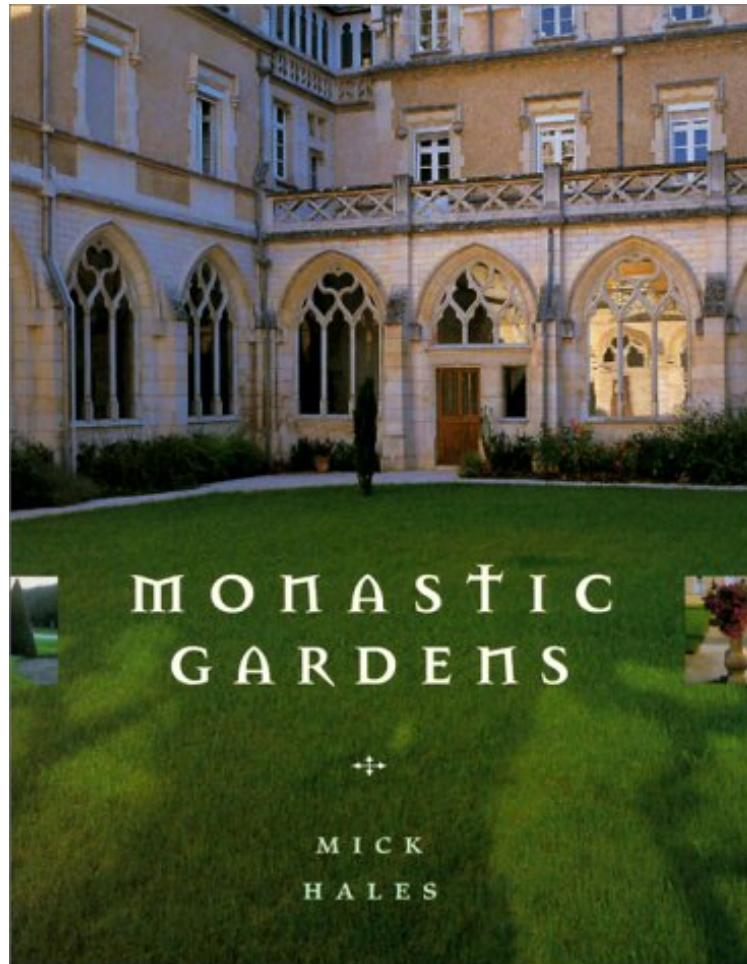


# Monastic Gardens

*Mick Hales*

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**Mick Hales : Monastic Gardens** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Monastic Gardens:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing photography By Gary R Price Jr Visually, it's not a very interesting book. The photography (subject matter and photo quality) is below the standards of most gardening books and magazines. I chose this book as a gift, but after seeing it, decided not to give it to the intended recipient. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Subject, photography and writing enjoyable By Customer Hales is pleasant to read. A nice surprise in addition to the photography. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Professional and relaxing. By Charles Barrett Excellent color photography depicting historically interesting gardens amid marvelous architectural backdrops. A refreshing and useful book which I recommend highly.

More than one hundred full-color photographs journey behind the cloister walls and gates of monasteries in Europe

and the United States to celebrate the special role of the garden in monastic life, accompanied by interviews with members of the different orders who discuss the divine purpose of gardening, its symbolic significance in Christianity, and the history of monastic gardening.

From the Publisher-Photographed on location in the United States, France, England, and Wales -The first comprehensive book on the subject -Offers divine inspiration for domestic gardens, from cutting to herb and vegetable gardens, orchards, and vineyards About the Author Mick Hales is an internationally acclaimed garden and architectural photographer who has been the sole photographer of eleven books and has contributed to several others. Born in England, he moved to the United States in 1984, and now lives with his wife in Columbia County, New York. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Excerpt from Chapter One On entering the cloister from the darkness of the buildings the green garden is partially hidden by the piers of the arches. Drawn forward in search of a better view, the visitor finds that every time he approaches a point where he expects to see the whole garden, another column obstructs his view. The only way to see it in its entirety is to move from the protection of the walkway into the garden proper, but this is like crossing an invisible line: the rich green seems to be bounded by an imaginary fence, as if to keep us from walking into the garden. Although in reality there is no prohibition against stepping into the center of the garth, it is easy to feel as if we have broken an unspoken rule. Viewed from the center, the garth fails to cast its spell: the spatial qualities break down when the visual tension between the walkway's arches and the garden disappears. The monks are well aware of this: as a brother from the Abbey of En Calcat has observed, although they are constantly walking around the garden or sitting along its perimeter, the only time the monks actually enter is to tend the plants. Along with the feeling of trespassing, standing in the center of the cloister garth can give one a sense of being in a fish bowl. The garden at Stanbrook Abbey in England, for instance, is surrounded on three sides by a tall brick Victorian building with a great many gothic windows, all facing the garden. It is difficult not to lose one's sense of security when venturing into the middle from the perimeter walkway. Walking the perimeter of a cloister garth is like exploring a labyrinth or medieval garden maze: just when you think you have arrived, you find you need to look further. This experience of being pulled forward can awaken the realization that what really matters in life is the journey or search for meaning, rather than the expectation that meaning will be suddenly revealed in a single, exceptional moment.