasury of plant portraits, stunning architectural details, and awe-inspiring vistas, Valder's chosen topic is rendered in such depth as to rouse armchair dreamers and act as a call to action for avid garden trekkers. Alice Joyce Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Valder's illuminating compilation of more than 200 gardens promises to provide the ultimate resource for future travelers, who, before embarking on a trip, can study and savor images and information on diverse horticultural realms located throughout China. . . . A lavish record of famed

Imperial gardens as well as fascinating examples of lesser-known temples, parks, and botanical arboreta. . . . Encompassing a treasury of plant portraits, stunning architectural details, and awe-inspiring vistas, Valders chosen topic is rendered in such depth as to rouse armchair dreamers and act as a call to action for avid garden trekkers. Booklist This book will appeal to any gardener with an interest in Chinese culture or, better yet, a plan to journey there. The Boston Globe Authoritative and readable, this title is a required reference for both landscape design and Asian studies collections. Choice An excellent summary of the history of Western experiences in China. . . . After reading The Gardens of China, I would love to return to that country. . . . If I do, this book will be my primary guide. Pacific Horticulture Useful to find so many wonderful gardens, most of them photographed by the author on his frequent trips to China. National Gardener It is essential reading for visitors to China with an interest in gardens and for those interested in garden history and Chinese culture. Professional Gardener Mr. Valders largeformat book with excellent photographs on almost every page does justice to this most remarkable garden tradition. American Rhododendron Society Journal It is useful to find so many wonderful gardens, most of them photographed by the author on his frequent trips to China. National Gardener