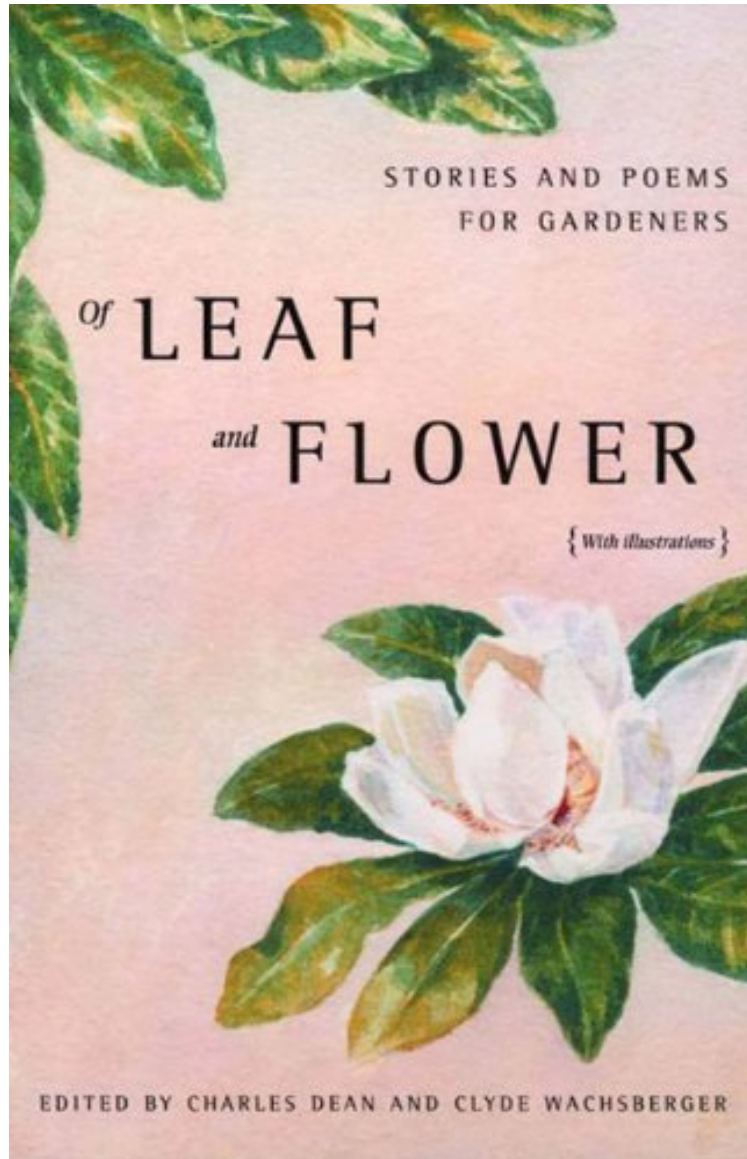


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Of Leaf and Flower: Stories and Poems for Gardeners

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From Brand: Persea Books : Of Leaf and Flower: Stories and Poems for Gardeners before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Of Leaf and Flower: Stories and Poems for Gardeners:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Classy collection of essays and poems....By Dianne FosterI'd hardly call this book of essays and poems soothing. Some of these folks are mighty disturbed. I don't think John Updike ever

wrote anything I could call delightful--provocative, beautiful--but not delightful. And true to form, his essay is about the aftermath of a decision to divorce and his "farewell" to some leaves he's become intimately involved with via his study window is both beautiful and sad. Sylvia Plath scares the heck out of me and her essay "Fable of the Rhododendron Stealers" is a signature piece. Then we have Alice Walker's poem "Revolutionary Petunias" about a backwoods woman who raised a George, a Martha, a Jackie and a Kennedy, and Josephine Jacobson's "Jack Frost" is a bit nippy. Robert Graves (I, Claudius and The White Goddess) addresses the behaviour of avid composters in "Earth to Earth". No, this book is definitely not restful, but, it's really, really good. If you're a fan of the short story, particularly those with a twist you will like this book (including the O'Henry tale, "The Last Leaf"). If you're a fan of good poetry (Billy Collins anyone) you'll like this book. LEAF AND FLOWER is not about gardening per se, though gardeners like the old woman who attempts to bring beauty into sordid surroundings in Eugenia Collier's "Marigolds" are sometimes featured. If I had to assign an organizing principle to this work, I would say this...every human life intersects with a plant at some critical juncture. OF LEAF AND FLOWER contains one of the most artistically assembled sets of essays and poems on the importance of flora for human beings. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. AN UPLIFT TO THE SPIRIT By A Customer WHAT A WONDERFUL COLLECTION OF STORIES TO UPLIFT YOUR SPIRITS IN THESE DISTURBING AND TERRIBLE TIMES. WHETHER YOU ARE A GARDENER OR NOT THESE STORIES ARE A DELIGHTFUL WAY TO LOOSE YOURSELF FOR A FEW HOURS. WOULD MAKE A GREAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE GARDENERS IN YOUR LIFE - THE ILLUSTRATIONS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND VERY SUBTLE. ALL IN ALL A 1ST RATE COLLECTION AND A JOY TO READ AND A NICE BOOK TO HAVE AROUND TO PICK UP FROM TIME TO TIME AND REREAD.

The answers to many gardening questions can be found in how-to manuals and essays, but who can fathom the passions behind the obsession? Why do we get down on our hands and knees in the mud in March or return to the garden for one last look before dark? Only the storytellers and poets can tell us. The twelve short stories and twelve poems collected here celebrate the irresistible emotions that plants inspire. A beautiful flower arouses the desire to possess in "The Lily" by H. E. Bates and "The Fable of the Rhododendron Stealers" by Sylvia Plath. In William Saroyan's "The Pomegranate Trees" a man plants fruit trees from his native Armenia and then goes to extremes to keep them alive in the California desert. Robert Graves's humorous story, "Earth to Earth", is set during the Second World War and reveals the secret ingredient in uniquely potent compost; and in Billy Collins's "Bonsai" a miniature tree changes our perspective on the whole world. Also included are Mary Austin, Kate Chopin, Amy Clampitt, Eugenia Collier, Mark Doty, Robert Frost, O. Henry, Josephine Jacobsen, Sarah Orne Jewett, Howard Nemerov, Kathleen Raine, Christopher Reid, Saki, James Schuyler, John Updike, Arturo Vivante, Alice Walker, William Carlos Williams, and Cynthia Zarin. Twelve elegant black-and-white sumi paintings of plants by Clyde Wachsberger enhance the collection. There is no better way to cultivate a gardener's passions during the long winter months than through this beautiful and moving book.

.com The contents of this anthology might tempt one to ask: Sylvia Plath in a gardening book? Aren't gardening books supposed to be lightweight affairs? Not so, proclaim editors Charles Dean and Clyde Wachsberger, who have assembled an impressive set of poems and short stories to address what they see as "the profound passions and wild obsessions that motivate gardeners." In Plath's work, "Fable of the Rhododendron Stealers," the poet steals a small bud from a public rose garden. Carrying it home and placing it in water, she hopes to keep it alive a little longer: "I considered the poetry I rescued / from blind air, from complete eclipse." The longing in this poem is part of the book's moody atmosphere--in a powerful story by John Updike, a self-absorbed and fearful narrator sees in leaf shadows "innumerable barbaric suggestions of scimitars, flanged spears, prongs, and menacing helmets." Although it's interspersed with soothing illustrations, obviously this book is no Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul. Including poems by Billy Collins and Mark Doty, as well as stories by William Saroyan and Kate Chopin, the one glaring omission is Jamaica Kincaid. Her work would fit perfectly into this collection of writers who see gardens as complex metaphors, or endlessly evocative dreamscapes. --Emily White From Booklist Blistered and scratched, mud-spattered and grimy, gardeners not only coax life from the soil through their sweat and strain but also with the faith and devotion that their efforts will be rewarded with a bit of beauty and sustenance. To do so requires more than the technical know-how that guides pruning shears or the trained eye that chooses to plant daylilies near daffodils--for gardeners are, if nothing else, receptive souls in tune to the life that flows around them. Dean and Wachsberger celebrate these sensitivities in 24 lustrous poems and stories harvested from the work of some of America and Britain's most acclaimed authors, contributors who understand the essential connection between person and plant. The work of Robert Frost and Alice Walker, John Updike and Kate Chopin, O. Henry and Sylvia Plath explore the motivation and mystery behind gardening, the most ancient of human activities, in a sumptuous anthology adorned with elegant sumi ink illustrations. Carol Haggas Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved [Offers] the wild rewarding pleasures of insight, empathy, and deep green communication a warm and moody collection. -- Robert Dash,

author of Notes from Madoo: The Making of a Garden in the Hamptons