

Digging deep for info — via apps

Apps are great go-to garden resources for several reasons: It's easier to swipe your smartphone while pulling weeds than to flip to page 327 of a how-to book; resources are typically utilitarian and easily accessed; and if you happen to be space-deprived, book storage isn't an issue. Here are five worthy downloads.

BUGS AND INSECTS (99 cents on iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch)

Ever wonder, "Ewwww, what is it?" Wonder no more: This app will help you identify home and garden pests, including many varieties of ants, spiders, roaches, beetles, moths and more than 400 types of butterflies.



DIRR'S TREE AND SHRUB FINDER (\$14.99 on iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch)

Michael Dirr is a professor of horticulture at the University of Georgia, a woody plant expert and quite a superstar in the horticultural world. He's written six books, lectured around the country and published more than 300 scientific and popular papers and articles. Now every gardener with a mobile device can access his recommendations and insights. Based on Dirr's "The Manual of Woody Landscape Plants," this app allows for searching by 72 criteria, and provides detailed text about nearly 9,500 trees and shrubs to help users find the perfect plant for the perfect place quickly and easily.

BURPEE GARDEN COACH (free, via text, but message and data charges may apply)

Not an app in the traditional sense, Burpee Garden Coach is

more of a zone-specific subscription. Instead of downloading an app onto a smartphone, users text their ZIP code to 80998, essentially signing up to receive notices throughout the season that are timed to coincide with the progress of their vegetable gardens, according to where they live. The well-timed notices include garden reminders, how-to tips, variety-specific advice, harvesting techniques, storage information and even recipes.

GARDEN DESIGN WITH JAMIE DURIE (\$2.99 on iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch)

The HGTV personality and landscape designer has packed this app with videos, text, images and inspiration for creating an inviting outdoor space, whether it's a large garden room or a cozy balcony.

BIRDLOG (North American version, \$9.99 on iPhone, Android)

With just one click, this app enables birders to report their field sightings instantly to eBird, the joint Audubon-Cornell Lab of Ornithology worldwide citizen science program. The online database that collects all this information generates reports that are used by educators, ornithologists, conservation biologists and other researchers.

