

Gardener's Guide to Snowdrops

Freda Cox

Crowood Press

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304 pages & 2088 colour illustrations

Over the last few years several new Snowdrop books have been published. I have at least six of these, including the first edition of this book by Freda Cox, which is very informative and contains many fine colour drawings. I am very happy to review this new second edition in its electronic form.

There are so many wonderful new parts in this book, with very comprehensive details for the species, and a wealth of excellent coloured flower drawings that show shape and texture. For me, the details about different leaf shape and form are very important and this is what I always notice first when looking for Snowdrops.

In part 1 (Morphology, Taxonomy, Round the World, Pest & Diseases, Gardens and Growers) Freda pays tribute to very many Snowdrop enthusiasts (I do not like the term "Galanthophiles") and she lists many special gardens where Snowdrops grow in profusion alongside suitable companion plants such as wonderful cyclamen and dwarf narcissus. Pictures are enhanced with large swathes of naturalised Snowdrops in woodland settings and are simply superb. An account of Snowdrops around the world is welcome and very interesting.

In part 2, the huge "Snowdrop Directory" depicts by hand several hundred individually detailed flowers, each accompanied by a concise description. These pages are a delight to read and comprise the most comprehensive list to date, showing very convincingly just how very special Snowdrops are. We are all now acquainted with "Snowdrop Madness", which has opened many doors around the world and has led enthusiasts to search for ever more to satisfy their cravings. This has led to escalating prices, new select breeding, to the addition of yellow tips, virescent, inverse, *poculiformis*, early & late forms, and even to those with orange & pink inners. No doubt criticism will be voiced by some but for me this book has something for all – it is an essential read.

Freda has constructed this book with great knowledge, deep understanding and obvious love for the humble Snowdrop. This is not just a reference book but is a fine work of art; it is outstanding in every way for everyone around the world with a passion for Snowdrops and is a tribute to the author. At this time of year, I have the first edition open on my desk at all times and now look forward to the printed version of this new edition.

Ian Christie

