
World’s Fair Gardens: Shaping American Landscapes surveys an important subject on which this is the first book of its kind. Cathy Jean Maloney presents a scholarly, but easily readable, study of nine of America’s great fairs covering Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition of 1876 through the New York World’s Fair of 1939. Just as scientists and architects learned of new trends in their specialties, so did landscape architects, horticulturists and pomologists. Horticultural palaces allowed specialists to exchange ideas, learn of new species and communicate new ideas while showcasing native plantings and produce. Likewise, floral displays impacted public and private gardens. Furthermore, the landscaping, designed by preeminent practitioners, led to the creation of public spaces and parks, some of which remain to this day.

The intended audience for Maloney’s work ranges from the gardener to the historian to professionals in the fields of landscape architecture, horticulture, urban planning, architecture and preservation. The volume is handsomely designed with an easily legible layout. World’s Fair Gardens is copiously illustrated including more than 100 photographs and reproductions, half of which are in color. The book is produced with a durable cloth binding and printed on good paper stock.

In terms of the scholarly apparatus, the author begins with a section of key names, documenting the individual’s career and the fair on which he worked. An adequate index is provided, but it does not offer a key to abbreviations used. The reader needs to be familiar with the literature of World’s Fairs in general to decipher them, i.e. COP for Century of Progress, PPIE for Panama Pacific International Exposition, etc. Plentiful notes are provided for each chapter and show the dazzling array of primary resources used by the author in her research for this publication. The recommended reading list at the end of the book is brief because little has been published that relates to this precise subject.

Maloney’s book would be a fine addition to all libraries.

Ray Anne Lockard, Bibliographer and Public Services, Frick Fine Arts Library, University of Pittsburgh, frickart@pitt.edu