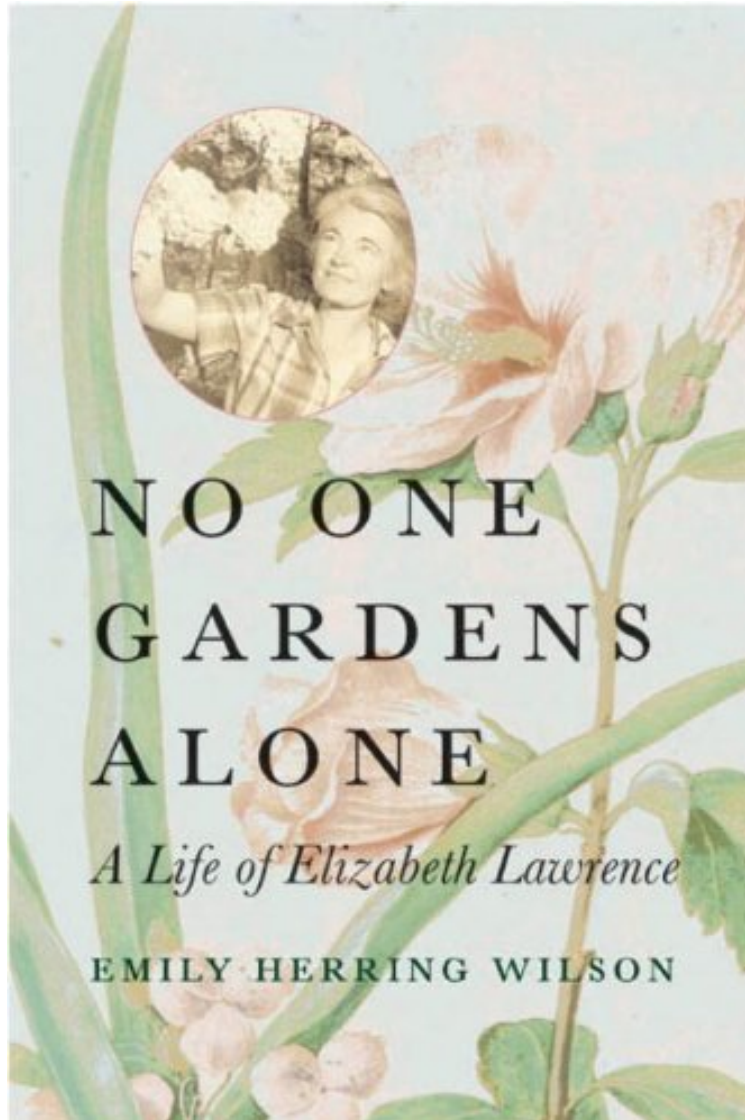


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## No One Gardens Alone: A Life of Elizabeth Lawrence (Concord Library)

*Emily Herring Wilson*

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**Emily Herring Wilson : No One Gardens Alone: A Life of Elizabeth Lawrence (Concord Library)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No One Gardens Alone: A Life of Elizabeth Lawrence (Concord Library):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. like Emily Dickinson By Cheyenne B. Miss Lawrence, like Emily Dickinson, never married, but there was a secret love! (Besides gardening!) Readable and enjoyable book that made

me wish I'd met Miss Lawrence.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Marvelous Book particularly for gardeners.By HarrietAn outstanding biography of an outstanding woman and gardener.I read it avidly and then immediately reread it! I wish we had been friends even though she had many many gardening friends. Plus an unusually loving and extended family. You will treasure this book.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Enduring Garden of Earthy DelightsBy OwlThe photograph on the front cover is a true herald of the delights of this superb biography of Elizabeth Lawrence, "No One Gardens Alone." A slender, fair-haired lady with surprisingly strong eyebrows gazes happily, adoringly at three blossoms as tall as she is and almost as big. The flowers (hydrangea? marigolds on mega-steroids?) gaze adoringly back. Readers can be justifiably fascinated by a garden writer whose books are at once reticent and forth-coming. Lawrence wrote such classics as "The Little Bulbs," cited after more than 30 years in today's gardening books. Those in search of botanical knowledge of what plants to grow and how to grow them would also meet Mr. Krippendorf and "Lob's Wood," the independent and feisty Miss Dornan who preserved plants native to the South, that legendary editor and writer Mrs. E. B. White from Maine, Mrs Chestina Welty and her daughter Eudora, and a Canterbury tales procession of farm women, nurserymen, other passionate gardeners, as well as redoubtable Mrs Lawrence, her mother and fellow gardener. Until this biography, however, much was known about Lawrence's gardens in Raleigh and Charlotte, NC, but little of the woman who wrote with such enthusiasm and elegance. The product of a decade of clearly painstaking research, Emily Herring Wilson has brought us a garden of earthy delights in a superb biography, satisfying as much as possible our interest in the making of a gardener and of her gardens. Lawrence came from a time and place where families remembered directly the grandparents and great grandparents from the Revolution and the Civil War. Born into two such families, she was a soft-spoken Southerner, a forthright talker, and a lady who considered the use of first names even after a year of correspondance a great step. Her life was shaped by the expectations that the young would care for the elderly, at home mind you, and their feelings and needs would take priority---priority over marriage, work, and almost anything else. Yet Lawrence spent four years in New York at Barnard College, making lifelong friends with two brilliant students; she traveled to Europe writing cheerful letters and more melancholy diaries; loving from earliest childhood plants and gardens, she stayed within the family circle physically and roamed a world of friends with whom she corresponded in thousands of letters---and she was among the first women to complete a rigorous program in landscape design in North Carolina. In the archives of friends and family and Lawrence's own papers, Wilson discovered two blossomings of love, once in the springtime of her life and later, in her early fall with a much older man. One story is told in her own words in an essay written very privately for her dear friends, writing mentors, and neighbors, Emily and Ann Bridgers. The other story is gleaned from letters and the recollections of her cherished niece and nephew. Both are bitter-sweet, these songs of innocence and experience and one had a very deep influence. Each of the 23 chapters of "No One Gardens Alone" (sequenced chronologically) brings such vividly told stories, illuminating the world in which her books and articles were written and her struggles to get them published. Born in 1904, she died in 1985, the arc of her life covering much of our own recent history. Graced with an excellent bibliography, thorough footnotes and well-chosen illustrations and photographs, this book could be an enduring pleasure for lovers of history, biography, and garden paths. Happily, Lawrence's own books and the excellent compilation of the letters between Katharine White and Elizabeth Lawrence are available for our reading on days too wet or cold for us to be out and about in our own gardens or visiting the gardens of others. Great thanks are due to Emily Herring Wilson, a biographer who brings Elizabeth Lawrence and her world so vividly to life. My one quibble is that the botanical illustrator is not mentioned. If the drawings were commissioned, the artist did a fine job and deserves our appreciation. If they were taken from an archive or book, even so: who drew them?

No One Gardens Alone tells for the first time the story of Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1985). Like classic biographies of Emily Dickinson and Edna St. Vincent Millay, this fascinating book reveals Lawrence in all her complexity and establishes her, at last, as one of the premier gardeners and gardening writers of the twentieth century. "In this first biography of the renowned gardening writer Elizabeth Lawrence, Emily Herring Wilson reminds us that even quiet lives hold unsuspected passions. Written with graceful clarity, sensitivity, and empathy, this life is a perennial."--Linda H. Davis, author of *Onward and Upward: A Biography of Katharine S. White* Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1985) lived a singular, often contradictory life. She was a traditional southerner; a successful, independent garden writer with her own newspaper column and numerous books to her credit; a dutiful daughter who cared for her elders and lived with her mother; a landscape architect; a passionate poet; a friend of literary figures like Eudora Welty and Joseph Mitchell; and a very private woman whose recently discovered letters illuminate aspects of her mystery. Lawrence earned many fans during her lifetime and gained even more after her death with the reissue of many of her classic books. When Emily Herring Wilson edited a collection of letters between Lawrence and famed New Yorker editor Katharine S. White in *Two Gardeners*, she found legions of readers who were eager to know more about the legendary Lawrence. Now, one hundred years after her birth, *No One Gardens Alone* tells for the first time the story of this fascinating woman. Like classic biographies of literary figures such as Emily Dickinson and Edna St. Vincent Millay, this book reveals Lawrence in all her complexity and establishes her, at last, as one of the premier gardeners and

garden writers of the twentieth century.

From Publishers Weekly Gardening seems a solitary endeavor, perfect for those who like to be alone with nature without leaving their own yard. But this biography of renowned Southern gardening expert Lawrence tells of a time when getting your hands on an Algerian iris was not as easy as opening a nursery catalogue. Lawrence (1904-1985), author of *A Southern Garden*, *Two Gardeners* and numerous articles in *House Garden* magazine and the *Charlotte Observer*, spent her life collecting different bulbs and clippings from the "friendly society" of gardeners across the country. Her love for gardens stretched beyond her own, and she often incorporated tips and accomplishments from the giant, informal association of green thumbs in her columns. According to Lawrence, "Gardening, reading about gardening, and writing about gardening are all one. No one can garden alone." Admired by writers such as Joseph Mitchell and Eudora Welty, Lawrence's writing was often about people and philosophy as well as planting. North Carolina writer Wilson's account is clear and unembellished, and her work provides a complete portrait of an independent, private and multifaceted woman. Photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist On the 100th anniversary of her birth, Lawrence's life is celebrated with joy, reverence, and clarity in this captivating biography of the quintessential horticulturist whose columns and books about her private Southern garden inspired gardeners throughout the country. Wilson, the editor of *Two Gardeners: Katherine S. White and Elizabeth Lawrence, A Friendship in Letters* (2002), vibrantly traces Lawrence's development from a shy, devoted daughter to a pioneering landscape architect and prolific garden writer, exploring in detail the paradoxes that were to define Lawrence's personal and professional lives. Raised in the genteel South, where devotion to family and community represented the highest ideals of young womanhood, Lawrence defied expectations by attending college in New York City. Although her exposure to urban sophistication profoundly affected her, it could not surpass the uncommon satisfaction she derived from working in her own backyard. Her writings about the practical and philosophical rewards of tending one's own garden won her legions of fans, from the notable to the ordinary. Carol Haggas Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved This is the biography of Elizabeth Lawrence that we have all been waiting for. Even though Lawrence's writings are legendary among southern gardeners, her personal life has always been somewhat elusive. Emily Herring Wilson deftly weaves together Lawrence's passions-her gardens, family circle, cherished friendships, and even her religious beliefs-in a compelling narrative.--Judith B. Tankard, Landscape Institute, Harvard University "Elizabeth Lawrence, who was my friend and mentor, would be delighted with Emily's Wilson's writing style and sensitive approach. Steeped as she is in the lore and history of the Southeast, Wilson is the perfect biographer for this southern lady."--Pamela Harper, author of *Time-Tested Plants* "The great merit in Emily Wilson's biography of Elizabeth Lawrence is the meticulous piecing together of the facts of Lawrence's life--the people who influenced and goaded her, her gardening correspondents, and her inquisitive and determined mind--all of which set the stage for the garden observations and writings that have become American classics." --Bobby J. Ward, author of *The Plant Hunter's Garden: The Explorers and Their Discoveries* "Elizabeth Lawrence's life, like her gardens and her writing, reflects the richness that comes from patient observation and acceptance of life's most evanescent changes. Emily Herring Wilson has captured Lawrence's 'gardener's spirit' with all its interior complexity, joy of discovery, and delight in sharing. Wilson is cautious not to trample or invade, but with candor and insight she uncovers the gardener's own bloom-time and poetic voice. This biography unlocks Lawrence's secret garden as only another gifted southern poet and writer could do." --Linda Lear, author of *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* "A touching, insightful, and always engaging account of the complicated life of a talented southern woman finding her way over the course of the twentieth century. Based on painstaking research and extensive interviews, Wilson places the professional life of Elizabeth Lawrence, the ultimate gardener's icon, within the larger context of Elizabeth Lawrence, the living, breathing, gracious-but-fallible, irritating-but-illuminating daughter, friend, and author we wish lived next door."--Michele Gillespie, Kahle Associate Professor of History, Wake Forest University