

Vegetable love via Vilmorin, founded in 1743

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I can still picture the fat paperback on my bookshelf: "The Vegetable Garden" by Vilmorin-Andrieux ([Ten Speed Press](#), 1981 and now out of print), originally published in the 19th century. I loved the detailed text and the old-fashioned illustrations commissioned by the French seed company founded by the French royal botanist in 1743. [Vilmorin](#) is still in business and today is the fourth-largest seed company in the world. In Paris you can find the seeds at Vilmorin-Andrieux on quai de la Mégisserie.

Somehow that Ten Speed Press book went missing when I moved a few years ago and I haven't seen it since.

Cut to last week when I walked into the little [Taschen](#) store at the original Farmers Market and found that the German publisher has released "[Album Vilmorin: The Vegetable Garden](#)," a portfolio of 46 Vilmorin vegetable prints in glorious color, each 13-by-19 inches and suitable for framing. (A smaller bound copy is in the works.)

If you have a blank wall in your kitchen or dining room, look for some inexpensive black frames and cover the wall with the framed prints. Better than wallpaper, and no sticky mess doing it. Or, pick out your favorites, have them framed, and save the rest of the prints for gifts.

Think of it that way, and the price becomes a sort of bargain.

[Album Vilmorin: The Vegetable Garden](#) (Taschen, \$99.99), available at bookstores and at Taschen, Farmers Market, 6333 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles, (323) 931-1168; and at 354 N. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, (310) 274-4300.

"The Vegetable Garden" by Vilmorin-Andrieux is out of print, but it's possible to turn up used copies. I also just discovered it can be downloaded for free at [Google Books](#), which has editions from both 1885 and 1905. Get it, if only to read the potato chapter.

ALSO:

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[Dear Mr. Gold: Dinner without a face](#)

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-- S. Irene Virbila

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Illustrations from "Album Vilmorin: The Vegetable Garden." Credit: Taschen, Berlin

