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Monroe Township Library

Gardening Titles (August 2025)

Twilight Garden – by Adams, Sara Nisha

FIC ADAMS

Warring London neighbors Winston and Bernice share an empty patch of greenery lost to time, but when Winston receives photographs of the garden in bloom many years prior, they decide to lay down their arms to revitalize the garden and help revive the community spirit that's been languishing for so long.

The Darling Dahlias and the Cucumber Tree - by Albert, Susan Wittig

MYS ALBERT

The Depression-era women of a Darling, Alabama, garden club get to the bottom of a mysterious buried treasure and a young woman's murder.

Garden Spells – by Allen, Sarah Addison

FIC ALLEN

The Waverleys have always been a curious family, endowed with peculiar gifts that make them outsiders in their hometown of Bascom, North Carolina. Even their garden has a reputation, famous for its feisty apple tree that bears prophetic fruit, and its edible flowers, imbued with special powers. Generations of Waverleys have tended this garden. Their history is in the soil. But so are their futures.

A successful caterer, Claire Waverley prepares dishes made with her mystical plants—from the nasturtiums that aid in keeping secrets and the pansies that make children thoughtful, to the snapdragons intended to discourage the attentions of her amorous neighbor. Meanwhile, her elderly cousin, Evanelle, is known for distributing unexpected gifts whose uses become uncannily clear. They are the last of the Waverleys—except for Claire's rebellious sister, Sydney, who fled Bascom the moment she could, abandoning Claire, as their own mother had years before.

When Sydney suddenly returns home with a young daughter of her own, Claire's quiet life is turned upside down—along with the protective boundary she has so carefully constructed around her heart. Together again in the house where they grew up, Sydney takes stock of all she left behind as Claire struggles to heal the wounds of the past. And soon the sisters realize they must deal with their common legacy—if they are ever to feel at home in Bascom—or with each other.

The Gardener's Plot – by Benoit, Deborah J

MYS BENOIT

A woman helps set up a community garden in the Berkshires, only to find a body in one of the plot's on opening day. After life threw Maggie Walker a few curveballs, she's happy to be back in the small, Berkshires town where she spent so much time as a child. Marlowe holds many memories for her, and now it also offers a fresh start. Maggie has always loved gardening, so it's only natural to sign on to help Violet Bloom set up a community garden. When opening day arrives, Violet is nowhere to be found, and the gardeners are restless. Things go from bad to worse when Maggie finds a boot buried in one of the plots... and there's a body attached to it. Suddenly, the police are looking for a killer and they keep asking questions about Violet. Maggie doesn't believe her friend could do this, and she's going to dig up the dirt needed to prove it.

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil – by Berendt, John 975.8 BER

Shots rang out in Savannah's grandest mansion in the misty, early morning hours of May 2, 1981. Was it murder or self-defense? For nearly a decade, the shooting and its aftermath reverberated throughout this hauntingly beautiful city of moss-hung oaks and shaded squares. John Berendt's sharply observed, suspenseful, and witty narrative flows like a thoroughly engrossing novel, and yet it is a work of nonfiction. Berendt skillfully interweaves a hugely entertaining first-person account of life in this isolated remnant of the Old South with the unpredictable twists and turns of a landmark murder case.

It is a spellbinding story peopled by a gallery of remarkable characters: the well-bred society ladies of the Married Woman's Card Club; the turbulent young redneck gigolo; the hapless recluse who owns a bottle of poison so powerful it could kill every man, woman, and child in Savannah; the aging and profane Southern belle who is the "soul of pampered self-absorption"; the uproariously funny black drag queen; the acerbic and arrogant antiques dealer; the sweet-talking, piano-playing con artist; young blacks dancing the minuet at the black debutante ball; and Minerva, the voodoo priestess who works her magic in the graveyard at midnight. These and other Savannahians act as a Greek chorus, with Berendt revealing the alliances, hostilities, and intrigues that thrive in a town where everyone knows everyone else.

Hothouse Flower and the Nine Plants of Desire – by Berwin, Margot

FIC BERWIN

Newly divorced Lila Nova travels to the Yucatán in search of the nine plants of desire, which legend says will fulfill her wildest dreams.

The Victory Garden – by Bowen, Rhys

MYS BOWEN

As the Great War continues to take its toll, headstrong twenty-one-year-old Emily Bryce is determined to contribute to the war effort. She is convinced by a cheeky and handsome Australian pilot that she can do more, and it is not long before she falls in love with him and accepts his proposal of marriage.

When he is sent back to the front, Emily volunteers as a “land girl,” tending to the neglected grounds of a large Devonshire estate. It’s here that Emily discovers the long-forgotten journals of a medicine woman who devoted her life to her herbal garden. The journals inspire Emily, and in the wake of devastating news, they are her saving grace. Emily’s lover has not only died a hero but has left her terrified—and with child. Since no one knows that Emily was never married, she adopts the charade of a war widow. As Emily learns more about the volatile power of healing with herbs, the found journals will bring her to the brink of disaster, but may open a path to her destiny.

Recipe for a Perfect Wife – by Brown, Karma

FIC BROWN

In this captivating dual narrative novel, a modern-day woman finds inspiration in hidden notes left by her home’s previous owner, a quintessential 1950s housewife. As she discovers remarkable parallels between this woman’s life and her own, it causes her to question the foundation of her own relationship with her husband—and what it means to be a wife fighting for her place in a patriarchal society.

When Alice Hale leaves a career in publicity to become a writer and follows her husband to the New York suburbs, she is unaccustomed to filling her days alone in a big, empty house. But when she finds a vintage cookbook buried in a box in the old home’s basement, she becomes captivated by the cookbook’s previous owner—1950s housewife Nellie Murdoch. As Alice cooks her way through the past, she realizes that within the cookbook’s pages Nellie left clues about her life—including a mysterious series of unsent letters penned to her mother.

Soon Alice learns that while baked Alaska and meatloaf five ways may seem harmless, Nellie’s secrets may have been anything but. When Alice uncovers a more sinister—even dangerous—side to Nellie’s marriage, and has become increasingly dissatisfied with the mounting pressures in her own relationship, she begins to take control of her life and protect herself with a few secrets of her own.

The Secret Garden – by Burnett, Frances Hodgson

JFIC BURNETT

Ten-year-old Mary comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors and discovers an invalid cousin and the mysteries of a locked garden.

Birnam Wood – by Catton, Eleanor

FIC CATTON

Birnam Wood is on the move . . .

A landslide has closed the Korowai Pass on New Zealand's South Island, cutting off the town of Thorndike and leaving a sizable farm abandoned. The disaster presents an opportunity for Birnam Wood, an undeclared, unregulated, sometimes-criminal, sometimes-philanthropic guerrilla gardening collective that plants crops wherever no one will notice. For years, the group has struggled to break even. To occupy the farm at Thorndike would mean a shot at solvency at last.

But the enigmatic American billionaire Robert Lemoine also has an interest in the place: he has snatched it up to build his end-times bunker, or so he tells Birnam's founder, Mira, when he catches her on the property. He's intrigued by Mira, and by Birnam Wood; although they're poles apart politically, it seems Lemoine and the group might have enemies in common. But can Birnam trust him? And, as their ideals and ideologies are tested, can they trust one another?

A gripping psychological thriller from the Booker Prize–winning author of *The Luminaries*, Eleanor Catton's *Birnam Wood* is Shakespearean in its drama, Austenian in its wit, and, like both influences, fascinated by what makes us who we are. A brilliantly constructed study of intentions, actions, and consequences, it is a mesmerizing, unflinching consideration of the human impulse to ensure our own survival.

The Complete Gardener – by Don, Monty

635.9 DON

This extensively revised new edition of his *Complete Gardener*, first published in 2003, brings you right up-to-date on how Monty gardens today - and his recommendations for you.

The most comprehensive, practical, and highly illustrated book Monty has ever written, it covers what he believes are the most important aspects of gardening. Organic techniques have always been at the core of his practice, but this new edition picks up on another key principle: the need to provide habitats in your garden for local wildlife. Over half of the photographs in this new edition will be new, taken over a year in his Long Meadow garden, and he is going through the text with a fine-tooth comb to ensure everything he says reflects his latest approach.

The Last Garden in England – by Kelly, Julia

FIC KELLY

Emma Lovett has just been given the opportunity of a lifetime: to restore the gardens of the famed Highbury House estate, designed in 1907 by her hero, Venetia Smith. But as Emma dives deeper into the gardens' past, she uncovers secrets from 1907 and 1944 that have long lain hidden.

The Kew Gardens Girls – by Lovell, Posy

FIC LOVELL

A heart-warming novel inspired by real life events, about the brave women during WWI who worked in the historic grounds of London's Kew Gardens.

Can the women of Kew keep the gardens alive in the midst of war?

London, 1916. England is at war. Desperate to help in whatever way they can, Ivy and Louisa enlist as gardeners at Kew, the Royal Botanic Gardens, taking on the jobs of the men who have gone to fight. Under their care, the gardens begin to flourish and become a safe haven for those seeking solace—but not everyone wants women working at Kew. The pair begin to face challenges on the home front. When a tragedy overseas affects the people closest to them, can the women of Kew pull together to support themselves and their country through the darkest of times?

The Forgotten Garden – by Morton, Kate

FIC MORTON

Abandoned on a 1913 voyage to Australia, Nell is raised by a dock master and his wife who do not tell her until she is an adult that she is not their child, leading Nell to return to England and eventually hand down her quest for answers to her granddaughter.

The Garden – by Newman, Nick

FIC NEWMAN

In a place and time unknown, two elderly sisters live in a walled garden, secluded from the outside world. Evelyn and Lily have only ever known each other. What was before the garden, they have forgotten; what lies beyond it, they do not know. Each day is spent in languid service to their home: tending the bees, planting the crops, and dutifully following the instructions of the almanac written by their mother. So when a nameless boy is found hiding in the boarded house at the center of their isolated grounds, their once-solitary lives are irrevocably disrupted. Who is he? Where did he come from? And most importantly, what does he want? As suspicions gather and allegiances falter, Evelyn and Lily are forced to confront the dark truths about themselves, the garden, and the world as they've known it.

The Orchid Thief – by Orlean, Susan

635.9344 ORL

A modern classic of personal journalism, *The Orchid Thief* is Susan Orlean's wickedly funny, elegant, and captivating tale of an amazing obsession. Determined to clone an endangered flower—the rare ghost orchid *Polyprrhiza lindenii*—a deeply eccentric and oddly attractive man named John Laroche leads Orlean on an unforgettable tour of America's strange flower-selling subculture, through Florida's swamps and beyond, along with the Seminoles who help him and the forces of justice who fight him. In the end, Orlean—and the reader—will have more respect for underdog determination and a powerful new definition of passion.

In this new edition, coming fifteen years after its initial publication and twenty years after she first met the “orchid thief,” Orlean revisits this unforgettable world, and the route by which it was brought to the screen in the film *Adaptation*, in a new retrospective essay.

The Night Gardener – by Pelecanos, George

FIC PELECANOS

Gus Ramone is "good police", a former Internal Affairs investigator now working homicide for the city's Violent Crime branch. His new case involves the death of a local teenager named Asa whose body has been found in a local community garden.

The murder unearths intense memories of a case Ramone worked as a patrol cop 20 years earlier, when he and his partner, Dan "Doc" Holiday, assisted a legendary detective named T.C. Cook. The series of murders, all involving local teenage victims, was never solved. In the years since, Holiday has left the force under a cloud of morals charges, and now finds work as a bodyguard and driver. Cook has retired, but he has never stopped agonizing about the "Night Gardener" killings.

The new case draws the three men together on a grim mission to finish the work that has haunted them for years. All the love, regret, and anger that once burned between them comes rushing back, and old ghosts walk once more as the men try to lay to rest the monster who has stalked their dreams.

This is Your Mind on Plants – by Pollan, Michael

581.6 POL

Of all the things humans rely on plants for—sustenance, beauty, medicine, fragrance, flavor, fiber—surely the most curious is our use of them to change consciousness: to stimulate or calm, fiddle with or completely alter, the qualities of our mental experience.

Take coffee and tea: People around the world rely on caffeine to sharpen their minds. But we do not usually think of caffeine as a drug, or our daily use as an addiction, because it is legal and socially acceptable. So, then, what is a "drug"? And why, for example, is making tea from the leaves of a tea plant acceptable, but making tea from a seed head of an opium poppy a federal crime?

In *This Is Your Mind on Plants*, Michael Pollan dives deep into three plant drugs—opium, caffeine, and mescaline—and throws the fundamental strangeness, and arbitrariness, of our thinking about them into sharp relief. Exploring and participating in the cultures that have grown up around these drugs while consuming (or, in the case of caffeine, trying not to consume) them, Pollan reckons with the powerful human attraction to psychoactive plants. Why do we go to such great lengths to seek these shifts in consciousness, and then why do we fence that universal desire with laws and customs and fraught feelings?

In this unique blend of history, science, and memoir, as well as participatory journalism, Pollan examines and experiences these plants from several very different angles and contexts, and shines a fresh light on a subject that is all too often treated reductively—as a drug, whether licit or illicit. But that is one of the least interesting things you can say about these plants, Pollan shows, for when we take them into our bodies and let them change our minds, we are engaging with nature in one of the most profound ways we can. Based in part on an essay published almost twenty-five years ago, this groundbreaking and singular consideration of psychoactive plants, and our attraction to

them through time, holds up a mirror to our fundamental human needs and aspirations, the operations of our minds, and our entanglement with the natural world.

The Alchemy of Flowers – by Resau, Laura

FIC RESAU

A woman takes a job at a secretive French garden to avoid reminders of children; there she meets a mysterious girl needing help. This debut adult novel blends the charm of *The Secret Garden* and magic realism of *Where the Forest Meets the Stars*.

The Heirloom Garden – by Shipman, Viola

FIC SHIPMAN

Two women, separated by a generation but equally scarred by war find hope, meaning and friendship through a garden of flowers. Iris Maynard lost her husband in World War II, her daughter to loneliness and, finally, her reason to live. Walled off from the world for decades behind a towering fence surrounding her home and gardens, Iris has built a new family...of flowers. Iris propagates her own daylilies and roses while tending to an heirloom garden filled with starts-and memories of her own mother, grandmother, husband and daughter. When Abby Peterson moves to Grand Haven, Michigan, with her family-a husband traumatized during his service in the Iraq War and a young daughter searching for stability-they find themselves next door to Iris, and are slowly drawn into their reclusive neighbor's life where, united by loss and a love of flowers, Iris and Abby slowly unearth their secrets.

The Well-Gardened Mind – by Stuart-Smith, Sue

155 STU

The garden has always been a place of peace and perseverance, of nurture and reward. Using contemporary neuroscience, psychoanalysis, and compelling real-life stories, *The Well-Gardened Mind* investigates the remarkable effects of nature on our health and well-being.

The Samurai's Garden – by Tsukiyama, Gail

FIC TSUKIYAMA

The daughter of a Chinese mother and a Japanese father, Gail Tsukiyama's *The Samurai's Garden* uses the Japanese invasion of China during the late 1930s as a somber backdrop for this extraordinary story.

A 20-year-old Chinese painter named Stephen is sent to his family's summer home in a Japanese coastal village to recover from a bout with tuberculosis. Here he is cared for by Matsu, a reticent housekeeper and a master gardener. Over the course of a remarkable year, Stephen learns Matsu's secret and gains not only physical strength, but also profound spiritual insight.

Matsu is a samurai of the soul, a man devoted to doing good and finding beauty in a cruel and arbitrary world, and Stephen is a noble student, learning to appreciate Matsu's generous and nurturing way of life and to love Matsu's soulmate, gentle Sachi, a woman afflicted with leprosy.

The Garden of Small Beginnings – by Waxman, Abbi FIC WAXMAN

Lilian Girvan has been a single mother for three years—ever since her husband died in a car accident. One mental breakdown and some random suicidal thoughts later, she's just starting to get the hang of this widow thing. She can now get her two girls to school, show up to work, and watch TV like a pro. The only problem is she's becoming overwhelmed with being underwhelmed.

At least her textbook illustrating job has some perks—like actually being called upon to draw whale genitalia. Oh, and there's that vegetable-gardening class her boss signed her up for. Apparently, being the chosen illustrator for a series of boutique vegetable guides means getting your hands dirty, literally. Wallowing around in compost on a Saturday morning can't be much worse than wallowing around in pajamas and self-pity.

Garden Variety – by Wilhelmi, Christy FIC WILHELMI

Each time Lizzie steps through the gates of the Vista Mar Community Gardens, she knows she's left the chaos of the outside world behind. Here, the rows are even, tools are properly stored, and each season brings new life. But even the shiniest apple can hide a worm, and behind the leafy green façade there is hidden heartbreak, tomato hornworms, and inter-garden political powerplays.

And to make things worse—a long forgotten loophole enacted by a nasty neighbor brings the outside world crashing in. The members are feuding, Lizzie's budding romance is wilting on the vine, and the very existence of Vista Mar is threatened. Can Lizzie and her fellow gardeners fight to save their urban oasis while they struggle to stay grounded in this chaotic city?

Flowers on Main - by Woods, Sherryl ROMANCE WOODS

When her last two plays are dismal failures and her relationship with her temperamental mentor falls apart, writer Bree O'Brien abandons Chicago and the regional theater where she hoped to make a name for herself to return home. Opening *Flowers on Main* promises to bring her a new challenge and a new kind of fulfillment.

But not all is peaceful and serene in Chesapeake Shores, with her estranged mother on the scene and her ex-lover on the warpath. Jake Collins has plenty of reasons to want Bree out of his life, but none of those are a match for the one reason he wants her to stay: he's still in love with her.

Jake might be able to get past that old hurt if he knew Bree was home to stay, but is she? The only way to know for sure is to take a dangerous leap of faith.

The Summer Garden – by Woods, Sherryl ROMANCE WOODS

When Moira Malone, the woman he had a fling with during his Dublin holiday, pays a surprise visit to Chesapeake Shores, Luke O'Brien is unsure if he is ready for a long-term relationship, prompting Moira to reexamine her feelings.

