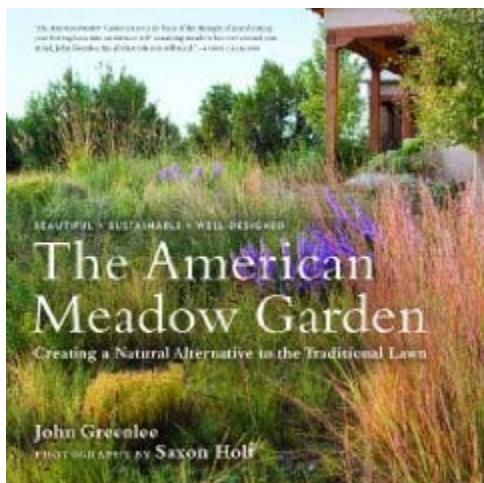


Now is the dawning of the age of the Meadow

Posted November 8, 2009 by Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator & Director of Outreach



The Great Plains where we live (and which we have transmogrified incidentally) are meadows. Our stunning alpine tundra is a meadow, essentially. There are lush meadows throughout our Colorado mountain parklands. Dotted here and there amid the predominant forests of foothills, montane and subalpine are meadows of unspeakable beauty that lure millions of tourists who come to visit and photograph (and spend money!). And yet we insist on football field quality turf in much of our landscape. There's something nutty about this. The small meadow in my home garden has proven to be the lowest maintenance part of my garden: filled with mariposa lilies and other bulbs, it provides a spectacular splash of bloom in late spring and summer. I am sold on the concept!

Several inspiring books about meadows have been written in recent years—usually about European meadow gardens where the art has been raised to tremendous heights by the likes of Christopher Lloyd and Fergus Garrett. And finally John Greenlee—who along with Kurt Bluemel and Rick Darke is part of America's trinity of Gramineous Gods—has mapped out his lifetime of experience creating successful meadows. Many of his methods and even the grasses in the encyclopaedic section are very much applicable to Colorado gardens. In fact, I recognized vignettes from Denver Botanic Gardens and several local meadows in the stunning photographs taken by Saxon Holt. I have spent happy hours dipping into the compendious text and noting some grasses and grass cousins I must try in my own meadows next spring. I highly recommend this treasure trove of a book.