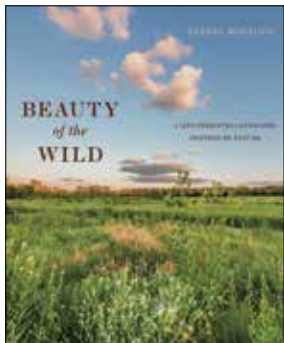


## Beauty of the Wild: A Life Designing Landscapes Inspired by Nature

Darrel Morrison. Library of American Landscape History, Amherst, MA, 2021. 192 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$40.


TODAY'S NATURALISTIC garden movement has deep roots. In *Beauty of the Wild: A Life Designing Landscapes Inspired by Nature*, Darrel Morrison traces the origins of nature-inspired design through his own education and 60-year career as a landscape architect and educator. Morrison's engaging writing reflects his passion for teaching, and rewards readers with lessons he harvested throughout life, from his Iowa farm roots to the legacies he's written in the landscape.



In the opening chapters, Morrison follows the evolution of his design philosophy through his studies and early career. Morrison marks his discovery of *American Plants for American Gardens*, by ecologist Edith Roberts and landscape architect Elsa Rehmman, as the foundation of his nature-based practice. This pivotal book brought native plants into the spotlight and laid the groundwork for an ecological approach to landscape design.

Morrison immersed himself in native plant communities, studying patterns of species distribution and their associated textures, colors, and movement in the landscape. More than anything else, the work of landscape architect Jens Jensen informed Morrison's teaching career and design practice. Jensen's uniquely North American aesthetic, the Prairie Style, placed nature above all else, integrating not only native plants, but topography and geographic features into his designs.

Stunning photographs throughout the book, as well as Morrison's own watercolor sketches, bring the landscapes in which he worked and studied to life for the reader. These include some of the nation's most renowned ecological research sites, from Aldo Leopold's famous Curtis Prairie (the world's first ecological restoration) to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Texas. The projects presented throughout the latter half of the book follow Morrison's career from Wisconsin to Georgia to New York and beyond.

*Beauty of the Wild* provides an abundance of lessons for gardeners and professionals alike in connecting ecology and design. Given the ever-growing popularity of the naturalistic garden movement, this insightful book is right on topic. 

—Kim Toscano

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