

# Fifth Annual Annotated Bibliography of Garden Books

## February 2021

This is my 5th annual February posting of annotations on gardening books I read the previous twelve months. As has been true in the past, most of my book reading occurs in the winter, a period when my outdoor gardening efforts are often quite limited. My time for reading was further constrained this past fall by the necessity of dealing with the aftermath of the August wind storm, creating unexpected demands on my time that will continue through the coming year. Despite the limitations in my reading schedule, I did manage to spend some time with many enlightening and enjoyable books on gardens. And has been true in the past, I found it a beneficial experience to re-visit these old friends, read my marginal notes, and search for the words to describe and assess these diverse texts. As an addendum to this year's review, I have added an authors' alphabetical list of all the books reviewed in the previous four bibliographies. ~Bob

**Ackerman, Diane.** *Cultivating Delight: A Natural History of My Garden.* Harper Collins, 2001. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> Ackerman book I've read, preceded by *A Natural History of the Senses* (one of the most interesting and informative books I've ever read, particularly on the subject of smell), *The Moon by Whale Light* (a book I often assigned for incoming college students in a course entitled Directed Summer Reading), and *A Natural History of Love*. Several years ago I purchased a copy of her garden book, wedged it on a book shelf between two other unread Ackerman books, and forgot about it. This summer I came across a short and rather negative commentary on the book, which reminded me that I owned the book and should check it out. I pulled my copy off the shelf, and Ackerman became my bedtime reading for the next week. I was not disappointed. While I can understand why some readers are not attracted to Ackerman's writing style, I love the vitality of her limber prose, her unmatched skill at devising unexpected metaphors, her willingness to pursue tangents and follow her curiosity in investigating dozens of diverse subjects.

As is the case with many other garden books, *Cultivating Delight* is organized according to the progression of the four seasons—though Ackerman complains that we need an expanded menu of more carefully defined seasonal distinctions. In the book's appendix she lists over 225 flower and shrub species in her garden—though this does not account for the multiple cultivars, including over 125 different varieties of roses. Ackerman emphasizes that she is not a professional gardener. She seeks to enjoy the pleasures of gardening and is not intent on producing a beautifully designed gardens for others to enjoy. Her book does occasionally talk about specific gardening techniques or practices, but she is primarily a garden ruminator, thinking about the “nature” of gardens, how we define gardens, what delights and benefits we gain from them. While portraying her deeply personal investment in her garden, she also introduces a multitude of related topics, offering us her observations on Robert Fortune (legendary collector of exotic plants), reptile sleep patterns, cardinals' feeding habits, John Whipple's observations of the moon in the 1850s, the migration of birds, the design of bird

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houses, the death of Edgar Allan Poe, the connections between rainbows and hummingbirds. *Cultivating Delights* was the most enjoyable gardening book I read this year and will be my primary source of quotes that I include in this year's four Kalendar blog postings (using excerpts from my 2020 garden journal). The Kalendar blog posts will provide a full sampling of Ackerman's analogies, but here are a couple of my personal favorites:

- "Most plants are pimps and thugs. Because they can't walk, flowers will do anything, no matter how lethal, extreme, or bizarre to get other life-forms to perform sex for them."
- ". . . summer days unfold like Charles Ives symphonies, full of the sprightly cacophony we cherish."
- "The more the merrier is my motto, let my beds be an Ellis Island of natives and immigrants whose cultures blend into a beautiful mix. But the road to excess leads to the castle of indolence, and hodgepodge beds take a lot of upkeep."

**Bailey, Elisabeth Tova.** *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2016. Although this is not really a book on gardening, Bailey once worked as a professional gardener and her skillful, disciplined perseverance as an observer of the natural world is certainly applicable for anyone trying to understand a garden's complex ecosystem. This is a book recounting an experience in which it would appear that almost nothing happens. Bailey is bedridden with a debilitating illness, and she spends hours day after day watching a wild snail exploring a terrarium on her nightstand. In the process of observing the snail's slow, quiet, methodical behaviors, she acquires an expected emotional solace and peace. The experience eventually leads her to do extensive research on this common woodland snail and use those investigations to illuminate her own life. It is a beautifully written book, an impressive celebration on a small subject. The book was my bedtime reading at a time when I was often exhausted by the tasks of cleaning up several gardens after the August derecho. I don't think I could have found a book more satisfying or inspiring. As one reviewer noted, the book is "an exquisite meditation on the restorative connection between nature and humans. . . . As richly layered as the soil she lays down in the snail's terrarium: loamy, potent, and regenerative."

Here are two of my favorite passages:

- "Despite its small size, the snail was a fearless and tireless explorer. Maybe it was searching for a trail back to its original woods or hoping to find better fare. Instinctively it knew its limits, how far it would travel during the night and still return home in the morning. On the crate's dry surface, the pot of violets was an oasis, offering water, food, and shelter."
- "In terms of size, mammals are an anomaly, as the vast majority of the world's existing animal species are snail sized or smaller. It's almost as if, regardless of your kingdom, the smaller your size and the earlier your place on the tree of life, the more critical is your niche on earth: snails and worms create soil, and blue-green algae create oxygen; mammals seem comparatively dispensable, the result of the random path of evolution over a luxurious amount of time."

**Buczacki, Stefan.** *Earth to Earth: A Natural History of Churchyards*. Uniform Publishing, 2018. [Read on Kindle] Academically trained as a plant pathologist, Buczacki is a distinguished British horticulturist and freelance author who has published more than 60 books and been awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal of the Royal Horticultural Society . His titles include *Collins Fungi Guide*, *From Blenheim to Chartwell: The Untold Story of Churchill's Houses and Gardens*; *Pests, Diseases and Disorders of Garden Plants* (a Collins Photoguide); *Pests, Diseases and Disorders of Garden Plants*; *The Herb Bible*, *Creating a Victorian Flower Garden*, and *Fauna Britannica* (an account of the entire wild animal life of the British Isles). This book on animals and plants common to churchyards is certainly not one of his major publications. It's a short book of short chapters offering broad generalizations about what you will or will not likely find in the "natural areas" of British churchyards. Because many of these churchyards have areas that have been left relatively undisturbed for hundreds of years, they often have flowers or fungi or lichen not readily encountered outside their boundaries. On the other hand, because these spaces are typically quite small, most animals could not rely on these yards to sustain their species over a long period of time. Buczacki does emphasize that because Great Britain has a rich diversity of both acidic and alkaline soils with quite different textures, the range of species in individual churchyards can be remarkably diverse. Great Britain has about 3,000 flowers growing wild in the countryside, and a significant percentage is likely to be found in some churchyard somewhere. Buczacki also points out that it would not be unusual for over 100 species of lichens to be found in a single churchyard.

Unfortunately I was reading this book on Kindle, and I suspect the printed copy with its many photographs and drawings would have made this a more satisfying reading experience. In terms of the written text, I felt the book did not really gain much momentum until the final pages when the purpose for this book finally emerges: the potential benefits of intelligent churchyard management in the larger conversation movement. The author estimates that about 6,000 churchyards in England are "managed specifically for their wildlife interest," but reminds his readers that protecting a churchyard ecosystem should not be equated with domestic gardening. The goal is not to create something that mimics a natural habitat but to conserve what is already there. Volunteers involved in this preservation moment should not assume they should be cleaning up an area and sowing a wildflower mix. The results would be anachronistic and misguided. He does, however, acknowledge that it may be acceptable to enhance native flora with seeds or plants of a missing native species. And he does discuss the benefits in planting native trees, particularly one of Britain's two native oak species, which host hundreds of species of moths, beetles, spiders, insects, and other invertebrates. "Over 400 lichen species have been found growing on oaks, along with around sixty-five kinds of moss and liverwort and over 4,000 different fungi – albeit many microscopic – while of course many birds and several mammals."

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**Clarke, Gillian.** *Nine Green Gardens*. Gomer Press, 2000. In the spring 2020 issue of *The Garden Quarto* we published "Miracle on St. David's Day" by Gillian Clarke, who was for many years the National Poet of Wales. Because of my admiration for her poem, I purchased copies of two of her books, the *Selected Poems* and *Nine Green Gardens*. The latter is a small book that brings together eleven poems celebrating the restoration in Wales of a garden that is probably Britain's oldest mediaeval garden. The poems are accompanied by photographs of the garden at various stages of its restoration. Unfortunately, my copy became water logged at some stage of its trip across the Atlantic, making it very difficult to separate several pages that had become glued together. While several photos were badly damaged, all the text survived intact. Nine of the poems focus on each of the "nine green gardens": a yew tunnel, cloister, Bishop Rudd's walk, church view wood, upper walled garden, lower walled garden, pool garden, stream garden, and pigeon house wood. I have never been to this garden, but I suspect the poetry would be a wonderful supplement to carry with you while visiting each of the garden areas.

In "Church View Wood," Clarke notes that "a poet shares a gardener's grand design: sound, pattern, meaning, double-digging, line," and it's evident there is a deep emotional bond between the poet and this medieval Welsh garden. For me, the most powerful poem was "What the Wood Remembers, Bishop Rudd's Walk." On one page is a photograph of white snowdrops on a hillside in early spring, and on the facing page is a poetic narrative of five young servant girls who died in their beds one winter morning, choked by the fumes of a blocked chimney: "People of no account, poor farmers' daughters. / No names. No documents. No graves. Instead / just talk of a tragedy, five young girls dead." The snowdrops and the poem become eloquent memorials for what the forest witnessed.

**Culp, David L.** *The Layered Garden*. Timber Press, 2012. Culp's book focuses on the garden that surrounds his home, Brandywine Cottage, in Pennsylvania. Culp introduces his design principles and plant choices for creating a garden with year-around interest. His text recurrently emphasizes the benefits of a garden with multiple layers in both time and space. He describes his gardening practice as an observer, editor, a "wizard behind the curtain, manipulating the scene in thought-provoking but not obvious ways, always trying to let the plants and their natural beauty speak first." He develops his case by illustrating the ways in which Brandywine Cottage has evolved and how he has positioned plants to give the garden successive areas of interest at different seasons of the year. The book includes a clearly labeled map showing the cottage's different garden areas: entry garden, ruin garden, halesia bed, driveway gravel garden, formal hellebore garden, vegetable garden, rose garden, nursery area, winter garden, north border, south border. His verbal portraits are supplemented by hundreds of Rob Cardillo's superb photos showing these areas at different times of the year and close-up photographs of the plants that thrive in this temperate Z6 garden. The photos confirm Culp's efforts to create a bucolic space that combines the pastoral and the wild. The garden is seen as "a living-growing-dying art form, always unfolding, always changing." Culp reminds me of

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General Eisenhower's advice that "plans are useless but planning is indispensable." Culp believes it's beneficial to have a "little anarchy" in the garden, that "making messes just might be an integral part of the creative process."

The second half of the book describes specific plants that play a key role in Culp's garden. Here are a few of those plants that I've never grown but would like to try here in Iowa:

- *Anemonella thalictroides* 'rosea' 'Oscar Schoaf' (long spring-time bloom; for a rock garden)
- *Adonis amurensis* 'Flore Pleno' (yellow petals, green center; blooms in late winter)
- *Aster novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome' (shorter aster; less susceptible to mildew)
- *Aster tartaricus* 'Jindai' (short aster; vigorous grower; yellow & purple blooms)
- *Epimedium x warleyense* 'Orangekönign' (orange flowers in spring)
- *Galanthus* 'Ballerina' (snowdrop with beautifully marked inner petals; Culp has a huge collection of different snowdrop cultivars)
- *Galanthus* 'Primrose Warburg' (with yellow ovaries and markings; a good naturalizer)
- *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Snowflake' (double-flowered native oak leaf hydrangea)
- *Stewartia koreana* (lovely flowers, multicolored exfoliating bark, fall foliage; a 4-season tree)
- *Trillium pusillum* (snow trillium; early spring bloom; purple foliage fades to green)

I'll conclude my review by sharing three passages I noted while reading the book this fall:

- "My garden's signature shape is provided by upstanding plants and man-made elements with vertical profiles. Since the predominant orientation of the garden is horizontal, these verticals—by piercing that horizontal plane—stand out, connect the earth to the sky, and help carry the eye from space to space when repeated throughout the garden." The integration of verticals is evident in Culp's use of rose pillars, bamboo teepees, a picketed garden fence, flowers with tall flower spikes (alliums, digitalis, kniphofia, etc).
- "Beauty is the main driver of my collecting, my twin desires to have a beautiful collection of individual plants and to combine them in beautiful ways in the garden. The more individuals I have, the more rich and layered the overall composition becomes."
- "It is good advice, in the garden and beyond, to love what loves us back, and not to covet what loves the gardens of others."

**Don, Monty. *Down to Earth: Gardening Wisdom*.** {Kindle edition.} For this publishing venture, Don has attempted to write a short, comprehensive introduction to basic gardening practices for readers who know almost nothing about vegetable and flower gardens. And perhaps the book will prove useful for some people in this group. The downside, as one would expect, is that Don must quickly and blithely cover a multitude of complex topics, and I'm not convinced he was particularly successful. I often felt like we were flying over a landscape in a drone, moving much too fast to obtain more than a superficial impression of the terrain before us. Don's prose on occasions feels worn, too neat, too facile. For example: "Gardens heal. When you are sad, a garden comforts. When you are humiliated or defeated, a garden consoles. When you are lonely, it offers companionship that is true and lasting. When you are weary, your

garden will soothe and refresh you.” Perhaps all true for some people some of the time, but the rhetorical neatness of the passage does not save the passage. Despite the lapses, the book provides novice gardeners with sound, practical advice. Particularly helpful would be the book’s final pages where Don provides a list of garden tasks to be completed each month, though of limited use for a Z5 garden in the U.S.–the book is exclusively intended for gardeners in England. After finishing the book I was surprised how often I had highlighted passages I wanted to retain—such as the following:

- Here Don is describing a gardener’s complex web of relationships with a garden: “Even the best gardener is not so much a conductor as a cross between the caretaker making sure the light bulbs are replaced and the member of the audience with the best seat in the house.”
- Don is a strong, consistent advocate for organic gardening, emphasizing that the goal is a productive garden that need not be perfect in appearance: “Diversity, not the number of plants or animals, is always the best measure of ecological health. Cultivate insects. Regarding insects as ‘bugs’ or ‘pests’ is absurd. They are the most important visible wildlife in your garden. Value them accordingly. Create suitable habitats, provide food and never, ever, kill insects indiscriminately. Revere fungi. Gardeners tend to regard all fungi as harmful. But do not be frightened of them. Only a tiny, tiny proportion do any harm at all and the vast majority are essential for life in the garden.”
- “We are ephemeral and make things that do not last. The place endures. It is the relationship – the tension – between these two that creates something interesting. We bring nothing into this world and take nothing with us – but leave something of yourself in your garden. Make it personal. Garden your own story. All gardens are made in layers, one on top of another, sometimes over many hundreds of years.”
- “You can never have too much green. Every garden should be set amongst lots and lots of green. All other colours then work from this base. A white garden is in fact a green garden with white highlights. Rich, jewel colours glow from an equally rich palette of greens. Green is endless in its variations and is the colour that begins and ends all planting. A garden that is just green can be – and usually is – a beautifully calm and inspiring place.”
- “Think of the garden as a series of interlinked spaces rather than as one complete, integral canvas. The best analogy is with a house. Although it can work to spectacular effect, few people choose to eat, sleep, wash, cook and relax in just one vast room. So it is with any garden. Break it down into its component parts.”
- “It is uncanny how choosy and almost perverse some plants can be about their exact placement and how seemingly tiny variations will affect them. Do not hesitate to move a plant if it is not thriving. Find it a better home – which may be only a few feet away.”
- Not a specific passage, but I appreciated Don’s vigorous advocacy for allotment gardens, and

**Don, Monty.** *The Road to Le Tholonet: A French Garden Journey.* Simon & Schuster, 2013.  
Book stores in England invariably have a section dedicated to books on gardening, and these

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sections will invariably have one or more books by Monty Don. It was inevitable that sooner or later I would dip into one of his books and decide for myself why his books were so popular. This happens to be the first Monty Don I added to my library, but it was the second book I read this year, after first reading his *Down to Earth: Gardening Wisdom* on Kindle (see previous review). It's hard for me to believe these two garden books were written by the same author. The *Down to Earth* text is a utilitarian, "how-to" publication conveyed by a speaking voice that in most passage remains rather dry and impersonal. In contrast *The Road to LeTholonet* is a memoir that recounts visiting gardens in France, covering a period stretching back to his teenage years. Don mixes personal anecdotes with travel writing and cultural history, frequently comparing French and British culture, cuisine, and gardening practices. Don introduces his principles for evaluating gardens. He celebrates gardens that he deeply admires while also explaining why he finds some French gardens shallow, ill-conceived, over-rated (such as Monet's garden at Giverny). Even though he was frequently writing about gardens totally new to me (and the quality of the photographs was not often helpful), I found the writing consistently engaging and enjoyable, a text I didn't want to stop. After having read *Down to Earth*, I was surprised at Don's crisp, insightful, engaging analytical commentaries. It was certainly one of the best garden books I read this past year. Here is a small sample of passages I found of particular interest:

- "Gardens are transient things, ready to run to wilderness and seed in the span of a war or messy divorce. Holding them in place is not so much like cleaning a statue as restraining a high-spirited horse. It wants to bolt."
- "I once asked the head gardener at Levens Hall in Cumbria [one of my favorite English gardens ] made in 1694 by a Frenchman, Guillaume Beaumont, and the oldest surviving garden in the UK, which is famous for its massive, monumental and surreal topiary, how long it would take to create this from scratch. About thirty years, he said. That's all? About that. For nearly 300 years all we have been doing is holding it back, working hard to stop it growing."
- A paragraph on "La Louve" near Avignon in southern France. "The garden was made between 1986 and 1996 by Nicole de Vesian, a fabric designer who, after retiring from working with Hermès, moved to the Lubéron to make a garden. She knew nothing at all about gardening but an awful lot about colour, shape, texture and style and had the wit to realize that the constituents of a good garden always owe more to good design than horticulture. . . . But Nicole de Vesian deliberately applied two other vital tenets to her garden. The first was to radically restrict her palette. No gaudy colours. She wanted her garden to be like an old tapestry so everything is muted, toned down, faded, washed out and weathered. Browns, sepias, greys, blues and greens. Stone, wood, earth. Not a blade of grass." Her second tenet was to create a garden that responded directly to the shapes of the landscape.
- On the Versailles: "It is a garden made for crowds, be they sycophantic seventeenth-century courtiers or twenty-first-century Chinese tourists with expensive cameras."

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- On the Hermés Roof Garden in Paris: “No one from the company touches it. . . . they all love gardening as long as they don’t have to get their hands dirty, so they have a woman from Aix en Provence who has been coming in to look after it for years. I talked to her and she, who lives in a tower block on one of the *banlieues*, loved her job. But the garden’s purpose is not to please those that care for it, any more than the purpose of fashionable frocks is to give satisfaction for those that launder them.”
- On Le Jardin Plume located between Rouen and Amiens in northern France: “Gardens are never natural. They are always fussed over, designed, details, and planned to within an inch of their lives. Every keen gardener is an obsessive, dreaming their gardens in the middle of the night, and straining after a perfection that nothing else can provide and which mostly eludes them. The trick is to make it all seem effortless and one of the most apparent skills at Le Jardin Plume is that Sylvie and Patrick know when to stop. They know the most important thing of all in any design which is what not to do.”

**Donald, Caroline.** *The Generous Gardener: Private Paradises Shared.* Pimpernel Press, 2018.

This book is based on a series of interviews conducted by Donald that were published in *The Sunday Times*, the newspaper where she has served as the gardening editor “since the turn of the millennium.” In her introduction she claims that the people featured in her book are “just people, like anyone else”—a portrayal not really supported by the evidence. In most instances these people and their gardens were chosen because of a perceived importance in British society, whether it be their aristocratic family connections or successful careers as authors, actors, gardeners, entrepreneurs, financiers, musicians. Most of the names are new to me but a few names I did recognize: Jim Carter (Carson, the butler in *Downton Abbey*), Jilly Cooper (novelist), Harrison Birtwistle (composer), Lord Carrington (Margaret Thatcher’s Foreign Secretary), Lady Mountbatten (godmother to Prince Charles), and several famous gardeners (Roy Lancaster, Dan Pearson, Fergus Garrett, Penelope Hobhouse). All the gardens are in private hands, and in only two cases could I recall having previously read anything about these gardens: Great Dixter in East Sussex (a garden made famous by Christopher Lloyd and overseen by Fergus Garrett) and La Louve in Provence, France (at the time of the interview owned by an American, Judith Pillsbury).

With the exception of a couple of vegetable gardens, all the gardens are perennial flower or landscape gardens primarily located in England, though Donald does include a few gardens in Ireland, Scotland, France, Greece, and Morocco. The majority of interviews were conducted in the first decade of the century, those articles followed by one or two paragraphs that tell us what has occurred with the garden owners and their gardens since the interviews were conducted. The interviews typically include 3-4 pages of text and 2-4 photographs, with at least one photograph featuring the individual or couple being interviewed. In most instances the photographs come across as rather pedestrian, rarely providing any notable insights into the design or textures of the gardens. But this may also represent the fact that over



20 photographers were responsible for the photographs and probably had to do the photo shoot on the day when the interviews occurred.

Most of the people interviewed are hands-on gardeners, but with a few exceptions these are not individuals who have written about their gardens or their gardening philosophy and practices. The book proved to be pleasant bedtime reading, but the portraits of gardens and gardeners remain relatively superficial, as if we were reading a collection of articles from *People* magazine. Donald is a polite, friendly interviewer and rarely has anything critical or disparaging about any of the gardens or how they are maintained. Not sure I gained any great insights or ideas for my own gardens, but here are a few passages that caught my attention:

- Christopher Gibbs, owner of a private garden in Tangier: “I am very interested in plants but I am more interested in gardens as adventure and experience, and surprises: a place to walk and think and reflect.”
- Roy Lancaster, whose autobiography I reviewed last year, describing his ideal garden: “It is like opening the curtains of a theatre. It is a stage, and all these performers—an international cast of plants—they each have something to give me.”
- Catherine Fitzgerald, an Irish garden designer living in London: “To really live, you need the biennials, the little surprises—echiums, foxgloves, the poppies that seed everywhere. . . . we’ve got this purple double poppy [that every year] pops up in a huge swathe in a new place and makes all these combinations you never expected.”
- Sam McKnight, a famous hair stylist comparing hair styling with gardening: “It is all about shape, form, colour and texture.”
- Neil Armstrong, a physician describing his eleven acres of a Cornish hillside: “I am a gardener, but also the curator of the space, so the artwork, the planting and the landscape have to fit together, without one taking away from the others.”

**Feluś, Kate.** *The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden*. I. B. Tauris, 2016. The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Georgian landscape gardens with their beautiful balance of grass, trees, and water are often celebrated as one of Britain’s most important contribution to European culture. Most histories of these gardens have focused on how these landscapes were designed by such figures as William Kent, “Capability” Brown and Humphry Repton. This book by Kate Feluś shifts the focus and focuses on how these gardens were used by the British people. The book is organized according to the hours of the day, describing the gardens as scenes for a wide range of activities, from early morning walks to afternoon luncheons to evening fireworks. This book apparently began as the author’s doctoral dissertation, and the book retains a rather flat academic style, perfectly serviceable but not many passages notable for their energy or incisiveness.

It needs to be acknowledged that Feluś had a difficult challenge, because she is writing on a subject about which relatively little can be known. The sources of primary documentation—letters, diaries, travel essays, novels, paintings, etc—are fragmented and often quite general and

cursory. The lack of useful data is particularly notable with regard to middle- and working-class gardens created by clergymen, doctors, and well-to-do farmers would have been used. Since virtually none of these gardens or their buildings have survived, Feluś must concentrate on the gardens of the nobility, which at the end of the Georgian period( in the 1820s) consisted of about 350 families. One important source of information is from paintings of the era, which frequently showed the people within their garden landscapes, and a notable strength of this book is the dozens of reproductions of art work from the period, though unfortunately the color and clarity of the reproductions is often compromised. With regard to these large, aristocratic, upper-class gardens, Feluś offers a few intriguing insights that suggest how they were used for more than just casual viewing.

- During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, large estates became progressively more important as scenes for exercise, especially for women. This is a point emphasized in Molly Peacock's *The Paper Garden*, another book reviewed in this bibliography, which describes Mary Delaney's daily exercise riding her horse.
- Many of the estates included large lakes, which were used not only for boating and fishing but even for scripted sea battles; Newstead Abbey, for example, had a fleet of boats, which included a 20-gun schooner manned by the estate staff.
- Bathing in a garden's bodies of water was a common Georgian activity in the mornings.
- Many gardens had buildings constructed with small libraries, frequently used for reading and study.
- Many gardens had menageries and some estates had extensive collections of botanical and zoological specimens.
- Most estates would have included a kitchen garden and glass houses, often combining exotic ornamentals with kitchen vegetables and fruits.
- As one might expect, gardens provided opportunities for amorous liaisons and sexual encounters; it is documented, for example, that Stockeld Park in Yorkshire was the scene for an adulterous relationship between Clara Louisa Middleton, the lady of the house and John Rose, a young and handsome groom—an affair in the 1790s exhaustively documented in the ensuing divorce case.
- Gardens were frequently used for playing and games for both children and adults: battledore and shuttlecock (early form of badminton), kites, swings, archery.
- In the afternoons and evenings, gardens were the location for the two most common leisure activities in a Georgian garden after walking: eating and drinking. Tea was a commonly served refreshment in the garden, especially in the early evening after dinner. It appears tea drinking in the garden pervaded all levels of society, from the grandest duchess to the tenant farmer.
- Night-time affairs, such as fêtes and fireworks, would typically be scheduled to coincide with a full moon. Paths were typically covered in light-coloured gravel so they would be seen at night.

**Hooper, Arthur.** *Life in the Gardeners' Bothy*. Malthouse Press, 2000. Although I am a big fan of the BBC's *Downton Abbey*, I was disappointed that the series never did show the estate's gardens. Given the size of the operation, the Crawleys would have had a sizable gardening staff, but those laborers remain out of sight. Hooper's memoir helps to fill a bit of that gap as he describes life of a young apprentice gardener at a series of large British estates in the 1920s and 1930s. As his title suggests, his primary focus is on the single men who lived in a bothy. Hooper comes across as a hard-working, conscientious person, consistently respectful of his superiors, but he is also ambitious, determined to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Head Gardener in a large garden. To obtain such a position required working at a variety of different gardens, in Hooper's case primarily working with flowers and in greenhouses. Each estate had a bothy, a building where 4-8 single men would eat, sleep, and socialize. These facilities, which had few extra comforts, were exclusively for unmarried apprentices. Hooper can only recall one female gardener that he ever worked with. Although this was a spartan existence, Hooper has fond memories of this 11-year period in his life and frequently expresses his gratitude for the friendships he developed while living in a bothy. He is also consistently complimentary of the Head Gardeners and their expertise—though he reveals that could often be rather inflexible and narrow-minded task masters.

By the time Hooper wrote his memoir, the distinctive social structure exemplified by the both had long disappeared. These large estate gardens were labor-intensive (several gardens where he worked employed over 50 gardeners) and very expensive to maintain. Although Hooper did obtain a permanent position as a Head Gardener after the Second World War, many of these large estate gardens had to be abandoned or transferred to private organizations or taken over by the National Trust.

Although not a professionally skilled writer, his prose is clean and clear and he does a reasonably good job in his description of each bothy where he lived, his relationship with his fellow gardeners, his relationship with each of the Head Gardeners, and the benefits of being a good cricket player for garden staffs that had a cricket team. Unfortunately, Hooper says almost nothing about the design of these gardens or any specific gardening practices. I don't recall a single instance where he talks about specific plants. He does mention that in several instances he worked with orchids but tells us nothing about these orchids or the challenges involved in raising them. While working at Gatton Park, Hooper recalls that they received some plants and seeds from one of the Kingdon Ward's historical expeditions to Eastern Europe and Southern Asia. The gardeners had to determine how to care for these plants and seeds about which they knew little or nothing. He tells us that they had some successes, including plants that were sent on to Kew Gardens, but he never identifies any of the plants by name. Although it was frustrating that Hooper provides so few specifics about his work as an apprentice gardener and that plants under his care, this was a pleasant read and provides some intriguing insights into the lives of those unmarried males who would have been living in the bothy at Downton Abbey.

**Mancuso, Stefano.** *The Incredible Journey of Plants*. Other Press, 2018. Originally published in Italian as *L'incredibile viaggio delle piante* in 2018; the English translation is by Gregory Conti. The evocative watercolor “maps” that accompany the text are by Grisha Fischer. A professor at the University of Florence, Mancuso is a scholar in the field of plant neurobiology. This book focuses on the remarkable ability of plants to migrate and colonize across the globe. He discusses how plants use animals, the wind, and other vectors to transport their seeds while thriving in inhospitable environments. Mancuso is a superb story-teller in a style that is amusing, informative, and thought-provoking. He describes how plants have successfully dealt with the Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown in Russia and the impact of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in World War II—recounting the survival of a weeping willow 1200 feet from ground zero in Hiroshima. He has three chapters on solitary trees that are totally isolated and three chapters on seeds that have survived hundreds of years, including the scientific regeneration of a grass seed frozen in the Siberian permafrost for 39,000 years.

Although there were not any passages directly applicable to my gardening practices in Iowa, Mancuso has certainly affected my thinking on two key issues. First, he presents rather convincing evidence on the intelligence of plants, demonstrating how assertive and adaptive they can be in insuring their survival. The second issue is Mancuso’s insistence that it makes no sense to establish precise boundaries between native and non-native species. As Mancuso demonstrates, species are constantly on the move. What we may currently label invasive species will be the “natives of tomorrow.”

*The qualities that make plants invasive are numerous. . . . great ability to spread their seeds; rapid growth; the capacity to alter their form in response to environmental conditions, tolerance of multiple kinds of stress; capability of associating with humans. All in all, these are the characteristics that make a species efficient, flexible, and resistant, capable of resolving all the problems that each new environment situation might pose. In short, they are the qualities that describe intelligence.*

In a chapter on coconuts and an explanation of why the fruits are so large, Mancuso includes a paragraph discussing how new seedlings can survive in dense forests, which allow little direct sunlight to reach the ground. The mature trees function like parents, taking care of the younger trees: “Most of the trees are connected through an underground network formed by roots and fungi, which live in symbiosis. By way of this network, the adult trees of the clan take care of their little ones, providing them with the sugars necessary to their survival.”

As for my favorite passage, that came near the end of the book while discussing the Osage orange—which happened to be one of the few trees that thrived on our farm in southeast Kansas. We had several Osage orange trees around our farm yard. My mother hated them because of the large, green, sticky hedge balls that covered the ground in the fall. I’ve seen hedge balls being sold in hardware stores (apparently used to repel spiders), but on our farm the only one who saw any value in these hedge balls was Candy, our cow pony, who would

occasionally nibble on a fresh hedge ball. I gained a new appreciation for the Osage orange after reading this passage in Mancuso's book:

*Although plants are more adaptable than animals, many plants surely became extinct in concomitance with the disappearance of the megafauna [such as the disappearance of the mastodons in North America]. Among the survivors are some well-known species, such as the persimmon and the papaya, and other lesser-known ones, like the *Maclura pomifera*. This plant, whose common name is the Osage orange—from the name of the Native American tribe that lived in the region where the tree grew—produces spherical infructescences of a diameter that can exceed six inches, much appreciated by the extinct North American herbivorous megafauna. Upon the disappearance of mastodons and mammoths, this species too inevitably found itself in trouble. For a certain period, some help for its diffusion came from wild horses, which started nourishing themselves on its fruit. In the end, with the continuous reduction as well of wild horses, salvation luckily arrived thanks to the plant's extremely hard wood, which made it the favorite of American cattle raisers for the construction of hedges and fences.*

Indeed, on our farm all the fence posts were made of Osage orange. It was also the primary source of the firewood that heated our farm house. In my backyard, I just rebuilt two raised herb beds, using hedge posts from our farm that I first installed in 1979. They are darn near indestructible.

**McGrath, Mike.** *You Bet Your Garden Guide to Growing Great Tomatoes: How to Grow Great-Tasting Tomatoes in Any Backyard, Garden, or Container.* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. [Read on Kindle]

The most annoying book I read all year. The author is determined to come across as chatty and funny. Occasionally the humor works, but most of these "look how amusing I am" struck my ear as juvenile and irritating, likely quite funny when being written but less amusing when being read. Here's one example that introduces McGrath's technique for determining if your tomatoes need watering: "Let's say you've lost track of all rainfall. You're a character on one of those daytime soaps, and you've just emerged from a coma to find that your fiancée—who was told you were dead by a doctor with dyslexia—has accidentally married your long-lost separated-at-birth brother, who misled a mob boss into thinking your car was gold-plated under that ratty yellow paint. And you don't know when it last rained." Despite these silly interruptions, McGrath knows a lot about tomatoes and offers some excellent suggestions for raising a fruit that can be very challenging. If one ignores the extraneous attempts to be funny, the book provides some succinct, practical recommendations. Here are several I plan to keep in mind this summer:

- Tomatoes are tropical plants; wait until two weeks after last frost date before planting them outside in your garden.
- Do not plant all your tomatoes in one area; spread them through the garden, giving each plant plenty of space (to insure ventilation) and surround them with flowers and herbs that can repel unwanted garden pests.

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- Do not overwater tomatoes (a point that McGrath makes over and over again). If you must water tomatoes, do not water in the evening or at night; best time to water is early in the morning.
- Mix crushed eggshells (source of calcium) into the soil for each plant.
- To deter cutworms (which were responsible for major damage to my tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and peas last year), insert 1" into the soil around each plant a tin can or plastic soda pop bottle with the lid and bottom removed. I'm planning to use plastic orange juice containers that can also serve as min-greenhouses.
- The best protection against disease is a layer of fresh compost around each plant.
- The ideal ratio of NKP nutrients for tomatoes is 3-1-2--but you want to be careful you don't give the plants too much nitrogen--which can produce large, beautiful green plants but no tomatoes.
- Bonemeal is the best source for phosphorus (the key element for good tomato production) because it comes in a form that can be quickly absorbed by the tomato plant; rock phosphate is another excellent source, but it should be applied in the fall.
- Greensand contains only a small amount of potassium but it's an excellent additive because of all its additional micronutrients; greensand takes time to break down so it should be added to the soil in the fall; some gardeners add it to their compost piles.
- For controlling fungal problems, McGrath recommends the Cornell University baking soda recipe and spraying the plants with a compost tea. Recipes for both mixtures are given in the book.
- In September, pick off any new blossoms so the plant's energy concentrates on the fruit already on the vine.

There was one piece of advice where I disagree with McGrath. He does not think gardeners should remove suckers because that is reducing the plant's "solar panels." My experience has been that removing the suckers ensures better ventilation, reduces disease problems, and increases the size of the individual fruit.

**Molnar, Martha.** *Taproot: Coming Home to Prairie Hill.* (Read on Kindle) This memoir was written by a child of Jewish Holocaust survivors who, after living and working in New York City and suburbs all her life, decides (with the approval of her husband, who has a similar ethnic and cultural background) to move to a remote hillside in Vermont and become closer to nature. When I downloaded this book, I had the mistaken impression Molnar included observations on her gardening experiences, but most of the book focusing on the couple's adventures in choosing a location for their future home and building a house (which in turn involved a sequence of frustrations with architects, contractors, road builders, etc). The basic structure of the book follows a chronological order, but Molnar does not hesitate to skip around in time zones, and it is occasionally difficult to follow her time frame and the length of various stages in the purchase and development of this property. There are also long stretches

in the middle of the book when the narration bogs down in recalling that “this happened and then this happened and then this happened.” The book begins to feel like one more tale of city folks finding out the simple life in the countryside is not so simple. An important point, but we’re already familiar with that tale.

Molnar, however, does offer some fresh insights on her this old story-line. I was intrigued by her commentary on her parents, who were fearful of a remote countryside dominated by dark forests, a horrifying reminder of their experiences in Auschwitz. Her father had been a slave laborer who had nearly died when on a forced winter march through the beautiful Carpathian Mountains. For her parents, “scenery meant danger” and safety was to be found in a city where they could make a living and raise their children. While acknowledging the truth of her parents’ experiences, Molnar appeals to research which has concluded that for the majority of humans, an ideal landscape will hills and trees in the background and an open grassy terrain with a river or lake in the foreground. “This preference goes beyond aesthetics. A forest provides protection, an open view makes intruders visible, and the water, like medieval moats around castles, creates a barrier. This kind of landscape is also typical of Africa, where humans first evolved.” This is the idealized landscape Molnar is seeking in Vermont.

The most convincing confirmation of their successful transition into rural Vermont came after their new home has been constructed, the private access road has been built, the indoor toilet is working, and she can begin to relax in their new home. Of course, there are still battles to be fought—for example, the long battle to halt the invasion of garlic mustard—but she does share a few moments when she shares with readers the beautiful garden evolving around her. But, she admits, old urban habits are hard to overcome. As a writer for the NY Times, her professional career depended on generating words, a skill that she finds can interfere with the pleasures of her new home.

“How I wish I could, just once, be purged of the torrent of words! Be perfectly still, not drumming fingers on the table or running them through hair or noticing the garden-chipped nails. To neither plan nor remember. I will do it. Now. I place a chair in the field. The faded lumpy cushion too. Comfort is important. But no books, no binoculars, no sweater, no water. Nothing for my hands to take up or distract my eyes. I sit, and the heavy grass heads rise above me. I am embraced in a tight circle of green sunlight. I place my hands on the armrests and wait for the buzz in my head to cease. I need to be open to voices other than my own. I will now watch the buttercup at work, I tell myself, then silence the thought. Words rushing in are an intrusion. I must stop trying to lasso the great mystery of the buttercup with words.”

**Morris, Ciscoe.** *Oh, La La!: Homegrown Stories, Helpful Tips, and Garden Wisdom.* Sasquatch Books, 2020. I had occasionally come across references to Morris’ gardening books and his reputation as a TV and radio personality. This past summer I saw he had published a new book

and decided to check him out for myself. *Oh, La La!* is divided into 52 essays, ranging in length from two to ten pages. Most of the essays were inspired by an amusing experience that he recalls in a very informal and conversational style. The texts usually include one or more humorous anecdotes, often concluding with a final sentence punctuated by an exclamation point! Most of his topics deal with landscaping and flower gardens, though he does have a few essays on vegetables. Specific subjects include his experiments controlling moles and flea beetles, placement of bird baths, composting practices, use of lacewing larvae to control “bad bugs,” nurturing mason bees, creating a stone landscape, growing potatoes in a container, applying wood chips as mulch. He comes across as a genial, fun-loving gardener who has really enjoyed life and his escapade as head gardener at Seattle University. Although an easy read, I’m not sure I gained any notable insights or discoveries. The most interesting essays were based on his relationships with the administration at Seattle University—though for me the most useful essay included his advice for growing Brussel sprouts, a vegetable that has never thrived in my garden. Morris has inspired me to give them another try this coming year!

**Nuese, Josephine.** *The Country Garden*. Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970. This book is written for readers who have a medium-sized rural garden—bigger than a backyard garden in the city but not a large estate. Nuese assumes her readers have limited resources and frequently includes 1969 price tags for anyone following her recommendations. The book is full of recommendations for plants and planting combinations, in most instances based on her own experiences. Although focusing on her experiences with a garden on an exposed north-facing hill in northwest Connecticut, she is operating in a Z5 hardiness zone with weather patterns quite similar to Iowa’s. On the downside, this book was published 50 years ago, and it would not be the most up-to-date guide for choosing specific cultivars or resources. In an appendix, she lists 21 nurseries, most of them in the northeast, that she has found to be reliable sources of plants, seeds, garden supplies, and garden ornaments. Since her list was compiled decades before the emergence of on-line nurseries, I did a quick Google search and discovered that at least 10 of these firms are still in business, including Burpee Seeds, Gurney Seeds, George W. Park Seed Co., Wayside Gardens, White Flower Farm, Gilbert H. Wild & Son.

Although Nuese frequently refers to her own country garden, she never provides us an overview of the garden, nothing about its size or design. The book does have about 50 black and white photographs sprinkled through the text, and in some instances that do support Nuese’s text, but the photograph reproductions are often rather muddy and we are never told the location of the photos. In this respect her book is quite different from David Culp’s *The Layered Garden*, another east coast country garden that is thoroughly portrayed in terms of its specific design and how it changes through the seasons. Nuese does offer a few observations concerning possible design options, but her primary focus is on the plants and how we ensure our gardening practices will ensure the survival of those plants. The book is organized according to the months of the year, each chapter introducing important seasonal tasks. The



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book is full of sensible, clearly written guidance on such tasks as sowing seeds, transplanting, mulching, pruning, etc. For example, Neuse frequently reminds readers of the importance of good ventilation, a topic introduced in the February chapter when talking about sowing seeds indoors but “essential to the well-being of almost all plants in all stages of growth.” She recommends applying a thin layer of vermiculite on top of seeds after they have been sown, to improve ventilation and conserve moisture. Neuse also provides useful guidance with regard to fertilization, particularly in her recommendations for the use of bone meal and manure teas for perennial flowers.

One notable pleasure of Neuse’s book is the author’s sense of humor. While I read several gardening books this past year that tried to be amusing, this was the one book where I frequently laughed at her witticisms and self-deprecating humor. Not all her efforts were successful (she frequently makes fun of women’s reputation for vanity), but the book was written over 50 years ago, and bygone comedy does not always wear well. Here are a few passages that I found amusing:

- On the use of stones to cover an area around a tree: “Where you will get these stones is, of course, your problem, though this is certainly no problem in New England where stones are mammals and breed like rabbits.”
- “The trouble with mint is not how to grow it but to keep it from growing.”
- “For years I admired [Madonna lilies] in other people’s gardens, but impersonally and without ardor, as one admires postal inspectors and the unsung artists who illustrate dictionaries.”
- “. . . to use these haughty [trumpet] lilies in the untended mish-mash of some country borders would be like doing the milking in a mink coat.”
- On the use of outdoor lighting in a garden: “Some people like it and some people don’t but according to those who have mastered the art it can make a briar path look like a flower show and Br’er Rabbit look like Zsa Zsa Gabor.”
- “For the way a plant looks when out of bloom is, to my way of thinking, even more important than the way it looks in its hour of flowering (which is when it is photographed for the catalogue) as you have to live with it a lot longer in this less glamorous stage. Choosing a tree or shrub is like choosing a husband or wife; you can be bewitched by the blossoms but when these are gone it is the character of the plant, its serene foliage, its intrinsic grace—or lack of it—which will be important to you for the rest of the course.”

**Peacock, Molly.** *The Paper Garden: An Artist Begins Her Life’s Work at 72.* Bloomsbury, 2010. Almost ten years ago I purchased a copy of this book (for reasons long forgotten), stuck it on a shelf that houses several other American poets whose last name begins with “P” (mostly books by and about Ezra Pound), and promptly forgot about it. Fortunately, one day last fall while walking by the shelf, I noticed this book with the word “garden” in its title and decided to see what it was all about. Thank goodness I did. This proved to be one of the best books I read all

year. It was entertaining, enlightening prose poem celebrating the life of Mary Granville Pendarvis Delany. While in her early 70s, this remarkable 18<sup>th</sup>-century British woman started creating 985 paper collages of flowers. Included in the book are lovely reproductions of eleven of Delany's mosaics: Hound's Tongue, Damask Rose, Nodding Thistle, Opium Poppy, Canada Lily, Passion Flower, Everlasting Pea, Magnolia, Bloodroot, Portlandia, and Winter Cherry. All the mosaics use a black paper for their background, creating a sharp focus on the flowers' details that reminds me of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch flower still life paintings. Delany's mosaics create a similar intense focus on the flowers being portrayed. These "mosaics," known as the *Flora Delanica*, eventually filled a 10-volume collection now housed in the British Museum.

Each chapter of *The Paper Garden* focuses on one of these collages and provides us with detailed information on how these collages, whose production required notable skills in aesthetic design, botanical observation, paper preparation, paper cutting (primarily by the use of scissors), and gluing (often of very tiny bits of paper). While describing these unique works of art, Peacock also provides an engaging biography of Delany, a skilled musician, writer, and conversationalist who was friends with a remarkable assortment of 18<sup>th</sup>-century illuminaries: George Frederic Handel, Jonathan Swift, William Hogarth, John Wesley (who apparently asked her hand in marriage), Joseph Banks, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Richardson, the Duchess of Portland, Lord Baltimore, King George III, and his wife Charlotte.

Interwoven throughout the text are Peacock's observations on her own biography and the unexpected parallels she discovers with Delany's life. The book becomes a highly personal and profound exploration of how creativity works and why such a remarkable artistic achievement as Delany's mosaics would have come so late in life. Peacock offers readers her own multi-layered prose mosaic, inspired by these hand-crafted mosaics from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Peacock demonstrates how Delany's unique achievement, "blooming" so late in life, was the understandable result of her previous experiences as a gardener, musician, painter, author, traveler, reader, dress designer, seamstress, and shell collector.

**Staw, Jane Anne & Mary Swander. *Parsnips in the Snow: Talks with Midwestern Gardeners*. University of Iowa Press, 1990.** This is one of the oldest garden books in my library, purchased not long after it was published thirty years ago. I had forgotten that Mary Swander had signed my copy, offering me her "well wishes" on the dedication page. The book's basic premise is simple and wonderful: the authors traveled around the Midwest (Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin) and recorded interviews with a diverse group of flower and vegetable gardeners. While the interviews frequently provide insights into various gardening practices, the real charm of this book derives from the engaging personalities of these unique gardeners. While Staw and Swander provide useful introductions and background information, this book primarily relies on the voices the gardeners. As a reader, I just had to relax and listen to whatever these people wanted to talk about. They all had plenty of opinions they were willing to share. Here's a small sample of my favorites:

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- “I wouldn’t know what to do with myself if I quit gardening. You have no problems when you’re out there in the field. You don’t think about nothing. All I’m interested in is getting the weeds out.” ~Joe Kantor; Omaha, Nebraska
- “At first I gardened just like Daddy did. But after the herbicides came in style, Bob and I used those. Now, Daddy never used chemicals. They wan’t really well known in those days. But when I was a young farm wife, there was so much propoganda that the chemicals were good, we used them just like everybody else. As I look back, I see I used too much Sevin. Then I got sick. And our doctor became concerned because the twins were sick, too. They had diarrhea and rashes. We didn’t put it all together for a while. Later, when I went to Dr. William Rhea’s Environmental Illness Unit in a hospital in Dallas, Texas, nineteen chemicals was found in my bloodstream from the farm sprays in this area.” Dixie Peterson; Oronogo, Missouri
- “I mostly just garden the way my dad gardened. My dad, he did truck gardening, but we always had a big garden for our own use. My mother canned about everything she could. But what did she used to say? Yes, that’s it: ‘You eat what you can. And what you can’t, you can.’” ~Larry Cassatt; Orongo, Missouri
- “Whenever relatives asked if he were worried about his garden in the dry spell, Floyd would draw on his Pall Mall, his tapered fingers forming a gentle arc over this mouth, and tell his aunt from Tulsa, his brother from Joplin, or his cousin from Wichita, ‘No, I ain’t worried. I ain’t worried no count. I just let the good Lord water.” ~Floyd Brannon; Galesburg, Illinois.

**Stewart, Katharine. *A Garden in the Hills*.** Berlinn, 2013 (Read on Kindle). This is apparently the first in a series of books Stewart has written on her life on a croft near Loch Ness in the Scottish highlands. The book is organized as a month-by-month account of her small rural garden and her daily chores as gardener, cook, and bee-keeper. She has a gentle, self-deprecating humor as she deals with getting older and her diminishing strength. Her gardening technique is relaxed, resisting any compulsion to impose a disciplined order on her garden. I initially had some difficulties getting into the book, and I set it aside for several months. But when I decided to finish the book, I found her voice and descriptions of her modest garden much more appealing.

Stewart compares her garden to an energetic three-year old grandchild, full of spunk and adventure, wanting to do all sorts of thing the gardener-parent can not handle. While the garden may often prove disappointing, giving the garden its freedom allow it to produce combinations of flowers and unexpected beauty beyond the gardener’s imagination. Stewart advises us to welcome these moments of serendipity. She doesn’t worry about weeds and even welcomes a few dandelions in her strawberries—their yellow flowers adding an early spring color while providing sustenance for the bees, butterflies, and other garden insects. In support of her tolerance, she quotes Gerard Manly Hopkins’ poem “Inversnaid”: “Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.” The one weed for which she has no tolerance is the horsetail—a weed that has also consumed many hours of my life at the Coe garden in the last six years. Near the

end of the book, Stewart summarizes her gardening philosophy, explicitly focusing on a gentle thread that winds its way throughout her text:

. . . in the garden I try to take a long detached look, to see the prospect as a whole. It is, after all, only a portion taken from the wild, from the heather and scrub, from self-sown conifers and birches. The wild would so gladly take it back and let its native creatures have their fill. Even now parts of it are developing a will of their own, and in a way of singular beauty. That willowherb, those grasses, ferns and ground-ivy in the wall, mosses on the stones, who could devise anything so innately appropriate? . . . Not for me trim lawns, neat parterres, knot gardens or topiary.

The book has a distinctly elegaic tone. Stewart knows her life in this garden will soon be coming to end (and, indeed, since the book was published she has left her croft and now lives in Inverness).

Days of stress, sadness or disappointment in any facet of life can be smoothed out as you look at the perfect structure of a flower. You stop and remember that root, stem and leaf have survived frost, snow, gale, every kind of storm or weather. You walk on, gather a sun-warmed strawberry, and realize that growing things give and give. After this garden? I can think of no other. Indoor plants don't do well for me. I shall have to rely on memory. This store is well-stocked already and capable of total, or almost total, recall. There are few, very few, black spots—the decimation of greens by rabbits or caterpillars, the uprooting of bulbs by the neighbourhood pheasant, a late frost—these will soon be obliterated. All the other images will have the freshness and colour of a morning in June. The scents and sound, too—clover in the early sun, the cuckoo calling from the hill-side birches, the swish of swallows' wings round and round the eaves. It will always be June.

**Stone, Daniel. *The Food Explorer: The True Adventures of the Globe-Trotting Botanist Who Transformed What America Eats.* [Read Kindle edition.]**

This is a biography of David Fairchild, a long-time employee of the Department of Agriculture. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>, Fairchild had a profound impact on American agriculture and the foods we produce and consume. Stone notes that prior to the arrival of Europeans in the western hemisphere, most of North America had only a few plants (e.g., strawberries, pecans, blueberries, a few squashes) that would have a lasting impact on our food options. The indigenous cultures in Central and South America had more diversity (corn, peppers, beans, tomatoes, potatoes), but this list pales in comparison to the incredible diversity of foods produced by civilizations in Asia and Africa: rice, apples, soy, onions, bananas, wheat, citrus, mangoes, etc.

Fairchild's personal mission was to travel the world, locate food plants that could be grown somewhere in the U.S., and find the means for transporting these seeds and plants to the U.S. and introduced into American agriculture. For many years this was virtually a one-

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man operation, working on a tiny budget and dependent a wealthy American who enjoyed traveling with Fairchild on a series of journeys around the world. Fairchild would eventually have some involvement in the introduction to the U.S. of such important crops as zucchini, alligator pears (what the Aztecs called avocados), capuzzo (a leafy cabbage that we now label kale), bean cheese (tofu), and wasabi (Fairchild believed that Japan had the world's most advanced horticulture). Eventually, Fairchild settled down, married a daughter of Alexander Graham Bell, and came to rely on other explorers to investigate the world. His most notable protégé was Frank Meyer, an intrepid adventurer who brought to America the Meyer lemon (we have one growing in our house) and the soybean variety that has become a major cash crop across the Midwest. While not a great biography, it is informative, particularly in the Fairchild's early years, and celebrates the accomplishments of a single individual who made a major, long-lasting contribution to American cuisine.

**Strong, Roy.** *The Quest for Shakespeare's Garden.* Thames & Hudson, 2016. Purchased at Kew Gardens in London, this is a beautiful book, with exquisite photo reproductions of drawings and paintings assembled by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Sir Roy Strong, who has served as director of the National Portrait Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum, is the world's leading authority on British gardens of the Renaissance and Elizabethan periods. This book expertly surveys the various ways in which devotees of Shakespeare's plays have viewed the playwright's textual references to plants and flowers. When Shakespeare purchased New Place for his home in Stratford-on-Avon, it already possessed a notable garden; however, the documents are silent on what that garden was like and what, if anything, Shakespeare may have done with it. While "Shakespeare gardens" have popped up all over the world (with dozens of examples in the United States—including one in Cedar Rapids), in most instances these gardens have simply attempted to include flowers and herbs mentioned in one of the bard's plays. Strong's primary focus is not on the plants but on the effort to transform the garden at New Place into a historically reasonable facsimile of what an Elizabethan garden would have looked like. The New Place garden is of more than sentimental curiosity because it is "a milestone in the emergence of garden history and recreation. . . . the first major public attempt in England to accurately recreate a garden of another age." Strong notes that the creation of the New Place garden was started just two years after the Great War. This garden was a to serve as an icon of national identity and a symbol of peace. While not a great book, it is short (easily read in one day) and reveals how evolving attitudes toward Shakespeare as a poet of nature corresponded with changes in British attitudes toward gardens and landscape design.

**Stuart-Smith, Sue.** *The Well-Gardened Mind: The Restorative Power of Nature.* Scribner, 2020. (Read Kindle edition.) Despite the book's laudatory reviews, I had some reservations when I ordered my Kindle version. While I believe gardens can have a "restorative power," I expected this book to trot out the typical generalizations about the benefits of gardening while repeating

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an assortment of old clichés. But I was wrong. Stuart-Smith is a psychotherapist who is an avid gardener (a 10-acre garden in Hertfordshire), for over 30 years has been married to Tom Stuart-Smith (one of the world's premier garden designers), and has extensive experience developing gardening programs that serve people with various kinds of psychological problems (for example, her involvement in a program at the Rikers Island prison in New York). I discovered there has been a plethora of serious academic studies on the interconnections between gardening and good mental health, and Stuart-Smith does a masterful job of summarizing that research and demonstrating gardening's positive impact on people's mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being. She does a superb job integrating resources from her professional training as a psychotherapist (with frequent references to Freud, Jung, and Fromm), and from a wide range of authors and historical figures across multiple fields (e.g., Xenophon, Montaigne, Voltaire, Gandhi, Thoreau, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the American poet Stanley Kunitz, the neuroscientist David Eagleman). She is a skilled writer, able to re-invigorate old ideas with a language that makes her conclusions feel fresh and convincing. When I finished reading the book, I had highlighted over 125 passages, almost one passage for every two pages. Here is a sample of passages that caught my attention:

- "A garden gives you a protected physical space, which helps increase your sense of mental space, and it gives you quiet, so you can hear your own thoughts. The more you immerse yourself in working with your hands, the more free you are internally to sort things out and work them through."
- "Much as there can be no baby without a caregiver, there can be no garden without a gardener. A garden is always the expression of someone's mind and the outcome of someone's care. When we step back from it, how can we tease apart what nature has provided and what we have contributed? Even in the midst of the action itself, it is not necessarily clear. Sometimes when I am fully absorbed in a garden task, a feeling arises within me that I am part of this and it is part of me; nature is running in me and through me."
- "Gardening itself can be a form of ritual. It transforms external reality and gives rise to beauty around us, but it also works within us, through its symbolic meaning. A garden puts us in touch with a set of metaphors that have profoundly shaped the human psyche."
- "Plants are so much less frightening and challenging than people that a garden may be more accessible."
- "For the Benedictines, gardening was an equalizer, and nobody within the monastery was too grand or too learned to work in the garden for a part of each day. This was a culture of care and reverence."
- "In a garden the level of background noise falls away and you can escape from other people's thoughts and judgments about you, so that within a garden there is, perhaps, more freedom to feel good about yourself. This relief from the interpersonal realm of life can, paradoxically, be a way of reconnecting with our humanity."

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- “We are a grassland species that emerged in the savannah landscapes of Africa, and over the course of evolution, our nervous and immune systems have been primed to function best in response to various aspects of the natural world.”
- “Gardening is more accessible than other creative endeavors, such as painting and music, because you are halfway there before you start; the seed has all its potential.”
- “The general rule in life is that we thrive best in situations where we have some control but not complete control. A total lack of control is stressful, and too much control is unstimulating, because life becomes boring and predictable. It is why, paradoxically, experiencing both illusion and disillusion, empowerment and disempowerment, doesn’t make us give up—it only spurs us on. We want to feel the thrill of the illusion again, and that, in itself, is compelling.”
- “The geographer Jay Appleton developed a psychology of landscape in the 1970s known as ‘habitat theory,’ based on our need to regulate the extent to which we can see and not be seen. He believed that we have an innate preference for environments that combine elements of ‘prospect’ with elements of ‘refuge.’ According to his ‘habitat theory,’ we automatically assess our physical surroundings in terms of possible hazards and scope for protection. A preference for parklike or savannah-type landscapes that offer both prospect and refuge is found across different cultures.”
- “One of the most basic benefits of spending time outdoors is the exposure to daylight. We easily forget that light is a form of nourishment. Our bodies create vitamin D from sunlight on our skin, and in addition, the blue light in the sun’s rays sets our circadian rhythm, our sleep-wake cycle, and regulates the rate at which serotonin is produced in the brain. Serotonin provides a background sense of well-being, helps to regulate mood, and promotes empathy. It also has an important effect on how we think and react because it reduces aggression, encourages reflective thinking, and makes us less impulsive. There is mounting evidence that PTSD involves a dysfunction of the serotonin system in which a vicious circle is set up. When serotonin is deficient, the threshold for activation of the amygdala is lowered, with the result that the body’s stress response is triggered more and more easily.”
- “Part of the pleasure of digging in the garden is the smell of wet earth. The aroma, known as *geosmin*, is released through the activity of soil bacteria called actinomycetes, and it has a pleasing and soothing effect on most people. The human olfactory center is remarkably sensitive to it.”
- “Everything that happens in a garden takes place in slow time; the flowers, shrubs, and trees simply get on with growing quietly at their own pace, and so it is with people.”
- “Americans . . . on average spend 93 percent of their time either in an indoor environment or sitting in an enclosed vehicle.”
- “Homo sapiens . . . we are the gardening ape.”
- “Freud points out that the enjoyment of ephemeral beauty entails opening ourselves to the loss of something we value. We are confronted with this not only in the fleeting beauty of the flower but also in the passing of the seasons, so that, he argues, we have to do a little bit of

mourning each year as winter approaches. The experience of mourning, which Freud called “love’s rebellion against loss,” involves pain, and the mind “instinctively recoils from anything that is painful.”

- “There is no negotiating with the march of the seasons or the pace of the natural growth force. You cannot slow them down or speed them up. You have to submit to the rhythm of garden time and you have to work within that. . . .”
- “Through grounding himself in nature, Jung experienced the immense interconnectedness of life: “At times I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the procession of the seasons.” For Jung, such experiences were a way of accessing the “two-million-year-old man that is in all of us.”

Much to my surprise, this turned out to be one of the most engaging, thought-provoking books on gardening I’ve ever read.

**Thomas, Graham Stuart.** *Cuttings from My Garden Notebooks*. Sagapress, 1997. This collection of 63 essays was my evening reading throughout the spring. It’s a big book, loaded with detailed information on a broad range of gardening issues. Thomas, an eminent authority on garden plants and design, has written extensively on roses, perennials, ornamental shrubs, trees for landscaping, the function of colour in garden design, ground covers, rock gardens, etc. As a Garden Consultant to the National Trust, Thomas played a pivotal in the restoration of historic gardens beginning in the 1960s. He is also a skilled artist whose drawings beautifully complement his written observations. His subjects in these essays include famous gardeners (Arthur Tysilio Johnson, Gertrude Jekyll, Nancy Lindsay), garden design (the uses of roses and weeping trees), theories of color (essays entitled “True Blue” and “Gardens of One Colour”), the function of plants with common qualities (e.g., “Climbers in Trees” and “Pines in the Garden”), his recommendations for particular cultivars (laburnums, jasmines, perennial peas, Portland roses), gardening practices (coppicing, pruning, mulches and mulching). Although my copy was printed in the United States and has some elements directed for American readers (a map of U.S. hardiness zones and recommended mail order resources), the essays are intended for gardeners in Britain. Many of the plants are not ones available in the U.S. or would never survive an Iowa winter. I often sensed I was reading about distinctions among cultivars that were irrelevant to my needs as a gardener. Nevertheless, there were dozens of passages I marked because of Thomas’s insights and his felicity of phrasing. Here is a small sample:

- The daffodils “bring us the first great glory of the garden’s year. It is yet too early to produce those studied gradations which we call colour schemes; they belong to later in the year, when the first gasp at spring’s bounty is over and we long to drag art into our garden pictures. It may be said that it is never too early to resort to art, but too careful a study of it can sometimes ruin the spontaneous enjoyment of a garden.”



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- “Nine-tenths of the garden’s yearly beauty is from leaves, yet we accord our fullest attention to flowers. Leaves are not only a background to flowers but an integral part of garden design and management; the evergreen shrubs control our views, and without ground-covering plants we should have to resort to hoeing or hand weeding, or even digging. Now, I have no objection to digging: it is a satisfying and excellent exercise, but if one is to have a well filled garden the spaces needing digging will not be great, and the lowly spreading plants will resent it.”
- “It is a great responsibility to plant a tree, anywhere. A tree will in all probability outlive the planter, who may own the soil where it grows but can scarcely be said to own the tree, a product of the soil and of greater nature.”
- “If we look through hedgerows, spinney and woods we shall note the wide variation of the trees and shrubs included; in fact, no two will be exactly alike in habit or leafage: a result of seed raising. I would go so far as to say that, while in hedges in gardens one needs the uniformity of vegetatively propagated stock, in the wilder application of the countryside completely the opposite should be the aim. That is what gives the irregular flushing of green in the spring and also the patches of colour in autumn. No woodland, planted from uniform stock, can compete in beauty with the natural variation of seed-raised individuals. But what we need in our smaller gardens is plants which can give a guaranteed effect and be garden-worthy, stalwart and long-lasting in their chosen sphere.”
- “A garden, however perfect it may appear to be, is never static. Even in the most naturalistic of garden styles, nature’s progress is being arrested by cultivation and maintenance. Schemes of quick-maturing plants may need a great deal of renewal during the many years that a tree, or even a shrub, is growing to its full beauty. For this reason, a garden of many parts and containing a considerable range of plants never matures as a whole, but is always in some part deteriorating. We gardeners seek to arrest the decay and do our best to keep a garden in good heart.”

**Weaver, William Woys.** *100 Vegetables and Where They Came From*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2000. Weaver introduces 100 vegetables that he has grown in his kitchen garden in Pennsylvania, where he has experimented with over 3,000 heirloom vegetables, flowers, and herbs. Several seed catalogs I use refer to Weaver as the source for the seeds they are selling, and many of the varieties described in the book are not readily available (though in some instances the problem may be that varieties exist under different names). Weaver provides each of the 100 vegetables with a 3-4 page profile that includes a history of the variety, Weaver’s personal connections with this variety (often describing where he first encountered it), recommendations for its culinary preparations, and miscellaneous tidbits. His book includes peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages, beans, beets, onions, cucumber, broccoli, eggplant, rhubarb, squash, and many greens (cress, lettuce, collards, orache, sorrel).

Although most of the varieties he touts were unfamiliar to me, I encountered a few vegetables I already grow: King of the Garden lima beans, spotted Aleppo lettuce, Cocozelle

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zucchini, Winter Luxury Squash (a great pie pumpkin), Toad Skin melons (my favorite sweet melon, one we first encountered on the island of Malta), and Petaluma Gold Rush beans (which did not do well in last year's garden). After initially marking about 25 varieties I would like to try, I did include these Weaver recommendations in my winter seed orders, which required ordering from several on-line seed suppliers I had never previously used:

- Buena Mulata Pepper (Baker Creek Seeds)
- Cutchogue Cheese Pumpkin (the Long Island Cheese Pumpkin in Johnny's Seeds)
- Flageolet Chevrier Vert Bean (the Maxibel Haricot Vert Bean in High Mowing)
- Juane Du Poitou Leek (Solstice Seeds)
- Mary Reynolds's Orange Tomato (Truelove Seeds)
- Merlot Lettuce (Hudson Valley Seeds)
- Roughwood Golden Plum Tomato ((Hudson Valley Seeds)
- Mikado Tomato (Truelove Seeds)

**Wulf, Andrea.** *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation.* Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. I purchased this book several years ago, expecting it would be an excellent choice for winter-time reading. I was not disappointed. Wulf demonstrates an impressive combination of research, insight, and narrative skill as a writer. Even when covering topics already familiar to me (such as Jefferson's farm and gardening practices), Wulf makes it seem new and revelatory. I was particularly impressed in revealing how agriculture and gardening practices were so fundamental to the beliefs and values of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison. For them, ploughing and planting was not just an economic necessity; tending one's farm was a political act that ensured the country's freedom survival. . Even when absorbed in the Revolutionary War and the political crises that absorbed so much of their public lives, these four future presidents were always thinking and writing and talking about their gardens, improved farming practices, experiments with new plants. In the midst of the Constitutional Congress in Philadelphia, a visit to John Bartram's garden helps resolve a political deadlock that allows for the delegates to agree on a common Constitution. "In Bartram's Garden, the delegates could see how the manifold flora of each state thrived together, their branches intertwined in a flourishing horticultural union." Wulf makes a compelling case that the Founding Fathers and their political/social/intellectual values cannot be properly appreciated without seeing them as farmers, gardeners, and conservationists.

One important dimension of the Founding Fathers' gardening practices that I had not previously recognized was their commitment to native flora. For example, early in the Revolutionary War, confronted by British warships, Washington sends a letter to Lund Washington, his estate manager at Mount Vernon, with detailed instructions on the design of new ornamental groves. Washington insists that only American natives (such as white pines, tulip poplars, red cedars, dogwood) be used. Washington did not want any English trees on his plantation. Although Washington was a careful reader of Philip Miller's *Gardeners Dictionary*

(the most important guide to gardening published in Great Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> century), Washington was determined to create America's "first ornamental garden to be planted almost exclusively with native species." Jefferson and Adams were also quite willing to learn from British gardening practices. Wulf includes a marvelous chapter describing an English garden tour that Jefferson and Adams enjoyed in 1786, followed five years later by Madison and Jefferson's tour of New England. It was on the 1786 trip that our country's second and third presidents came to appreciate how British gardens depended on the importation of American species, in many instances because of the work of John Bartram. At Monticello Jefferson hoped to create an aesthetically satisfying American garden of vegetables, fruits, grains, and flowers that would demonstrate the superiority of American agriculture and its plants.

One message running through Wulf's book is the progressive commitment of these men to improved farming methods and environmental conservation. Washington was the first American to build a "stercorary" (a covered dung depository) and developed a six-year crop rotation plan that eliminated the cultivation of tobacco, a crop notoriously harmful to the health of the soil. Jefferson and Madison also shared literature on the benefits of crop rotation. Although on a much smaller scale, Adams had an equal commitment to innovative agriculture and published an essay that emphasized the benefits of experimental practices "upon Soils and Manures, Grains and Grasses, Trees and Bushes." What was totally new to me was Madison's early advocacy of environmental protection measures, seeking to halt the destruction of the country's fertile soil and forests. Madison argued that sound agricultural practices required that "vegetable matter which springs from the earth" must be returned to the earth. The goal was a "balance of nature," a goal that would be achieved by a careful study of nature. Wulf describes Madison as understanding that nature is a "fragile ecological system that could be easily destroyed by mankind."

My primary reservation concerning this marvelous history is Wulf's silence on the role of slavery in the farming and gardening practices of the three Virginia plantation owners. Virtually nothing is said about the slaves' labor, their expertise, their contributions to the successes of the plantations administered by Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. We learn nothing about who these slaves were, and with the exception of one paragraph describing how Washington would on occasion join with the slaves in some physical labor, nothing about the working relationship between the slaves and their owners. While this book is an impressive celebration of the founders' ideas about agriculture and gardens, it's unfortunate Wulf did not provide more insight into the system and practices which brought those ideas into the real world.

## **Addendum**

### **Comprehensive List of Gardening Books in February Blog Bibliographies, 2016-2019**

The year when the book was read is in brackets at the end of the each entry;

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a book's review would have been posted in February of the following year.

**Akeroyd, Simon.** *100 Perfect Plants: A Simple Plan for Your Dream Garden*. National Trust, 2017. [2019]

**Anderton, Stephen.** *Lives of the Great Gardeners*. Thames & Hudson, 2016. [2019]

**Arkell, Riginald.** *Old Herbaceous: A Novel of the Garden*. Modern Library, 2003. First published, 1950. [2016]

**Austen, Jane.** *Mansfield Park*. Kindle edition; first published in 1814. [2019]

**Biggs, Matthew.** *RHS Lessons from Great Gardeners*. Mitchell Beazley, 2015. [2018]

**Blaikie, Thomas.** *Diary of a Scotch Gardener*. Edited by Francis Birrell. George Routledge, 1931. [2016]

**Bonsall, Will.** *Will Bonsall's Essential Guide to Radical, Self-Reliant Gardening*. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015. [2018]

**Bronzert, Kathleen & Bruce Sherwin.** *The Glory of the Garden*. Avon Books, 1993. [2018]

**Burke, Sue.** *Semiosis*. Kindle edition. [2019]

**Campbell, Susan.** *Cottessbrooke: An English Garden*. Century Hutchinson, 1987. [2017]

**Carse, James P.** *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility*. The Free Press, 1986. [2018]

**Chatto, Beth.** *Garden Notebook*. Orion Paperback, 1998; first published in 1988. [2018]

**Cooper, Thomas C.** *Odd Lost: Season Notes of a City Gardener*. Henry Holt, 1995. [2017]

**Cooper, Thomas C., Editor.** *The Roots of My Obsession: Thirty Great Gardeners Reveal Why They Garden*. Timber Press, n.d. [2017]

**Cotner, June.** *Garden Blessings: Prose, Poems and Prayers Celebrating the Love of Gardening. Kindle Edition*. [2016]

**Crawford, Stanley.** *A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm*. Edward Burlingame Books, 1992. [2019]

**Cullina, William.** *Understanding Perennials: A New Look at an Old Frontier*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. [2017]

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**Dickey, Page.** *Embroidered Ground: Revisiting the Garden.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. [2017]

**Earle, Alice Morse.** *Old Time Gardens.* University Press of New England, 2005. First published 1901. Introduction by Virginia Lopez Begg. [2016]

**Easton, Valerie & David Laskin.** *Artists in Their Gardens.* Sasquatch Books, 2001. Photography by Allan Mandell. [2016]

**Eck, Joe and Wayne Winterrowd.** *Our Life in Gardens.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009. [2016]

**Eck, Joe & Wayne Winterrowd.** *To Eat: A Country Life.* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013. [2018]

**Edwards, Ambra.** *The Story of the English Garden.* National Trust, 2018. [2019]

**Edworthy, Niall.** *The Curious Gardener's Almanac: Centuries of Practical Garden Wisdom.* Penguin Books, 2006. [2018]

**Ellacombe, Henry.** *In a Gloucestershire Garden.* Kindle edition. [2019]

**Ellacombe, Henry N.** *In My Vicarage Garden and Elsewhere.* Kindle Edition. Original edition in 1901. [2016]

**Elliott, Charles.** *Why Every Man Needs a Tractor And Other Revelations in the Garden.* Frances Lincoln, 2011. 2016]

**Ely, Helena Rutherford.** *A Woman's Hardy Garden. 1930.* Kindle Edition. [2016]

**Etty, Thomas & Lorraine Harrison.** *Heirloom Plants: A Complete Compendium of Heritage Vegetables, Fruit, Herbs & Flowers.* Ivy Press, 2015. [2018]

**Fenton, James.** *A Garden from a Hundred Packets of Seed.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. [2017]

**Fish, Margery.** *We Made a Garden.* Random House Modern Library Edition, 2002; first published in 1956. [2018]

**Floud, Roderick.** *An Economic History of the English Garden.* Allen Lane, 2019. [2019]

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**Forkner, Lorene Edwards & Linda Plato.** *Hortus Miscellaneous: A Gardener's Hodgepodge of Information & Instruction.* Sasquatch Books, 2007. [2018]

**Fortier, Jean-Martin.** *The Market Gardener.* New Society Publishers, 2014. [2019]

**Fox, Robin Lane.** *Thoughtful Gardening.* Basic Books, 2010. [2019]

**Francis, Mark & Randolph T. Hester, Jr., Editors.** *The Meaning of Gardens: Idea, Place, and Action.* MIT Press, 1991. [2017]

**Gillman, Jeff and Meleah Maynard.** *Decoding Gardening Advice: The Science Behind the 100 Most Common Recommendations.* Kindle Edition. [2016]

**Goldman, Amy.** *Heirloom Harvest.* Bloomsbury 2015. Photographs by Jerry Spagnoli. [2016]

**Goldman, Amy.** *Melons for the Passionate Grower.* Workman Publishing, 2002. [2019]

**Hadfield, Miles.** *A History of British Gardening.* John Murray, 1979 (orig. edition 1960) [2016]

**Hamer, Marc.** *How to Catch a Mole: Wisdom from a Life Lived in Nature.* Greystone Books, 2019. [2019]

**Harrison, Robert Pogue.** *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition.* University of Chicago Press, 2008. [2016]

**Hensel, Margaret.** *English Cottage Gardening for American Gardeners.* W. W. Norton, 2000. [2016]

**Hills, Lawrence D.** *Fight Like the Flowers.* Green Books, 1989. [2017]

**Hobhouse, Penelope.** *Plants in Garden History.* Pavillion Books, 1997. [2017]

**Holloway, Jane, editor.** *The Language of Flowers: Poems.* Alfred A. Knopf, Everyman's Library Pocket Poets, 2017. [2019]

**Hudson, Jules.** *Walled Gardens.* National Trust, 2018. [2019]

**Jekyll, Gertrude.** *Wood and Garden: Notes and Thoughts, Practical and Critical, of a Working Amateur.* Ed. By Graeme Stockdale. Kindle edition, 2015. [2016]

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**Jenkins, Allen.** *Plot 29: A Memoir.* 4<sup>th</sup> Estate, 2017. [2018]

**Johnson, Victoria.** *American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic.* Liveright Publishing, 2018. [2018]

**Klaus, Carl.** *My Vegetable Love: A Journal of a Growing Season.* Houghton Mifflin, 1996. [2016]

**Kunitz, Stanley (with Genine Lentine).** *The Wild Braid: A Poet Reflects on a Century in the Garden.* W. W. Norton. [2016]

**Lancaster, Roy.** *My Life with Plants.* Royal Horticultural Society, 2017. [2019]

**LeHoullier, Craig.** *Epic Tomatoes: How to Select & Grow the Best Varieties of All Time.* Storey Publishing, 2015. [2016]

**Leighton, Ann.** *Early American Gardens: "For Meate or Medicine."* University of Massachusetts Press, 1986; originally published in 1970. [2018]

**Lively, Penelope.** *Life in the Garden.* Viking, 2017. [2019]

**Lloyd, Christopher.** *The Well-Tempered Garden.* New and Revised Edition. Penguin Books, 1985. [2016]

**Lloyd, Christopher and Beth Chatto.** *Dear Friend and Gardener: Letters on Life and Gardening.* Frances Lincoln, 1998. [2016]

**Mabey, Richard.** *A Brush with Nature: Reflections on the Natural World.* BBC Books, 2010. [2019]

**Mabey, Richard.** *The Cabaret of Plants: Forty Thousand Years of Plant Life and the Human Imagination.* W. W. Norton, 2015. [2018]

**McDowell, Marta.** *Emily Dickinson's Gardens: A Celebration of a Poet and Gardener.* McGraw-Hill, 2005. [2017]

**Michel, Carol J.** *Potted and Pruned: Living a Gardening Life.* Gardenangelist Books, 2017. [2017]

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**Mickey, Thomas J.** *America's Romance with the English Garden*. Ohio University Press, 2013. [2016]

**Nardi, James.** *Discoveries in the Garden*. University of Chicago Press, 2018. [2018]

**Nauseef, Judy.** *Gardening with Native Plants in the Upper Midwest: Bringing the Tallgrass Prairie Home*. University of Iowa Press, 2016. [2016]

**Page, Russell.** *The Education of a Gardener*. New York Review Books, 2007. [2016]

**Pavord, Anna.** *The Curious Gardener*. Bloomsbury, 2010. [2016]

**Pollan, Michael.** *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*. Laurel Paperback, 1991. [2017]

**Petrie, Ruth, Editor.** *Notes from the Garden: A Collection of the Best Garden Writing from The Guardian*. Guardian Books, 2009. [2017]

**Richardson, Barbara, Editor.** *Dirt: A Love Story*. University Press of New England, 2015. [2017]

**Richardson, Tim.** *The New English Garden*. Frances Lincoln, 2013. [2016]

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**Rogers, Elizabeth Barlow.** *Writing the Garden: A Literary Conversation Across Two Centuries*. David R. Godine, 2011. [2016]

**Royer, France & Richard Dickinson.** *Weeds of the Northern U.S. and Canada*. University of Alberta Press, 1999. [2017]

**Rupp, Rebecca.** *Blue Corn & Square Tomatoes*. Storey Communications, 1987. [2019]

**Sabbagh, Karl.** *A Rum Affair: A True Story of Botanical Fraud*. Da Capo Press, 1999. [2017]

**Sales, John.** *Shades of Green: My Life as the National Trust's Head of Gardens*. Unicorn, 2018. [2018]

**Sheldon, Elisabeth.** *Time and the Gardener: Writings on a Lifelong Passion*. Beacon Press, 2003. [2016]



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**Solomon, Steve.** *The Intelligent Gardener: Growing Nutrient-Dense Food.* New Society Publishers, 2013. [2019]

**Stace, Alison.** *Sculpture Parks and Trails of Britain and Ireland.* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Bloomsbury, 2013. [2016]

**Strong, Roy.** *A Celebration of Gardens.* Timber Press, 1993; first published by HarperCollins in 1991. [2019]

**Swift, Katherine.** *The Morville Hours.* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008. [2019]

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