

The Plant Hunters Two Hundred Years Of Adventure And Discovery Around The World

An A-to-Z compendium of more than 200 garden elements, styles, features, and ornaments for gardeners around the globe. Following the bestselling *The Gardener's Garden*, garden expert and historian Toby Musgrave explores the creative art of garden-making through more than 200 elements and features. This is the ultimate reference guide, with entries ranging from All-Season and Bower to Formal, Native Planting, and Xeriscape -- each illustrated with examples drawn from historic and contemporary gardens around the world. Whether tending an English cottage garden or a Japanese Zen landscape, gardeners and garden lovers everywhere will be inspired as never before.

The fifth order of the natural kingdom is made up of an estimated 1.5 million species of fungi, found in every habitat type worldwide. *The Book of Fungi* takes 600 of the most remarkable fleshy fungi from around the world and reproduces each at its actual size, in full colour, and accompanied by a scientific explanation of its distribution, habitat, association, abundance, growth form, spore colour and edibility. Location maps give at-a-glance indications of each species' known global distribution, and specially commissioned engravings show different fruitbody forms and provide the vital statistics of height and diameter. There's a place, too, for readers to discover the more bizarre habits of fungi from the predator that hunts its prey with lassos to the one that entices sows by releasing the pheromones of a wild boar. Mushrooms, morels, puffballs, toadstools, truffles, chanterelles fungi from habitats spanning the poles and the tropics, from the highest mountains to our own gardens are all on display in this definitive work.

For centuries, from foodstuffs to industrial materials, plants have dominated trade between countries. Possession of rare spices, sweets, and narcotics could mean enviable wealth and power, so explorers ventured forth, risking death on unknown seas. Here are stories of seven plants--tobacco, sugar, cotton, tea, poppies, quinine, and rubber--and how Europe's hunger for them led to the Age of Empire and turned world history upside down. Not only did these crops ensure the commercial success of America and Europe, but they became the catalyst for piracy, smuggling, addiction, and the slave trade: the darker side of the golden profits. A beautiful presentation of a fascinating subject. "Should appeal to all rugged individualists who dream of escape to the forest."—*The New York Times Book Review* Sam Gibley is terribly unhappy living in New York City with his family, so he runs away to the Catskill Mountains to live in the woods—all by himself. With only a penknife, a ball of cord, forty dollars, and some flint and steel, he intends to survive on his own. Sam learns about courage, danger, and independence during his year in the wilderness, a year that changes his life forever. "An extraordinary book . . . It will be read year after year." —*The Horn Book*

Follows the lives of six men who shared a passion for plants and a love of gardening in eighteenth-century London, who made Britain the epicenter of horticulture, and transformed gardening from an aristocratic pastime to a national obsession.

Krakauer's page-turning bestseller explores a famed missing person mystery while unraveling the larger riddles it holds: the profound pull of the American wilderness on our imagination; the allure of high-risk activities to young men of a certain cast of mind; the complex, charged bond between fathers and sons. "Terrifying... Eloquent... A heart-rending drama of human yearning." —*New York Times* In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How Christopher Johnson McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of *Into the Wild*. Immediately after graduating from college in 1991, McCandless had roamed through the West and Southwest on a vision quest like those made by his heroes Jack London and John Muir. In the Mojave Desert he abandoned his car, stripped it of its license plates, and burned all of his cash. He would give himself a new name, Alexander Supertramp, and, unencumbered by money and belongings, he would be free to wallow in the raw, unfiltered experiences that nature presented. Craving a blank spot on the map, McCandless simply threw the maps away. Leaving behind his desperate parents and sister, he vanished into the wild. Jon Krakauer constructs a clarifying prism through which he reassembles the disquieting facts of McCandless's short life. Admitting an interest that borders on obsession, he searches for the clues to the drives and desires that propelled McCandless. When McCandless's innocent mistakes turn out to be irreversible and fatal, he becomes the stuff of tabloid headlines and is dismissed for his naiveté, pretensions, and hubris. He is said to have had a death wish but wanting to die is a very different thing from being compelled to look over the edge. Krakauer brings McCandless's uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows, and the peril, adversity, and renunciation sought by this enigmatic young man are illuminated with a rare understanding--and not an ounce of sentimentality. Mesmerizing, heartbreaking, *Into the Wild* is a tour de force. The power and luminosity of Jon Krakauer's storytelling blaze through every page.

Roses, jasmine, fuchsia, chrysanthemums, and rhododendrons bloom in gardens across the world, and yet many of the most common varieties have roots in Asia. How is this global flowering possible? In 1829, surgeon and amateur naturalist Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward placed soil, dried leaves, and the pupa of a sphinx moth into a sealed glass bottle, intending to observe the moth hatch. But when a fern and meadow grass sprouted from the soil, he accidentally discovered that plants enclosed in glass containers could survive for long periods without watering. After four years of experimentation in his London home, Ward created traveling glazed cases that would be able to transport plants around the world. Following a test run from London to Sydney, Ward was proven correct: the Wardian case was born, and the botanical makeup of the world's flora was forever changed. In our technologically advanced and globalized contemporary world, it is easy to forget that not long ago it was extremely difficult to transfer plants from place to place, as they often died from mishandling, cold weather, and ocean salt spray. In this first book on the Wardian case, Luke Keogh leads us across centuries and seas to show that Ward's invention spurred a revolution in the movement of plants—and that many of the repercussions of that revolution are still with us, from new industries to invasive plant species. From the early days of rubber, banana, tea, and cinchona cultivation—the last used in the production of the malaria drug quinine—to the collecting of beautiful and exotic flora like orchids in the first great greenhouses of the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, DC, and England's Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Wardian case transformed the world's plant communities, fueled the commercial nursery trade and late nineteenth-century imperialism, and forever altered the global environment.

Describes more than 200 gardens in China from temple courtyards, ancient burial grounds, and imperial tombs to public parks, botanical gardens, and arboreta.

Explains how to transform a courtyard into the perfect personal refuge, presenting a series of stunning design ideas--along with detailed blueprints, suggestions for plantings, and full-color photographs--that reflect a range of stylistic inspiration, from an Italian Renaissance garden complete with a grotto to a tropical paradise or a Modernist oasis. Reprint.

Let the experts at the Royal Botanic Gardens guide you around the beautiful and mysterious world that is the plant kingdom. From regulating the air we breathe to providing food, clothes, fuels, and medicines - plants are fundamental to our lives. Discover an extraordinary diversity of species, which includes a grass that grows a meter a day, roots that breathe air, and "queen of the night" cactuses whose rare blooms vanish before dawn. In a combination of art and science, *Flora* celebrates plants from majestic trees to microscopic algae, explaining how they germinate, grow, and

reproduce. It presents species that have evolved to accommodate pollinating insects such as the foxglove, and plants that have adapted to flourish in even the most hostile of habitats. Pierre-Joseph Redoute in the 18th-century was described as the "Raphael of flowers". Flora showcases his botanical paintings as well as those of Georg Ehret and others in this gorgeous visual celebration of plants through the ages. Whether you are a keen gardener, naturalist, or botany student, this beautiful book is a treat that will entice, inform, and amaze.

In 1837, Daguerre developed his eponymous process, opening the doors to modern photography. Around the same time, the once-neglected Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, found itself the focus of renewed interest and rapid expansion. The renaissance at Kew and revolution in photography are inextricably linked, as professional photographers and casual tourists alike have been capturing pieces of Kew's history for more than one hundred years, marking its development one frame at a time. *The Story of Kew Gardens in Photographs* brings together two hundred and fifty of those photographs to tell the tale of these magnificent gardens. *The Story of Kew Gardens in Photographs* covers the period from 1844 to the 1970s, ending as another advance, color photography, was taking hold. Featuring many rarely seen photographs, the collection provides a fascinating look at the botanical and social history of the gardens. The black-and-white images show a remarkable transformation in the growth and expansion of the gardens. The photographs also illustrate the importance of plants in the British Empire and how Kew became one of the most important botanical institutions in the world. This engrossing book provides a glimpse of British history from the days of vacationing royalty to the great Victorian plant hunters, through two world wars and millions of visitors.

An exciting and refreshing call to arms, *The Planthunter* is a new generation of gardening book for a new generation of gardener that encourages readers to fall in love with the natural world by falling in love with plants.

This fascinating account of eleven remarkable, eccentric, dedicated, and sometimes obsessive individuals that established the science of botany brings to life these extraordinary adventurers and draws out the scientific and cultural value of their work and its legacy.

This is the story of the men who discovered and brought back a wealth of exotic new plants. Journeying through remote and beautiful lands, often in great peril, they collected the plants that shaped western garden design for 200 years. The stories are illustrated with portraits, photographs and maps.

A conservation biologist and a printmaker team up for a fascinating, visually arresting guide to botanical history, biodiversity, and the rich inner lives of plants. A must-read for budding gardeners! Covering more than twenty-five subjects, from photosynthesis and permaculture to the hidden world of Victorian plant hunters, this stylish illustrated guide is packed with scientific insight into the critical role plants play in the drama of life on Earth. Did you know that some plants steal while others defend themselves against attack? That the largest cacti can reach sixty-six feet tall and weigh more than a car? That there are meat-eating plants the size of footballs? Readers young and old will marvel at the wondrous diversity and adaptability of plants, from trees and tropical species to those that have evolved to master extreme conditions. A brisk narrative bursting with facts--all carefully organized with maps and charts in richly patterned vintage-style illustrations--make for a vivid guide to all that grows . . . and a beautiful gift book for anyone interested in the environment.

From New York Times bestselling author and world-renowned scientist Jane Goodall, as seen in the National Geographic documentary *Jane*, comes a fascinating examination of the critical role that trees and plants play in our world. *Seeds of Hope* takes us from Goodall's home in England to her home-away-from-home in Africa, deep inside the Gombe forest, where she and the chimpanzees are enchanted by the fig and plum trees they encounter. She introduces us to botanists around the world, as well as places where hope for plants can be found, such as The Millennium Seed Bank. She shows us the secret world of plants with all their mysteries and potential for healing our bodies as well as Planet Earth. Looking at the world as an adventurer, scientist, and devotee of sustainable foods and gardening--and setting forth simple goals we can all take to protect the plants around us--Goodall delivers an enlightening story of the wonders we can find in our own backyards.

Almost all the books that have been published on plant hunting focus on the so-called 'golden age' that ended with the death of Frank Kingdon Ward in 1958. One might be forgiven for thinking that plant hunting itself came to an end in 1958. On the contrary, there have been more new plant introductions in the past thirty years than ever before. This book tells the stories of the modern-day plant hunters--such pioneering adventurers as Mikinori Ogisu, Dan Hinkley, Roy Lancaster, Ed de Vogel, Lin Yu-Lin, Michael Wickenden and Claire Scobie. The author also examines the search for medicinal plants and the work of scientific institutions, both of which have been largely ignored, and considers such developments as the effect of habitat destruction on plant loss and plant diversity.

"Highly entertaining...Mabey gets us to look at life from the plants' point of view." —Constance Casey, *New York Times* *The Cabaret of Plants* is a masterful, globe-trotting exploration of the relationship between humans and the kingdom of plants by the renowned naturalist Richard Mabey. A rich, sweeping, and wonderfully readable work of botanical history, *The Cabaret of Plants* explores dozens of plant species that for millennia have challenged our imaginations, awoken our wonder, and upturned our ideas about history, science, beauty, and belief. Going back to the beginnings of human history, Mabey shows how flowers, trees, and plants have been central to human experience not just as sources of food and medicine but as objects of worship, actors in creation myths, and symbols of war and peace, life and death. Writing in a celebrated style that the *Economist* calls "delightful and casually learned," Mabey takes readers from the Himalayas to Madagascar to the Amazon to our own backyards. He ranges through the work of writers, artists, and scientists such as da Vinci, Keats, Darwin, and van Gogh and across nearly 40,000 years of human history: Ice Age images of plant life in ancient cave art and the earliest representations of the Garden of Eden; Newton's apple and gravity, Priestley's sprig of mint and photosynthesis, and Wordsworth's daffodils; the history of cultivated plants such as maize, ginseng, and cotton; and the ways the sturdy oak became the symbol of British nationhood and the giant sequoia came to epitomize the spirit of America. Complemented by dozens of full-color illustrations, *The Cabaret of Plants* is the magnum opus of a great naturalist and an extraordinary exploration of the deeply intertwined history of humans and the natural world.

Twelve inspiring projects, plus 200 in-depth plant profiles with detailed useful information and care instructions to help you cultivate and care for your houseplants. Learn how to choose which plants to use where, care for your houseplants to keep them healthy, and use plants to best effect in your home, with trusted advice, creative inspiration, strong visual aesthetic, and practical step-by-step detail. Two hundred plant

profiles provide information and care instructions for a wide variety of plants, including ferns, orchids, and succulents, while a dozen step-by-step photographic projects offer exciting ideas for using plants to decorate your home or greenhouse—from eye-catching terrariums to a living succulent wall to a floating kokedama "string garden." With information on plant care, propagation, pests and diseases, pruning, and problem-solving, *The Practical Houseplant Book* is the essential guide for indoor gardeners.

Tales of the botanist explorers who enriched our gardens.

They are sometimes called storksbills and originated in South Africa. They may be star-shaped or funnel-shaped, and they range in color from white, pink, and orange-red to fuchsia and deep purple. The geranium and its many species, much loved and also much loathed, have developed since the seventeenth century into one of the most popular garden plants. In this book, Kasia Boddy tells the story of geranium's seemingly inexorable rise, unearthing the role it has played in everything from plant-hunting and commercial cultivation to alternative medicine, the philanthropic imagination, and changing styles in horticultural fashion. Boddy shows how geraniums became the latest fad for wealthy collectors and enterprising nurserymen after they were first collected by Dutch plant-hunters on the sandy flats near present-day Cape Town. She explains that the flower would not be rare for long—scarlet hybrids were soon found on every cottage windowsill and in every park bedding display, and the backlash against the innocent plant followed quickly on the heels of its ubiquity. Today, geraniums can be found throughout the world, grown as annuals in the regions too cold for them to regenerate. In addition to exploring the history of geraniums, Boddy reveals the plant's other uses, including how they are cultivated and distilled for their scents of citrus, mint, pine, rose, and various spices to use in perfumes. With their edible leaves, they are also used to flavor desserts, cakes, jellies, and teas, and some people believe that certain species provide an effective treatment for a cough. Featuring over one hundred illustrations, *Geranium* shows how the plant is portrayed in painting, literature, film, and popular culture, and provides an intriguing example of the global industrialization of plant production.

The Plant Hunters Two Hundred Years of Adventure and Discovery Around the World Ward Lock Limited

Caroline Cass has written an enchanting tale of love and intrigue which will delight every reader with a thirst for adventure and the unexpected.

Dwarfish and intense, Reginald Farrer (1880-1920) spent an isolated, privileged childhood climbing the limestone cliffs of his native Yorkshire, collecting the delicate alpine plants that grew there in profusion. By age eight he knew their names and anatomy, and by thirteen had published his first discoveries in the *Journal of Botany*. He went up to Oxford with a world-beating attitude and a vain, abiding dream of becoming a great novelist. Instead he became the foremost garden writer of his generation, a wit, taste-maker, and flamboyant iconoclast who, through his best-selling books, almost single-handedly "democratized" gardening, transforming it from an indulgence of the rich to a passion of millions. He was also an intrepid plant collector, mounting expeditions to China, Tibet, and Upper Burma and introducing many important new species to the gardens of the West. It is no exaggeration to call him the father of modern flower gardening, the man who put garden books in every Englishman's library and a rockery in every backyard.

He has just a few months to complete his quest? no one has ever done it before within one growing season? and it will require ingenuity, stamina and a large dose of luck. As he battles the vagaries of the British climate, feverishly chasing each emerging bloom, Leif Bersweden takes the reader on a remarkable botanical journey. This study of the 52 native species is a fantastic gateway into the compendious world of orchids? one that will open your eyes to the rare hidden delights to be found on our doorstep. Like *Two Owls at Eton* and *My Family and Other Animals*, *The Orchid Hunter* is a charming account of a precocious adolescent's obsession with the natural world. Leif's enthusiasm for his quest is infectious, as is the quiet conviction with which he keeps at it, showing how plant hunting can be the ultimate mindful activity.

A boy and girl find and count 100 different bugs in their backyard in increments of ten.

Driven by an all-consuming passion, the plant hunters traveled around the world, facing challenges at every turn: tropical illnesses, extreme terrain, and dangerous animals. They battled piranhas, tigers, and vampire bats. Even the plants themselves could be lethal! But these intrepid eighteenth- and nineteenth-century explorers were determined to find and collect new and unusual specimens, no matter what the cost. Then they tried to transport the plants—and themselves—home alive. Creating an important legacy in science, medicine, and agriculture, the plant hunters still inspire the scientific and environmental work of contemporary plant enthusiasts. Working from primary sources—journals, letters, and notes from the field—Anita Silvey introduces us to these daring adventurers and scientists. She takes readers into the heart of their expeditions to then-uncharted places such as the Amazon basin, China, and India. As she brings a colorful cast of characters to life, she shows what motivated these Indiana Jones-type heroes. In *The Plant Hunters*, science, history, and adventure have been interwoven to tell a largely forgotten—yet fascinating—story.

Presents the experiences and contributions of early adventurers, explorers, and scientists responsible for discovering and documenting new types of plants, showing how their often dangerous voyages help establish the field of botany.

This splendidly illustrated book about the world famous botanic gardens at Kew examines their historic impact and importance. With 250 fascinating photographs, many of them previously unseen, it describes the botanical, social, cultural, political and technological developments of the past two centuries and highlights the pivotal role that plants have played in British life. The tale of Kew Gardens embraces a wide range of themes, including: plant hunters, ecologists, explorers and other pioneers; the evolution of building and garden design; influential directors, architects and landscape gardeners; the gardens as a vital public resource; digging for victory - Kew in wartime.

A beloved classic that captures the powerful bond between man and man's best friend. Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks. Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past. Praise for *Where the Red Fern Grows* A Top 100 Children's Novel, School Library Journal's A Fuse #8 Production A Must-Read for Kids 9 to 14, NPR Winner of Multiple State Awards Over 7 million copies in print! "Very touching." —The New York Times Book Review "One of the great classics of children's literature . . . Any child who doesn't get to read this beloved and powerfully emotional book has missed out on an important piece of childhood for the last 40-plus years." —Common Sense Media "An exciting tale of love and adventure you'll never forget." —School Library Journal "A book of unadorned naturalness." —Kirkus Reviews "Written with so much feeling and sentiment that adults as well as children are drawn [in] with a passion." —Arizona Daily Star "It's a story about a young boy and his two hunting dogs and . . . I can't even go on without getting a little misty." —The Huffington Post "We tear up just thinking about it." —Time on the film adaptation

Paralleling the human senses, the author explores the secret lives of various plants, from the colors they see to whether or not

they really like classical music to their ability to sense nearby danger.

From Queen Hatshepsut's journey to the land of Punt in 1482 B.C. to modern botanical expeditions, here is a vivid account of botanists, their travels, and the interesting, valuable specimens they brought back to their gardens and laboratories. Mr. Whittle first surveys the history of collecting prior to the time of Nathaniel Ward, the inventor of the portable greenhouse, then explains the scientific techniques of plant hunting developed by Ward. And, finally, he tells of the "Scramble for Green Treasure" to the far corners of the earth that followed in Ward's wake and he explores the gradual development of the methods botanists are using now.

An insider's guide to the world's greatest 'secret' gardens, green spaces, and pocket parks tucked away in cities around the globe. Cities everywhere are graced with charming but little-known, off-the-beaten-track gardens and green spaces, offering urbanites in the know a chance to immerse themselves in nature. These often small, well-kept secrets are not as grand as those on the tourist trail but are equally delightful and rewarding to visit, if you know where to find them. Green Escapes is the revelatory insider's guide to these secret gems. Each of them open to the public, the gardens range from pocket parks, courtyards, and rooftop terraces, to community gardens and more.

A leading medical ethnobotanist tells us the story of her quest to develop new ways to fight illness and disease through the healing powers of plants in this uplifting and adventure-filled memoir. Plants are the basis for an array of lifesaving and health-improving medicines we all now take for granted. Ever taken an aspirin? Thank a willow tree for that. What about life-saving medicines for malaria? Some of those are derived from cinchona and wormwood. In today's world of synthetic pharmaceuticals, scientists and laypeople alike have lost this connection to the natural world. But by ignoring the potential of medicinal plants, we are losing out on the opportunity to discover new life-saving medicines needed in the fight against the greatest medical challenge of this century: the rise of the post-antibiotic era. Antibiotic-resistant microbes plague us all. Each year, 700,000 people die due to these untreatable infections; by 2050, 10 million annual deaths are expected unless we act now. No one understands this better than Dr. Cassandra Quave, whose groundbreaking research as a leading medical ethnobotanist--someone who identifies and studies plants that may be able to treat antimicrobial resistance and other threatening illnesses--is helping to provide clues for the next generation of advanced medicines. In *The Plant Hunter*, Dr. Quave weaves together science, botany, and memoir to tell us the extraordinary story of her own journey. Traveling by canoe, ATV, mule, airboat, and on foot, she has conducted field research in the flooded forests of the remote Amazon, the murky swamps of southern Florida, the rolling hills of central Italy, isolated mountaintops in Albania and Kosovo, and volcanic isles arising out of the Mediterranean—all in search of natural compounds, long-known to traditional healers, that could help save us all from the looming crisis of untreatable superbugs. And as a person born with multiple congenital defects of her skeletal system, she's done it all with just one leg. Filled with grit, tragedy, triumph, awe, and scientific discovery, her story illuminates how the path forward for medical discovery may be found in nature's oldest remedies.

Old Herbaceous sat, propped amongst his cushions, by the cottage window, surveying the Manor gardens he'd so lovingly tended for so many years. Gardens! He let his thoughts wander through the scented past. He had started as a nobody, an abandoned baby found on the doorstep who, as a boy with a gammy leg and a passion for flowers, never seemed to fit in. But with tender mentoring and the luck of a prize at the flower show, young Herbert had become a somebody. Old Herbaceous traces his journey from young help to head gardener and although things were different than in his day, the world had started with a garden and things that old don't disappear so easily.

'A refreshingly insightful history of plant introductions.' - Roy Lancaster Travel the world with extraordinary tales of the botanical discoveries that have shaped empires, built (and destroyed) economies, revolutionised medicine and advanced our understanding of science. Circling the globe from Australia's Botany Bay to the Tibetan plateau, from the deserts of Southern Africa to the jungles of Brazil, this book presents an incredible cast of characters - dedicated researchers and reckless adventurers, physicians, lovers and thieves. Meet dauntless Scots explorer David Douglas and visionary Prussian thinker Alexander von Humboldt, the 'Green Samurai' Mikinori Ogisu and the intrepid 17th century entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian - the first woman known to have made a living from science. Beautifully illustrated with over 100 botanical artworks from the archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, this absorbing book tells the stories of how plants have travelled across the world - from the missions of the Pharaohs right up to 21st century seed-banks and the many new and endangered species being named every year. *** THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, KEW is a world-famous research organisation and a major international visitor attraction. It harnesses the power of its science, the rich diversity of its gardens and collections to unearth why plants and fungi matter to everyone. Its aspiration is to end the extinction crisis and help create a world where nature and biodiversity are protected, valued and managed sustainably.

A fascinating history of Britain's plant biodiversity and a unique account of how our garden landscape has been transformed over 1000 years, from 200 species of plant in the year 1000 to the astonishing variety of plants we can all see today. Thousands of plants have been introduced into Britain since 1066 by travellers, warriors, explorers and plant hunters - plants that we now take for granted such as rhododendron from the Far East, gladiolus from Africa and exotic plants like the monkey puzzle tree from Chile. Both a plant history and a useful reference book, Maggie Campbell-Culver has researched the provenance and often strange histories of many of the thousands of plants, exploring the quirky and sometimes rude nature of the plants, giving them a personality all of their own and setting them in their social context. The text is supported by beautiful contemporary paintings and modern photographs in 2 x 8 pp colour sections.

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