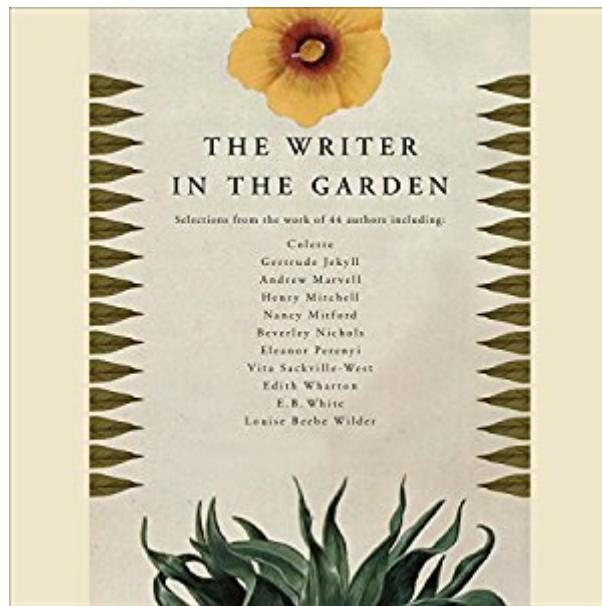


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# The Writer In The Garden



## **Synopsis**

The Writer in the Garden adds up to a glorious compendium of writing that is amusing, original, and idiosyncratic. Excerpts span not only the beauties of the garden but such far-reaching topics as weeds, the tribulations of gardening in a cold climate, the dangers of rare plant collecting, the delights of weeding, the pitfalls of growing roses, and the place of "tacky" in a garden. With selections carefully chosen from both sides of the Atlantic, this anthology pays homage to the great garden writers of the 19th and early 20th centuries while, at the same time, introducing the listener to some of the most original voices of today's generation of garden writers. Books on gardening have become a marketing phenomenon. However, this is the first time an anthology of garden writing has appeared on audio. Impeccably read by a group of professional actors, this potpourri of philosophical meanderings, passionate observations, and practical advice is essential listening for all gardeners and garden lovers. The authors include Gertrude Jekyll, Vita Sackville-West, Abby Adams, Edith Wharton, Stephen Lacey, E. B. White, Beverly Nichols, Ken Druse, Eleanor Perenyi, W. S. Merwin, Mirabel Osler, Henry Mitchell, Jamaica Kincaid, Robert Dash, Sara B. Stein, Michael Pollan, M.F.K. Fisher, Anne Raver, Patti Hagan, and Paula Deitz.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is my favorite book about gardeners. This is not a how to; if you need a book about how to plant & care for a garden, this is the wrong book. It is, however, a book about how people feel while gardening, why they began & how steady effort made wonderful, peaceful places (do not forget, a garden often qualifies as a work of art). There are stories about gardeners who refuse to quit after

they realize troubles of life disappear while they work the soil. The book's stories are sometimes serious, sometimes hilarious, about action that defy logic, as people attempt to grow problematic impossible vegetation in places no gardener has yet dared to place a shovel. If not a gardener, the reader may decide to try a few plants, an exhilarating experience of great benefit to the soul. This will help to understand why people in the stories keep at it, even if injured (I have three herniated discs & a titanium cage holding my spine together). This book might change your life. Remember, begin slowly & avoid lifting plants weighing the same as you.

The book was a gift for someone who is....a writer and has a garden...so a great choice! In response to my inquiry; she wrote ....."The book is wonderful. Each of the essays is a unique perspective on the garden. Absolutely lovely, especially during the foggy, cold winter."

Beautiful book! And, enjoyable, interesting reading especially for those who garden or like being in one!

I had previously read many of the books, articles, news columns etc. excerpted in Jane Garmey's book "The Writer in the Garden" but I read them again because most are very well written. Now, I'll hand the book over to my daughter who has recently taken an interest in gardening. She's approaching 40 and one of the writers in this book suggests 40 is the fateful age when gardening takes on new meaning. If you haven't read many "garden" books and are looking for a place to begin, try this book. There are about 10,000 garden books on the market, many of them not worth a dime, but Garmey has included excerpts from some of the masters: Henry Mitchell, Anne Raver, Beverly Nichols, Vita Sackville West, Elizabeth Lawrence, Allen Lacy, Katherine White, Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd. All these excellent gardeners have years of hands-on experience, as well as a talent for distilling years of experience into some fine "yarns." I discovered a new writer whose book of poetry I intend to read--W. S. Merwin. He describes his gardening efforts in Hawaii. I lived there once, and recall taking a dead stick and using it as a stake to prop a plant. The "dead" stick came to life. An idiot could garden in Hawaii. However, Mr. Merwin is trying to do something different. He's planting native flora in his hillside garden where fools once tried to grow sugar. His writing is so lucid and beautiful I felt transported to a garden I left over 30 years ago. His essay, "The Shape of Water" is worth the price of the book. Ms Garmey has included other writers I don't think of as garden writers. Mary Francis Kennedy Fisher, whose autobiographical writings focus more on food than where it came from writes about roses in a childhood garden. Since she grew up in Whittier

California, you can bet those roses were superb. Several of the writers were boring or fretful and I am put off by both traits. I don't care for articles that give me so much detail I fall asleep, but not enough detail to help me. I also am tired of writers who complain. Anyone who gardens knows it's hard work. On the other hand, sometimes the complaints were hilarious. Eleanor Perenyi does seem to have had a run of bad luck with her gardeners. Before you invest in other gardening books, you might review the material in this little book. You will discover first hand why not all "garden" writers are created equal--or even if they are, may not appeal to you. This is a book of essays with little immediate practical information for beginners. Still, one never knows...

In one of the loveliest parts of Milton's "Paradise Lost," Adam and Eve talk about gardening, describing the beauties of their mornings amidst the trees & flowers, and lamenting the work involved in keeping things pruned. Readers will find in Jane Garmey's many-splendoured "The Writer in the Garden" 65 four or five page selections organized in five sections: A Taste for Gardens, Gardeners in the Garden, Design in the Garden, Seasons in the Garden, and Garden Variety. Some are from gardeners who are also writers such as Wayne Winterrowd & Joe Eck; some are by writers who are also gardeners such as Vita Sackville-West and Michael Pollan; and some usually write about other things but have burst into bloom on a particular topic, such as E. B. White's poignant introduction to his wife's "Onward & Upward in the Garden" and Thoreau's report on his bean field. The selections are pungent with opinion as gardeners are nothing if not opinionated, intoxicating with enthusiasms, and shivering & quivering with the gardeners' eternal challenges (too many bugs, too little space, persnickety plants, and, as noted, when everything grows lavishly, pruning). I am a coffee farmer and every fiber resonates to these reports from the writer-gardeners Garmey brings to us. Are some selections better than others? Yes indeed. Henry Mitchell to me is on a pedestal all his own, for example. All the selections, however, are by skilled writers, motivated by a vegetable passion, and they're fine reading. If readers find a favorite, much-loved voice, the writer of their choice probably has several full books which can be obtained at almost give-away used-book prices. This is about about the feelings & experiences of gardeners and gardening. It is not a how-to book nor a book for the advanced, expert gardener whose library probably encompasses all the selected writers and more. Readers can expect to learn, but should anticipate the need to look elsewhere for detailed instruction. No shortage there, in the thousand or more books on just about every aspect of gardens from terrariums to designs for mighty acres. Highly recommended, as the five stars indicate. Friends to whom I've given this book have joined in voicing my only regret: there is, as yet, no "The Writer in the Garden, Vol. II" At the low used book prices,

"The Writer in the Garden" is an excellent value---including the well-chosen botanical prints on the cover and introducing each selection, the signature binding, and the words, the words, the words.

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