In recent years, vegetable gardening has made a comeback as a popular pastime in America. Yet, gardeners are creating vegetable gardens with a difference; they are intended to be pleasing to the eye as well as a source for fresh produce. In an effort to beautify traditional vegetable gardens, landscape architects and amateur gardeners are finding inspiration in the elaborate European vegetable gardens of the seventeenth century. Feast Your Eyes examines the historical antecedents of this modern movement as well as the changing perceptions of the beauty of vegetable gardens over time and among different cultures. Generously illustrated with over one hundred historical and contemporary photographs and artwork highlighting material from the Smithsonian Institutions Archives of American Gardens, this book provides a fascinating and wide-ranging discussion of such topics as the vegetable garden at Versailles, Ming dynasty vegetable gardens, the war gardens of World War I, World War II victory gardens—including those of the Japanese American internees—and vegetable still lifes. As the boundary between vegetable garden and flower garden has become blurred, the same is true for vegetables. Horticulturists have developed popular garden ornamentals from kale, chili peppers, sweet potato, and eggplant. Pennington provides biographies of these vegetables and describes new varieties that are being developed for their aesthetic qualities. She shows how this is not a uniquely modern phenomenon but is rooted in the introduction of exotic vegetables to Europe starting as early as the thirteenth century. Published in association with Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

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