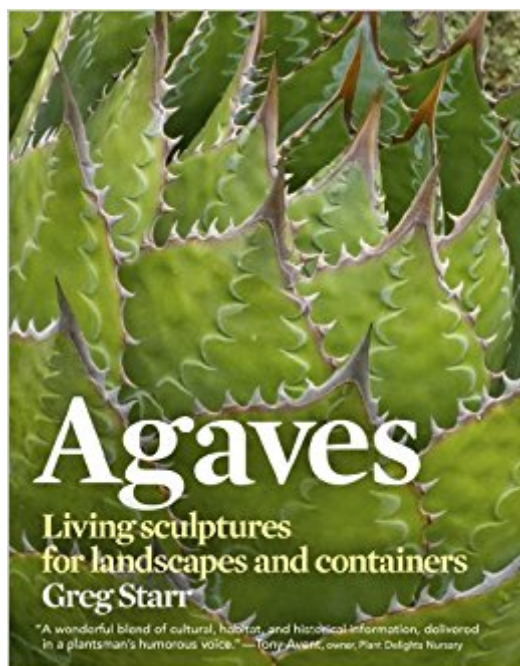


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# Agaves: Living Sculptures For Landscapes And Containers



## Synopsis

Gardeners and garden designers are having a love affair with agaves. It's easy to see why—they're low maintenance, drought-tolerant, and strikingly sculptural, with an astounding range of form and color. Many species are strikingly variegated, and some have contrasting ornamental spines on the edges of their leaves. Fabulous for container gardening or in-the-ground culture, they combine versatility with easy growability. In *Agaves*, plant expert Greg Starr profiles 75 species, with additional cultivars and hybrids, best suited to gardens and landscapes. Each plant entry includes a detailed description of the plant, along with its cultural requirements, including hardiness, sun exposure, water needs, soil requirements, and methods of propagation. Agaves can change dramatically as they age and this comprehensive guide includes photos showing each species from youth to maturity—a valuable feature unique to this book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Will prove especially useful for budding botanists and gardeners interested in learning more about agaves in their native habitat.”  
Library Journal “Details 75 species with suggestions on how to add it to the home garden. . . . each photo-rich entry also includes a description and care advice.”  
Arizona Daily Star “Help[s] readers select plants properly and use them in conjunction with other compatible species.”  
The Desert Sun “Once you’ve seen his photos and read his descriptions, you may find yourself crossing over into agave-nut territory yourself.”  
Digging “An

extremely useful addition to my library, but even more than that it manages, on every page, to increase the excitement I feel about these wonderful plants. • Danger Garden

Greg Starr is a foremost proponent of Xeriscaping in the American Southwest. He is well known as an expert on low-water-use plants, and has spent most of his life popularizing and promoting the use of xeric plants such as agaves, leucophyllums, daleas, and many others. Starr owns and operates Starr Nursery. He has traveled extensively in agave country, both in Mexico and the United States, to study and photograph agaves in their habitats. He is a prolific writer for many respected publications including *Cool Plants for Hot Gardens*.

This is an intriguing, even inspiring book. It is beautiful and has a lot of information that will ward off much disappointment. For example, I had a *Macroanthia* and a *Queen Victoria Agave*, which I was going to plant on the North and South side of my house respectively. After consulting Gregg's book, I know I need to flip that. Also, I just purchased a small *Agave Montana* and I was going to plant it in my usual sandy gravelly mix of dirt. But, through this book Gregg informed me that the *Montana* is native to a high pine forest and needs more organic matter. Each *Agave* discussed has a section on landscaping use which is useful. But, it is the pictures of the *Agave* in their native habitat really make the book. What a difference between seeing an agave in a one gallon black plastic at your local nursery and seeing the full grown specimen growing off a cliff in Mexico. The lists are very helpful: most frost hardy, most frost tender, most xeric and the size lists. An indispensable book for any xeric gardener.

This long awaited tome fills a critical void in the literature on *Agaves*. The long out-of-print *Agaves of Continental North America* from 1982 is still the best reference for species identification, however if one wants cultural information, including the new cultivars (hybrids), then you need this book. Greg has taken his intimate knowledge of all things *Agave* and translated it to the written word in a highly readable fashion. The photographs are exceptionally well done and the choice of images for this book is worthy of praise. There is a bit of wit and wisdom that interplay throughout the text and this I find uplifting especially compared to some of the more recent generalist works that are as dry as the habitats the plant live in. So some so much that I would need my own xeric adaptation to continue reading them. This book will be great for the *Agavologist*, as Greg call the people whom study agaves, for the new and old collector, the botanical curious and the diehard agave enthusiast. It isn't often that one gets really excited about a new plant book and I admit that I haven't had those

emotions evoked in quite a while.... until now. I spent nearly 3 hours pouring through the pages, reading the information and learning the history and culture of some of the more obscure agaves. This is a Must Have for anyone who grows Agaves. The author has done a tremendous job in writing and Timber Press, as always, has put a very worthwhile book out! Kudos to both.

This book is a great read if you are interested in agaves. The encyclopedia section does not include ALL of the possible varieties that you may encounter. I would love it if there were an updated edition with more varieties added. But the varieties that are included are relevant and I still find it a great book to have. We recently moved to Arizona and I love agave plants. I have learned from the book on the care of these plants. And the photos are fantastic.

The information and photographs are so useful I wish it covered all Agave species. The species and cultivars in this book are limited to cold-hardy, recently discovered, and under-appreciated species, plus innovative cultivars. One extremely valuable feature is the suggestions for companion plantings that will thrive in the same conditions. Mr. Starr was a garden designer and grower of all sorts of xeric plants prior to specializing in Agaves, so his suggestions can be relied on. Another valuable point of the book are the photos of plants in their native locations, which gives understanding as to what conditions the plant really needs to be successful. And the photos are gorgeous. It exceeded my expectations. A good companion to the Gentry book.

This book tries to appeal to several audiences. The first audience is the people of the horticultural world who would love the stories behind the plants and the locations where they were originally found. The other audience is the novice or intermediate agave gardener. It's tough to pull off such a multi-audience book, but I think the author succeeds because of his down to earth writing style, sense of humor, and organization. Most people who are interested in agaves will really like this book by such person who was historically key to bringing agaves to our attention.

I highly recommend this book for anyone with an interest in the Genus Agave. Although the cultural information is geared for the US, the book contains enough information for others to adopt for their climates. The illustrations are fantastic. Dozens of species have been photographed in habitat and presented in colour and there is an ID key at the end of the book for similar species.

This is a book by a plant lover for other plant lovers--agaves in particular. Greg Starr's enthusiasm

comes out on every page as he describes the species in conversational, rather than academic, terminology, and recounts his forays to track them down in their native haunts. Very enjoyable to read, and especially helpful in providing horticultural information. A must-have for anyone wishing to develop an agave collection. Excellent photography

This is a very good book for a beginner looking for agaves that are hardy and size appropriate. I like the way the information is presented. I carry it with me to the nurseries.

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