Annotated Bibliography of Gardening Books Read in 2016

Arkell, Riginald. ***Old Herbaceous: A Novel of the Garden*. Modern Library, 2003. First published, 1950.** This is a delightful, poignant novel, full of gentle humor. I read it while on a trip to English in June, and it was the perfect companion after a day hiking in the Lake District. Here is Penelop Hobhouse's near-perfect summary of the book's structure and charm: "It reveals Arkell's love of gardening and his conviction that a man could be perfectly happy working in a garden all his life. His fictional hero is a head gardener who, after being apprenticed as a gardener's boy at fourteen, works his way up through the ranks in the manor-house garden, where he remains all his life. Arkell himself and the hero, Herbert Pinnegar, known locally as 'Old Herbaceous,' were both born in the same decade [1870s], so that one sees through Pinnegar's eyes the author's memories of country matters dating back to the end of the Victorian era. It is a sensitive portrayal of village and garden life through seventy years of social change. Although written in typical Arkell style, it is a slightly sad story, in which the reminiscences become an evocation of an Arcadian age that Reginald Arkell had lived through and looked back on with nostalgia."

Blaikie, Thomas. *Diary of a Scotch Gardener*. Edited by Francis Birrell. George Routledge, 1931. I first encountered a reference to Blaikie in A Little History of British Gardening, the author discussing how Scotland in the 18th and 19th century produced Britain's "most skilled professional gardeners and adventurous plant hunters." One of those Scottish gardeners was Thomas Blaikie (1758-1838), who became a respected promoter of English gardening in France at the end of the 18th century. Blaikie composed a journal recounting his adventures in France prior to the French Revolution, and it was eventually published in London in 1931. I paid £30 to obtain a copy on Amazon, the most I paid for any book this year. It was worth the £30. Blaikie led an incredible life, offering his engaging comments on estates he visited, gardens he designed (such as the gardens of Bagatelle), and the people he encountered, including Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin, and Marie Antoinette (the diary includes a particularly poignant record of their last conversation before her execution). The text is also amusing because it retains Blaikie's unique phrasing and spelling. Here are some of his spellings from one page, the phonetics almost certainly revealing his pronunciations: Gardner (gardener), Neveu (nephew), weding (wedding), keept (kept), Embassador (Ambassador), chappelle (chapel), carecter (character), umberassing (embarrassing), and humilegin (humiliating).

Cotner, June. Garden Blessings: Prose, Poems and Prayers Celebrating the Love of Gardening. Kindle Edition. This anthology was a quick, easy read. Here are a few short passages that caught my eye:

"Gardens are not created or made, they unfold, spiraling open like the silk petals of an evening primrose flower to reveal the ground plot of the mind and heart of the gardener and the good earth." ~Wendy Johnson

· "To share a garden is to share a lifetime, past, present, and future.¼Plants that grew and bloomed in my grandma's garden now grow and bloom in my own garden." ~Laura Martin

· "Almost any garden, if you see it at just the right moment, can be confused with paradise."

~Henry Mitchell
· "A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books." ~Walt Whitman
· "More grows in the garden than the gardener sows." ~Spanish Proverb
· "As is the gardener, so is the garden." ~Proverb
· "Successful gardening is doing what has to be done when it has to be done the way it ought to be done whether you want to do it or not." ~Jerry Baker
· "Gardening is never simply about gardens. It is work that reveals the meaning and character of humanity, and is an exercise and demonstration of who we take ourselves and creation to be. It is the most direct and practical site where we can learn the art and discipline of being creatures. Here we concretely and practically see how we relate to the natural world, to other creatures, and ultimately to the Creator. We discover whether we are prepared to honor these relations by nurture and care and celebration, or despise and abuse them. Gardens are a microcosm of the universe in which all the living and nonliving elements of life meet, elements ranging from geological formations and countless biochemical reactions to human inventiveness and age-old traditions about cuisine and beauty."

Earle, Alice Morse. *Old Time Gardens*. University Press of New England, 2005. First published 1901. Introduction by Virginia Lopez Begg. Without question, the most pleasurable surprise of the year. One of the authors introduced in Rogers' *Writing the Garden* was Alice Morse Earle, an author about whom I knew nothing. After finishing the Rogers survey, I ordered several books listed in her bibliography and one was Earle's *Old Time Gardens* ($2 plus shipping). I found it charming and informative, a fascinating brew of late 19th-century garden lore mixed with an impressive mastery of New England material culture and a comparable knowledge of authors (including many appropriations from Shakespeare, Milton, Ruskin, and Thoreau). I was also impressed by her resolute feminist defense of the contributions of women not only in gardening matters but in broader social agendas. While Earle has her crochety opinions–and does not hesitate to share them–the book is dominated by eloquent passages celebrating the joy she receives from gardens. Here's just one small example: "I like a garden in which plants have been growing in one spot for a long time, where they have a fixed home and surroundings. In our garden the same flowers shoulder each other comfortably and crowd each other a little, year after year. They look, my sister says, like long-established neighbors, like old family friends, not as if they had just 'moved in,' and didn't know each other's names and faces."

Easton, Valerie & David Laskin. *Artists in Their Gardens*. Sasquatch Books, 2001. Photography by Allan Mandell. I didn't read all of this book's text, instead focusing on the photos of ten private, "spontaneous, free-form gardens" created by studio artists. With one

exception the gardens are not intended for display, sale, or exhibition; they are "playgrounds for the artist" and the photographs reveal a lot of inspired playfulness. The foreword advocates the benefits of being the "Brave Gardener," and these ten gardens confirm the benefits of that advice, each garden demonstrating combinations of colors, textures, and materials that most of us would never attempt. While the book does not introduce any garden I would adopt as a model for my own backyard (or the Alumni House Garden, for that matter), these were all delightful gardens to visit.

Eck, Joe and Wayne Winterrowd. ***Our Life in Gardens*****. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.** Illustrations by Bobbi Angell. Eck and Winterrowd were the cofounders of the garden design firm North Hill and lived together on a Vermont property that became one of the premier private gardens in North America. This was their third and final book written collaboratively, utilizing a remarkably appealing "we" speaking voice. This proved to be one of my favorite books read in 2016. One recurrent theme is their dedication to nurturing flowers that most people would not expect in a Z4 Vermont garden. "The best of all garden effects are made out of difficulties that initially seem impossible to surmount." The authors admit that some flowers they love will require extraordinary efforts. Here, for example, is the conclusion of a short essay on taking care of their agapanthus, a mainstay of many English gardens: "And so, to consummate an affair with agapanthus, we fear you must resort to shoving and hauling, smashing and splintering, to a cold bedroom full of nasty, yellowing foliage, always anticipating the pure bliss that will come. Not so very different, after all, from any other love affair." Page after page is full of their love for their home, their garden, their life in rural Vermont. It's also a sad book, several passages expressing their concern about the inevitable demise of their garden after they are gone. And five years after the book was published, Wayne Winterrowd was dead. Here are a few passages reflecting on the gardener's and the garden's mortality.
· "You cannot separate a mature garden from mortality, for on even the most casual stroll through it you are reminded of your own, in a tree grown to maturity or even a patch of snowdrops multiplied from one bulb into a hundred. One can learn to accept the fact that one's own demise and the demise of one's garden may be approximately simultaneous. Actually, that is our greatest hope, for it won't be at all pleasant to see the garden go before we are ready to."
· "Gardens by their very nature are fragile beings that live in the two dimensions of time and care/" Knows that with their passing, their garden will also pass. Records Linc Foster's observation on Millstream, his great rock and alpine garden. As he was near death, he wrote: "The garden was young when I was young, and old when I am old, and it will die when I die."
· "Gardens always depend on the constant care and the vigilance of their creators. After that, they are shadows."

Ellacombe, Henry N. *In My Vicarage Garden and Elsewhere*. Kindle Edition. Original edition in 1901. Ellacombe (1822-1916) was a vicar in the parish at Bitton (between Bath and Bristol) for 68 years, following his father, who had been the parish vicar from 1835 to 1850. Father and son were both avid gardeners and writers about gardening, and their half-acre vicarage garden became one of England's great private gardens of the 19th century. Ellacombe had an astute sensitivity to a wide range of plants, and was particularly adept at identifying literary associations of English flowers. This book and its predecessor (*In a Gloucestershire Garden*) helped establish a distinctively English style in gardening literature. The Kindle edition had a number of editing and page layout problems, but this was still a lovely, restful book for in-bed, end-of-the-day reading.

· "Sir Henry Wotton laid down the rule that there was 'a certain contrariety between building and gardening; for as fabricks should be regular, so gardens should be irregular, or at least cast into a very wild regularity.' It is this 'wild regularity' which forms to my mind the real charm of a good mixed garden ; and it is this, and not the large collection of different plants in it, which distinguishes it from other gardens, because plants grown in such a way may be allowed to grow in their fullest vigour, and to develop each its own shape, colour, and character, without any fear of its transgressing the lines. . . ."

· "My ideal of a good mixed garden is one in which the borders are always full, in which there is no repetition, so that there can nowhere be found one yard like another, and which in every month of the year and in every week can show a different set of plants in flower. . . . My own garden, including everything, is less than two acres, and I have very little glass, so that almost everything must be hardy ; and yet there is no difficulty in carrying out the principles I have just laid down. Every border must be full ; and for this purpose no border is given up to any one class of plants; there is a mixture of shrubs, herbaceous plants, bulbs, and ferns all joined together, without any respect to uniformity."

· "The want of harmony in colour I deny. Plants whose flowers will not (theoretically) harmonise may be planted in close contact, if only they are allowed to grow naturally. The colours of the flowers in a field or wood or hedgerow or Swiss pasture are mixed together without any respect to the laws of colour-harmony—yet there is no discord."

· "The old proverb says— 'There is no debt paid so nigh As the wet pays to the dry ;' and taking the twelve months ending the 31st of March there is a debt of twelve inches of rain. But all this is uncertain ; and does not this very uncertainty form one of the chief pleasures of gardening? It would be tame work if it was always successful and if we could have it all our own way. And is it not our uncertain and much-abused English climate, with all the difficulties and disappointments that it brings with it, which has made our English and Scotch gardeners among the very best in the world?"

· "For three hundred years no vegetable has been introduced that can in any degree compare with the results, commercial, agricultural, and even political, of the potato. Nor can it even be

said that the vegetables as now grown are very different or much better than those grown by our forefathers. In a few instances varieties have been introduced which are more prolific, or in some respects more profitable, but in spite of the nurserymen, whose catalogues announce novelties and improvements every year, the plants practically remain very much the same, and those who can look back fifty years or more are very positive in their assertions that the peas, asparagus, potatoes, etc., which they ate in their youth, were in no way inferior to what they get now."

Elliott, Charles. *Why Every Man Needs a Tractor And Other Revelations in the Garden.* Frances Lincoln, 2011. I first fell in love with Elliott's short essays in *Horticulture* magazine. Many of those essays, as well pieces published elsewhere, were subsequently collected in a series of books, included *The Transplanted Gardener, The Potting Shed Papers, More Papers from the Potting Shed*, and *Why Every Man Needs a Tractor*. Eliot was at one time a book editor with Alfred A. Knopf in New York, but in 1985 he moved to London and began writing about his home gardening experiences in Welsh Marches. Two of Elliott's greatest attributes are his curiosity and his quiet, genial humor. His essays frequently are the results of his personal research, tracking down the history of a heroic plant hunter or explaining the challenge of the knotweed invasion into English gardens. On the back cover of my copy, Elliott's reviewers have described his writing as delightful, absorbing, delightful, irresistible, delightful, quirky, irreverent, fun, and delightful. I agree.

Ely, Helena Rutherford. *A Woman's Hardy Garden*. 1930. Kindle Edition. An American gardener committed to the Jekyll, English cottage tradition. Ely's book is a quick read, clean and competent writing, with sensible, practical advice. Here are seven of my favorite passages, demonstrating Ely's style and gardening practices:

· "To attain success in growth, as well as in effect, plants must be so closely set that when they are developed no ground is to be seen. If so placed, their foliage shades the earth, and moisture is retained. In a border planted in this way, individual plants are far finer than those which, when grown, are six inches or a foot apart."

· "Always have the seeds of perennials soaked for twenty-four hours before planting, and find that by so doing they are very sure to germinate. Care must be taken, when soaking a number of different kinds at the same time, to place the name of each variety of seed under the glass or bowl containing the same. When ready for planting, pour off the water and mix the wet seeds carefully with very dry earth, in a cigar-box, which is of the right size and easy to handle. Then sow, not too deeply, in rows about a foot apart in the bed, covering very lightly, according to size. One-half inch is enough for the large seeds. The very fine varieties should simply have the earth sprinkled on them. If planted too deep they will never come up. Seeds of annuals do not require soaking."

· "Everything possible should be done in the fall. Perennials start early in the spring, and it is a pity, when they are once started, to disturb them."
· "The moment a blossom withers, cut the stalk down to the ground; another will immediately spring up. I had four crops of blossoms from some of my Delphiniums last summer, so that, from the end of June until the middle of October, there were always some of them in blossom."
· "They have climate in England [and] we have weather . . . English gardens will always fill American gardeners with despair."
· "If there are no woods near, where the men can gather leaf-mould, have the rakings of the autumn leaves put in a pile, cover with boards, and occasionally during the spring and summer have them well forked over; the next autumn there will be a quantity of the finest thing for Lilies, Rhododendrons, Ferns, or indeed any kind of plant. This should be mixed in a pile in the proportion of one wheelbarrow of mould, two of good soil, two coal-scuttlefuls of wood-ashes, one-half barrow of old manure and two spadefuls of fine bone-meal. There is also nothing better for the Roses than some of this mixture."
· "The dial made for the latitude bears this inscription, "Utere praesenti, memor ultimae" (Use the present hour, mindful of the last), which I found in an old book on sun-dials in the Avery Library, at Columbia University."

Gillman, Jeff and Meleah Maynard. ***Decoding Gardening Advice: The Science Behind the 100 Most Common Recommendations.*** **Kindle Edition.** Though I don't recall many passages that I found particularly new or inspiring, the book is filled with reasonable, common-sense recommendations. Here are a few snippets of their advice:
· "A few plants that do well when pinched are pincushion flower (Scabiosa columbaria), oxeye daisies (Chrysanthemum leucanthemum), yarrow (Achillea millefolium), larkspur (Delphinium), daisies (Chrysanthemum), cardinal flower (Lobelia cardinalis), salvia (Salvia splen-dens), speedwell (Veronica officinalis), tickseed (Coreopsis), balloon flower (Platycodon grandiflorus), blanket flower (Gaillardia aristata), and daylilies (Hemerocallis)."
· "Any sort of pot can be sterilized with a mixture of 1 part bleach and 10 parts water. Soaking rather than scrubbing is okay, too. Rinse well, and let the pot dry completely before planting. If you don't like bleach, you can soak or scrub pots in a solution of 1 part vinegar and 1 part water. Some gardeners like to run smaller pots through the dishwasher, whereas others just clean dirty containers with soapy water. This works, but it's not as effective at killing pathogens as other methods. Be sure to completely wash the vinegar or bleach from the container before you add potting soil, as these compounds can be toxic to plants as well as microbes."
· "We recommend adding about four crushed eggshells to the soil per plant at planting time. This is particularly important for container-grown tomatoes, but can be a good idea in the garden, too. Adding a little compost to the potting media when planting container-grown tomatoes is also a good idea because it will provide nutrients as it breaks down."

· “Leafy crops, like lettuce, mustard greens, arugula, endive, kale, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Swiss chard, and many herbs tolerate shade best and can do with as little as two hours of direct sunlight. With just three to six hours of consistent, dappled sun you can grow beets, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, turnips, and radishes—though they will be more lush in sunnier locales.”

Goldman, Amy. *Heirloom Harvest*. Bloomsbury 2015. Photographs by Jerry Spagnoli. A 2015 Christmas present from my son, this book is a collection of modern daguerreotypes of vegetables and fruits from a Hudson River Valley farm in New York. The daguerreotypes are intense, dramatic, luminous, mesmerizing. Walking through this book is like entering into a different world, revealing beauties that could never be communicated in traditional color photography. It was particularly rewarding to encounter daguerreotypes of vegetables that I attempt to grow either at my home or at the Wickiup garden: Black Beauty Eggplant, Armenian Cucumber, Pixwell Gooseberries, Purple Top White Globe Turnips, Christmas Pole Lime Beans, Black Seeded Simpson Lettuce, Sugar Snap Peas, Beauregard Sweet Potatoes, Aunt Molly’s Ground Cherries. Goldman’s introductory text provides some background with regard to their purchase of the farm, the remodeling of the farm house, the transformation of the landscape, their commitment to heirloom vegetables and fruits (made possible by her early involvement in Seed Savers), and the history of her relationship with the photographer Jerry Spagnoli. Unfortunately, the book provides only minimal information about how the daguerreotypes were done, nor is there much information on the fruits and vegetables rendered in the daguerreotypes. But this is still one of my favorite garden books, one I will frequently be revisiting in the future.

Hadfield, Miles. *A History of British Gardening*. John Murray, 1979 (orig. edition 1960). This is a dated but still impressive history: exhaustive detail, insightful descriptions of gardens and gardeners, interpretations delivered with wit, verve, and fair-mindedness. Hadfield includes timely literary quotations, such as this observation by Lord Kames in *Elements of Criticism* (1762): “The most perfect idea of a garden . . . is to inspire all the different emotions that can be raised by gardening.” Early in this history Hadfield offers an surprising celebration of the ease with which gardens disappear: “Gardeners are indeed fortunate, for when their work is neglected, willow-herb and sow-thistle, the peace-loving elder and the watery sycamore come quickly in and obliterate all; never can even the smallest garden end in the desiccating cellar of a museum.” Here are a few other observations that caught my attention:
· Hadfield notes the long history of gravel paths, espoused since Bacon and the early 16th century. The paths had aesthetic, symbolic, and practical value (providing an effective tactic for dealing with the frequent cold and wet days in the British climate).
· According to Hadfield, “gardening as an art and the aesthetic appreciation of flowers scarcely

existed until the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries."

· The benefits of gardens were advocated by Thomas More in his Utopia as a way to deal with the "strife and contention" of life in a city.

· Frequent references to the importance of parson-naturalists and their pivotal role in Brish natural history.

· Assertion that English gardens were "the most cosmopolitan in the Old World."

· Hadfield provides a revealing list of gardening tools used in the 17th century, the same tools still being used in the 21st century.

· Hadfield emphasizes the importance of a translation of A. J. Dezallier d'Argenville's *La Théorie et la Pratique du Jardinage* done by John James in 1712. English title: *The Theory and Practice of Gardening*. This translation effectively explains French practices to an English audience, resulting in "the climax of classical gardening, when geometric art was combined with horticultural skill to a degree never since surpassed."

· This book has an excellent chapter on the "Landskip" and the years 1720-1780. Notes the powerful impact of literature on the goals of an ideal garden. These 18th-century Whig gardens "aspired to produce visual scenes and effects that could be well described, heavily overlaid with poetic and other allusions meaningless to those who were not well read."

· Hadfield admires Pope, his correspondence demonstrating a brilliant visual imagination and a keen understanding of the practical side of horticulture.

· Hadfield also stresses the importance in the early 19th century of of Humphrey Reption and his commitment to the "beautiful" (rather than the "picturesque"). "Repton . . . had an education and intelligence superior to that of any of his predecessors. He was a man of wide reading, something of a mathematician, who could demonstrate his theories of design with geometrical diagrams, while his botanical writings appeared in the Transactions of the learned Linnean Society."

· In1826 the first periodical designed for gardeners of all kinds: *The Gardener's Magazine*. Loudon, the journal's "conductor," emphasized "the social aspects of gardening, and the need to encourage the working gardener to 'improve' himself, and for his employer to pay him a proper wage."

· List of the eight dominant florists' flowers of the 19th century: tulip, auricula, carnation, pink, anemone, ranunculus, hyacinth, polyanthus.

· The first systematic plant breeder in British horticulture was Thomas Andrew Knight (1759-1838); he recognized the importance of hybridization through careful selection, producing improved varieties of apple, pear, cherry, nectarine, damson, potatoes, peas, and cabbage.

· Following the Victorian period, Hadfield sees the return of science in informing gardening practices, evident in the work of William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll, and the continuing importance of clergy gardeners, such as Rev. Henry Ellacombe.

· Hadfield points out that the disappearance of horse-drawn transport after 1914 necessitated a

revolution in gardening: “No longer, particularly in urban and suburban areas, was there an abundant source of dung available for every gentleman’s and many a tradesman’s garden.”
· And, finally, a wonderful tribute to the amateur gardener of the early 20th century: “As in the past . . . the talented and experienced amateur, devoting a lifetime to one garden, almost invariably produced something nearer perfection than the professional who was called in to provide a design, carried it out, and then departed.”
The conclusion to the 1979 edition includes an appendix (covering the years 1939-1978) by Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe contrasting the classical and the romantic gardens:
“The formal or classical garden is concerned with the finite: that is to say that the limiting boundaries are apparent, as they are in the house. The informal or romantic garden is concerned with the infinite, where the boundaries are subdued or eliminated and the imagination is encouraged to roam at will beyond the confines of the site. This is an especially English concept and not only inspired Bridgeman and Kent to ‘leap the fence and see that all nature was a garden’, but led such later writers as Uvedale Price to establish Picturesque principles for parks and gardens which may equally apply to the small gardens of the present day. Philosophically, the romantic garden is not so much an extension of the house as an incursion of nature into the site. This is the ancient Chinese concept of a town garden and is symbolic, not a copy, of nature.”

Harrison, Robert Pogue. ***Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*****. University of Chicago Press, 2008.** The book’s front cover includes a brief quote from a *New York Times* book review: “The year’s most thought-provoking, original, and weighty garden book.” That statement is true for me as well. My copy is covered with underlined passages and marginal notes. What is rather remarkable is that Harrison is not a gardener, and only in a few passages does he ever talk about “real” gardens (two exceptions being a small garden on the campus of Stanford University and King Louis XIV’s garden at Versailles). This is, instead, a book focusing on what the presence of gardens in classical literature and philosophy can reveal about how those authors and their culture perceive themselves and their world. The book focuses on such works as *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Garden of Eden in *Genesis*, Homer’s *Odyssey*, the philosophies of Plato and Epicurus, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, and one book that does focus on gardening: Karl Capek’s *The Gardener’s Year*. Harrison’s ultimate concern is with the empty purposeless of contemporary existence and the absence of any concern for serenity or a creative reordering of life. When practiced properly, gardening is committed to the cultivation of “care” (a key concept for Harrison). Instead our culture seeks to be free of responsibility, to gain pleasures, with no need to “labour to become beautiful” (to quote Yeats). Harrison’s attitude is succinctly expressed in this speech by a Japanese master gardener in Michel Tournier’s novel *Gemini*: “Garden, house, and man are a living organism which it is wrong to break up. The man must be there. The plants will only grow well under his

loving eye. If the man quits his home for any reason at all, the garden withers and the house falls into ruins." Harrison believes we are now living in a house without a gardener and everything is falling into ruins.

Hensel, Margaret. *English Cottage Gardening for American Gardeners*. W. W. Norton, 2000. Revised and expanded version of 1992 edition. In many respects this is a coffee-table book, and the photographs, also done by Margaret Hensel, are consistently stunning. Each chapter focuses on a cottage garden, all but two of them located in England. Hensel's photographs beautifully convey the mixtures of plants and blooms that make English cottage gardens so enticing. Every inch of space is used, the earth rarely making an appearance beneath the scramble of diverse plants. One special benefit of perusing this book is seeing how effectively English cottage gardens re-use a few fundamental flowers in a multitude of combinations: hardy geraniums (Geranium species), lady's mantle (Alchemilla mollis), catmints (Nepeta mussinii), red valerian (Centranthus ruber), various dianthus hybrids, chives, Russell Strain lupines, climbing roses, and an occasional foxglove. Thousands of works of art created with a similar palette of flowers. With the exception of the red valerian, all of these plants can be found in the Alumni House Garden. Now our task is to reposition these into successful combinations.

Jekyll, Gertrude. *Wood and Garden: Notes and Thoughts, Practical and Critical, of a Working Amateur*. Ed. By Graeme Stockdale. Kindle edition, 2015. Jekyll is as good as advertised, a wonderful garden writer who offers a trenchant mixture of practical advice with fundamental principles. Of the 50+ passages I highlighted, here are some favorites:
· "Nature is such a subtle chemist that one never knows what she is about.
· "Little by little, comes the power of intelligent combination, the nearest thing we can know to the mighty force of creation."
· "A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all, it teaches entire trust. 'Paul planteth and Apollos watereth, but God giveth the increase.'"
· "The song of the nightingale and the ring of the woodman's axe gain a rich musical quality from the great fir wood. Why a wood of Scotch fir has this wonderful property of a kind of musical reverberation I do not know; but so it is. Any sound that occurs within it is, on a lesser scale, like a sound in a cathedral. The tree itself when struck gives a musical note. Strike an oak or an elm on the trunk with a stick, and the sound is mute; strike a Scotch fir, and it is a note of music."
· "I always think it desirable to group together flowers that bloom at the same time. It is impossible, and even undesirable, to have a garden in blossom all over, and groups of flower-beauty are all the more enjoyable for being more or less isolated by stretches of intervening greenery."

· "It is important in such a border of rather large size, that can be seen from a good space of lawn, to keep the flowers in rather large masses of colour. No one who has ever done it, or seen it done, will go back to the old haphazard sprinkle of colouring without any thought of arrangement, such as is usually seen in a mixed border."

· "For however charming in humanity is the virtue modesty, and however becoming is the unobtrusive bearing that gives evidence of its possession, it is quite misplaced in a Dahlia."

· "As in much else, one must watch what happens in one's own garden. We practical gardeners have no absolute knowledge of the constitution of the plant, still less of the chemistry of the soil, but by the constant exercise of watchful care and helpful sympathy we acquire a certain degree of instinctive knowledge, which is as valuable in its way, and probably more applicable to individual local conditions, than the tabulated formulas of more orthodox science."

· "Every year I divide Michaelmas Daisies, Goldenrod, Helianthus, Phlox, Chrysanthemum maximum, Helenium pumilum, Pyrethrum uliginosum, Anthemis tinctoria, Monarda, Lychnis, Primula, except P. denticulata, rosea, and auricula, which stand two years. Every two years, White Pinks, Cranesbills, Spiræa, Aconitum, Gaillardia, Coreopsis, Chrysanthemum indicum, Galega, Doronicum, Nepeta, Geum aureum, Oenothera youngi, and Oe. riparia. Every three years, Tritoma, Megasea, Centranthus, Vinca, Iris, Narcissus."

· "No artificial planting can ever equal that of Nature, but one may learn from it the great lesson of the importance of moderation and reserve, of simplicity of intention, and directness of purpose, and the inestimable value of the quality called 'breadth' in painting. For planting ground is painting a landscape with living things; and as I hold that good gardening takes rank within the bounds of the fine arts, so I hold that to plant well needs an artist of no mean capacity."

· "It is not the paint that make the picture, but the brain and heart and hand of the man who uses it."

· "To live with one's garden is one of the best ways to ensure its welfare."

· "It was the window-box of a factory lad in one of the great northern manufacturing towns. He had advertised in a mechanical paper that he wanted a tiny garden, as full of interest as might be, in a window-box; he knew nothing--would somebody help him with advice? So advice was sent and the box prepared. If I remember rightly the size was three feet by ten inches. A little later the post brought him little plants of mossy and silvery saxifrages, and a few small bulbs. Even some stones were sent, for it was to be a rock-garden, and there were to be two hills of different heights with rocky tops, and a longish valley with a sunny and a shady side."

· "There is no royal road. It is no use asking me or anyone else how to dig--I mean sitting indoors and asking it. Better go and watch a man digging, and then take a spade and try to do it, and go on trying till it comes, and you gain the knack that is to be learnt with all tools, of doubling the power and halving the effort; and meanwhile you will be learning other things, about your own arms and legs and back, and perhaps a little robin will come and give you

moral support, and at the same time keep a sharp look-out for any worms you may happen to turn up; and you will find out that there are all sorts of ways of learning, not only from people and books, but from sheer trying."

· "Those of us who feel and understand in this way do not exactly attempt to imitate Nature in our gardens, but try to become well acquainted with her moods and ways, and then discriminate in our borrowing, and so interpret her methods as best we may to the making of our garden-pictures."

· "But the most frequent fault, whether in composition or in colour, is the attempt to crowd too much into the picture; the simpler effect obtained by means of temperate and wise restraint is always the more telling."

Klaus, Carl. ***My Vegetable Love: A Journal of a Growing Season*****. Houghton Mifflin, 1996.** There are several parallels between Prof. Klaus and me. We both were professors at institutions of higher learning in east-central Iowa, Prof. Klaus at the University of Iowa and myself at Coe College. Although Prof. Klaus was in an English Department and I in a Rhetoric Department, our teaching focused on the personal essay and creative nonfiction, introducing the existing literature and assisting students in composing their own nonfiction pieces. We both served as department chairs, spent a substantial portion of our professional careers dealing with administrative matters, and experienced similar alienations in the final years of our professional careers. And in the summer of 1995, we both were custodians of substantial vegetable gardens, located about 30 miles from each other. But the differences are also notable. While only on rare occasions did I write in my garden journal, Carl Klaus composed a 500-word essay on his garden, each day from Thursday, March 16, to Friday, November 24. His collection of daily essays is a charming, personable review of the year. I never met Carl Klaus, but one of the joys of this past fall was reading his book (a copy purchased at Prairie Lights and signed by him) and listening to his observations on the weather, a wood chuck, his Ace peppers, his patty pan squash, his Enchantment tomatoes, and the impressive meals he and his wife Kate prepared using the products of this marvelous garden.

Kunitz, Stanley (with Genine Lentine). ***The Wild Braid: A Poet Reflects on a Century in the Garden*****. W. W. Norton**. Photographs by Marnie Crawford Samuelson. A book based on over two years of conversations between Genine Lentine and Stanley Kunitz beginning in the summer of 2002, many occurring in Kunitz's seaside garden in Provincetown. The book is short, perhaps 60 pages of text, plus many photographs of Kunitz in his garden. The text weaves together passages from his poems with edited transcripts of his comments on gardening, poetry, and life. One distinctive theme is his emphasis on the garden as something constantly alive, flowing, ever-changing, mysterious–qualities he also seeks in his poetry. During the two-year sequence of conversations, Kunitz became seriously ill, and he appeared he was going to

die, but he revived and the final pages express his pleasure in receiving this renewed gift of life, enabling him to return to his garden and write a few more poems. Here are a few notable passages from the book:

· "Certainly gardening has many collaborative aspects to it. You're helping to create a living poem. Philosophically, the garden is a co-creation. It expresses something of the character of the place itself, something that any human intervening there must respect."

· "As with the making of a poem, so much of the effort is to get rid of all the excess, and at the same time be certain you are not ridding the poem of its essence. . . . A certain degree of sprawl is necessary. . . . You must be very careful not to deprive the poem of its wild origin."

· "Part of the fascination of gardening is that it is, on the one hand, a practical exercise of the human body and, on the other, a direct participation in the ritual of birth and life and death."

· "I never am absent from the garden, even when I'm away from it. It's an abiding companion during the whole year."

· "There's a conversation that keeps going on beyond the human level, in many ways, beyond language, extending into the atmosphere itself. Weather is a form of communication. There is an exchange between the self and the atmosphere that sets the tone for an entire day."

· "The main obligations of the gardener are to be mindful of the garden's needs and to be observant each day of what is going on in the garden. And it compels you to structure your life because there are things you have to do at certain times."

· "I conceived of the garden as a poem in stanzas. Each terrace contributes to the garden as a whole in the same way each stanza in a poem has a life of its own, and yet is part of a progressive whole as well."

· "I can scarcely wait till tomorrow / when a new life begins for me, / as it does each day, / as it does each day." [The book begins and ends with this passage from Kunitz's poem "The Round."]

LeHoullier, Craig. ***Epic Tomatoes: How to Select & Grow the Vest Varieties of All Time.*** **Storey Publishing, 2015.** This present from my daughter, a book on my Christmas wish list, is an exhaustive discussion of tomatoes, covering almost every imaginable topic (germination, planting, care, troubleshooting, saving seeds, breeding, recipes, preserving, etc). The book concludes with a comparison of 250 different "recommended" varieties, and some further recommendations on the best of the best. Although LeHoullier grudgingly acknowledges the potential benefits of a few F1 hybrids (e.g., lemon boy), his real passion is for open-pollinated heirlooms, arguing passionately that not only are they better tasting than the hybrids produced since the 1950s, but they can do just as well in terms of resistance to bugs and diseases. I followed his advice in choosing my tomatoes for the summer of 2016, and while not all proved successful, several produced the best tomatoes I've harvested in years–most notably Cherokee Purple and Lillian's Yellow Heirloom. I also planted for the first time the one modern hybrid

LeHoullier does recommend: sun gold cherry. It is the best tomato I've ever eaten directly off the vine.

Lloyd, Christopher. *The Well-Tempered Garden*. New and Revised Edition. Penguin Books, 1985. First edition, 1970. A long-time fan of Lloyd's *Horticulture* articles, I was not surprised in this book confirming that Lloyd's mastery of gardening is analogous to Mr. Bach and the Clavier. The book is not easy reading: it took the entire year, reading a few pages at a time. With over 50 years experience, Lloyd has an incredible breadth and depth of knowledge, a knowledge rendered in vigorous prose on every page. Scathing dismissals of flower catalogues mix with ecstatic celebrations of his garden at Dixter. While impossible in a few quotes to convey the richness of Lloyd's wit and wisdom, here are two short examples:

"The easiest mistake you can make when sowing in pots and boxes is to cover the seed with too great a depth of compost. The thickness of the seed is the greatest depth with which it should be covered. I know this well, and yet I still make this mistake myself from time to time. Recently it was with some Salvia patens seed. This has a way of all germinating together and lifting the entire top layer of soil like a lid, or as you might have a corps of ballet dancers balancing an enormous tray above their heads at arms' length."

On the Crown Imperial, *Fritillaria imperalis*: "The inflorescence is so spectacular and unusual that one wonders how it ever came to be a ring of bells surmounted by a bunch of greenery in pineapple style. And one cannot resist lifting the bell flowers so as to be able to look into the heart of them where the nectaries glisten like suspended tears. Of course the plant does smell appalling–a mixture of garlic and fox that is wafted afar on the wind. But then most peoples sense of smell has atrophied anyway, and one can always hold one's nose."

Lloyd, Christopher and Beth Chatto. *Dear Friend and Gardener: Letters on Life and Gardening*. Frances Lincoln, 1998. Over a two-year period (January 1996 to December 1997), these two pre-eminent British gardeners, Lloyd and Chatto, exchanged dozens of letters primarily focusing on their daily gardening experiences. On occasion the letters will also turn to such subjects as opera performances at Glyndbourne, family health issues, handling garden visitors, the vicissitudes of the weather, recipes and cooking. Lloyd and Chatto know their letters are to be collected for this book, and I often had the sense they were including recitations on their gardens (including careful attention to the inclusion of scientific plant names) that might not have been the case if they knew they were writing privately. Lloyd and Chatto have established reputations as representing different planting traditions, and Lloyd occasionally will include humorous pokes at Chatto's practices. But it's evident they have great love and respect for each other, and the correspondence is eminently polite and civilized. Not a great book, but a delightful opportunity to listen to a conversation between two of the greatest gardeners of the 20th century. A few representative passages:

Chatto to Lloyd:
· "I must confess, much as I love the decorative garden, the vegetable plot is, for me, both a place to relax and, occasionally, somewhere to hide. Yes, I admit my vegetables are organically grown. I cannot see the point of going to all the trouble of growing them yourself, and then dowsing them with poisonous chemicals. Save yourself the bother and buy them from the supermarket, sprayed and scrubbed."
· "I think we may have a wider approach to garden design if we have been helped to appreciate other forms of art; to be aware of basic principles–balance, repetition, harmony and simplicity–which apply to all forms of creativity. To look for these ideas in painting and architecture, or hear them in music, has certainly influenced me as much as knowing whether to put a plant in the shade, or in full sun."
Lloyd to Chatto:
· "The placing of plants in relation to their neighbours is so important and so fascinating, colour being only one aspect to consider. Heights, shapes and textures, as well as season of comeliness, are all factors to be considered. Up to a point, it comes instinctively, but thought is more dependable than instinct, while experience (or discovery, when they are new) of your plants' preferences is most important of all."t
· "Publishers don't like the risk of a new author writing on a new theme. Beyond the well-established authors whom they know will sell, they show minimal enterprise, except, maybe, on a fashionable and politically correct subject like 'Organic Gardening' or 'Gardening with Nature,' or 'Women Gardeners Through the Ages,' or 'The English Garden,' or the 'Englishwoman's Garden,' or, maybe, 'The Englishwoman's Ecologically Friendly Garden.'"

Mickey, Thomas J. ***America's Romance with the English Garden*. Ohio University Press, 2013.** Although this book is full of fascinating historical details and marvelous illustrations, the coverage of topics is superficial and organization chaotic and repetitious. The author jumps from topic to topic, frequently repeating what has been said earlier. Fortunately, the book includes a respectable bibliography of primary and secondary literature of the history of American gardening, but of all the gardening books I read in 2016, this was by far the most disappointing.

Nauseef, Judy. ***Gardening with Native Plants in the Upper Midwest: Bringing the Tallgrass Prairie Home*. University of Iowa Press, 2016.** A modest book that confirms, in many respects, what I have learned from other sources. The text and photos do concentrate on Iowa, and I particularly appreciated the author's identification of native grasses and perennial flowers that as a professional landscape designer she found useful in diverse situations: species of Achilles (yarrows), Andropogon (Big Bluestem), Baptisia (False Indigo), Chasmanthium (Northern Sea Oats), Echinacea (Coneflowers), Liatris (Gayfeathers), Monarda (Bee Balms), Nepeta (Catmints),

Panicum (Switch Grasses), Penstemon (Husker Red), Rudbeckia (Black- and Brown-eyed Susans), Salvia, Sorghastrum (Indian Grass), Schizachyrium (Little Bluestem), Vernonia (Ironweed), and a nonnative grass, Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster." Using these plant options could go a long way to restoring a native prairie.

Page, Russell. *The Education of a Gardener*. New York Review Books, 2007. Preface by Robin Lane Fox. Original publication, 1962. Russell Page (1906-1985) became a professional garden designer in his early twenties, and eventually designed hundreds of gardens in Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America. This memoir mixes memories of his work on specific gardening projects with his opinions on how gardening should–and should not–be done (though, he admits, only once in his life has he briefly had his own garden). I frequently found the book slow going as he discusses unfamiliar continental gardens, but many of his principles and insights came through unimpaired. The primary lesson I took from this work was the importance of minimalism, focusing on simple and clean lines in terms of a garden's structure and the plants to be bedded within that structure. As he writes on the first page of his Introduction: "I have always tried to shape gardens each as a harmony, linking people to nature, house to landscape, the plant to its soil. . . . At each new attempt, I see that which is superfluous, that is, everything which clutters up my understanding of a problem must be discarded. Everything which detracts from the idea of a unity must go." Invaluable advice. Hard to follow but invaluable. Here are a few more short excerpts from Page's *Education*:
· "Whether I am making a landscape or a garden or arranging a window box I first address the problem as an artist composting a picture; my pre-occupation is with the relationships between objects whether I am dealing with woods, fields or water, rocks or trees, shrubs and plants or groups of plants. . . . every object emanates–sends out vibrations beyond its physical body which are specific to itself."
· "If you are a garden designer you can scarcely be a purist since a garden is by definition an artifice. To try to imitate nature exactly, just as to fly in her face, leads to absurdity. When you plant trees and shrubs, however informally, your aim is to intensify a natural ambience and to condense and underline a theme derived from nature herself."
· "Paris gardens, private and public, are seen as a decoration to be admired, whereas in London I feel that they are primarily a vehicle for an English love of cultivating growing things."
· "I enjoy designing austere gardens, using a very limited and simple range of materials and trying to create a harmony by carefully adjusted proportions."

Pavord, Anna. *The Curious Gardener*. Bloomsbury, 2010. With 13 wood engravings by Howard Phipps. The dedication page reads as follows: "This book is dedicated to all my editors at the Independent [the British newspaper where these garden pieces were first published], from Hilly Janes to Laurence Earle. They have given me plenty of rope, but have also prevented me from

hanging myself. Thank you." That little passage nicely captures Pavord's humor. I'm including passages from this book in my four seasonal Kalendar Blog postings for this year, so I will rely on those pieces to display a more complehensive portrait of this gifted garden writer.

Richardson, Tim. *The New English Garden*. Frances Lincoln, 2013. Photographs by Andrew Lawson. Richardson is a garden columnist for the *Daily Telegraph* and with the assistance of the Lawson photographs has produced a beautiful introduction to 25 impressive English gardens. The photographs in this coffee table volume are particularly effective in conveying the overall structure and depth of each garden. While I appreciated reading about and seeing photographs of well-known gardens I had previously either visited or read about (e.g., Great Dixter, Packwood House, Highgrove, the Athenaeum Hotel), I was most deeply impressed and emotionally attracted to gardens totally new to me–particularly The Lynn Garden, Ascott, designed by Jacques and Peter Wirtz in Buckinghamshire. It's a stunning arrangement of turf mounds, grasses, trees, and pools in abstract forms–with no evidence of any flowers. I can easily imagine this private garden serenely complementing any season of the year. On the other hand, I was also attracted to Keith Wiley's Wildside, a Devon garden bulging with hundreds of different shrubs and forbs.

Rogers, Elizabeth Barlow. Writing the Garden: A Literary Conversation Across Two Centuries. David R. Godine, 2011. Publication sponsored by the New York Society Library & Foundation for Landscape Studies. This work is composed of 42 profiles of famous garden writers, all European (mostly British) and American, dating from the late 18th century–Jefferson and Rousseau–until the middle of the 20th century. Rogers has sorted the authors into a dozen groups, such as "Women in the Garden" (Jane Loudon, Frances Garnet, and Gertrude Jekyll) and "Rhapsodists in the Garden" (Celia Thaxter, Alice Morse Earle, Elizabeth Arnim, & Louise Beebe Wilder). While the groupings often appear rather arbitrary, the system does provide a means for highlighting recurrent patterns and traditions. Rogers provides succinct introductions to each writer, including a bibliography of their most important publications. I read this book last winter, and much of my subsequent reading in 2016 was following paths introduced in Rogers' survey (e.g., Reginald Arkell, Alice Morse Earle, Russell Page).

Sheldon, Elisabeth. *Time and the Gardener: Writings on a Lifelong Passion*. Beacon Press, 2003. After an introductory essay on "time and the gardener," the remaining 33 essays are divided into three groups: "What I've Learned Over Time," "Timeless Plants" (portraits of her favorite flowers), and "Gardeners of Other Times." An octogenarian, Sheldon has decades of experience gardening in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The essays often give a feeling of an author recognizing that she is growing old (and infirm), and she knows her garden will not be conserved by the National Trust or a garden conservancy, but it's the "doing" that

counts: “no one has had more fun than we have had.” As for her advice for novice gardeners? “. . . dig, plant, weed, work, and . . . read, read, read.” One needs to be “glad and grateful when something works out and not to grieve too much when it doesn’t.” While the book is full of practical advice on dealing with various flowers and soil/climate conditions, it also have many passages evoking her emotional engagement as a gardener. Here is an excerpt from the first paragraph of an essay describing her mother’s love of columbines. “As she lifted them to lay them in the box she said: ‘Look at them–they’re more beautiful than orchids!’ So, for the first time, I really looked at them. She was right. Above their scalloped, slightly grey-green foliage, they hung like butterflies, like dragonflies, hummingbirds. They flew, they floated. They were delicate, almost ethereal, with their translucent petals, their long slender spurs, their pale lovely colors, their fragility. They seemed to be barely attached to their stems, barely earthbound. No wonder they were named ‘aquilegia’ for the eagle and ‘columbine’ for the dove.”

Stace, Alison. Sculpture Parks and Trails of Britain and Ireland. 2nd Edition. Bloomsbury, 2013. Three 2016 Christmas presents are included in this bibliography. This Stace book happened to be a Christmas present for my wife. It became one of the most influential books either of us read early in the new year, inspiring us to organize a trip to Great Britain (with our daughter and her husband) that included two weeks traveling in England visiting sculpture parks–which inevitably means you are also walking through gardens. Stace’s guide combines good practical information (hours of operation, driving directions, price of admission, etc) with attractive photos and a useful appraisals of what visitors will encounter at each site. Two high points of our trip was spending an afternoon at The Sculpture Park at Churt in Surrey (very hard to find) and a day in St. Ives, Cornwall, visiting the Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden.

Uglow, Jenny. ***A Little History of British Gardening*****. Pimlico, 2005.** An enjoyable read, full of wonderful anecdotes, but not a text that thoroughly engaged me. Perhaps the problem is that this was my first survey history of British gardening, and I lacked sufficient mental hooks for snaring and retaining what I was reading. After finishing Uglow’s book, I then read the older Hadfield history. Although it had much thicker prose and far more detail, I found it more engrossing and easier to follow. Perhaps Uglow’s glow would be more appealing the second time around.