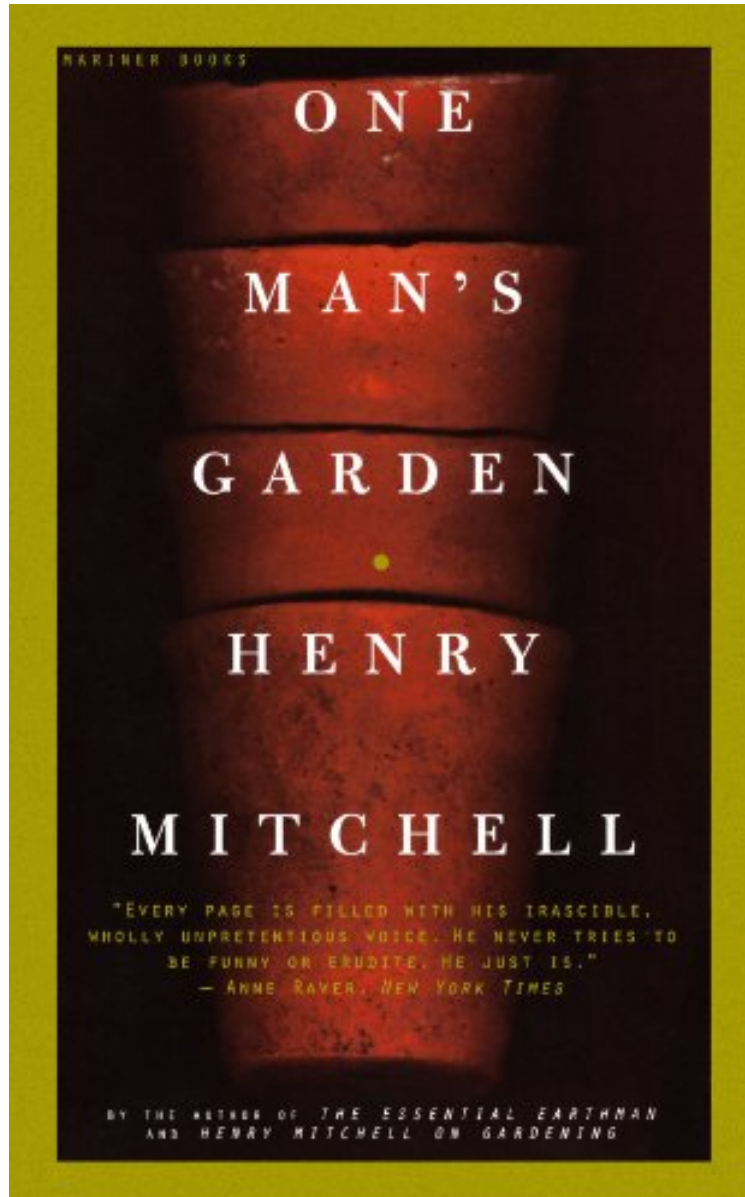


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## One Man's Garden

*Henry Mitchell*

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#1199964 in Books Henry Mitchell 1999-04-14 1999-04-14 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x .69 x 5.75l, .74 #File Name: 0395957699272 pages One Man s Garden | File size: 35.Mb

**Henry Mitchell : One Man's Garden** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised One Man's Garden:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Fine and Wonderful MadnessBy Owl'A gardening friend of mine has quite lost her mind---not that it distresses her much---and no longer makes an effort to conceal her madness." So

begins one of my favorites, "How the garden grows and grows," among Henry Mitchell's essays. There were about 3,000 of them over the 20 years in which he wrote the Washington Post's Sunday Earthman column. I used to read Earthman even before "Prince Valiant," even before the Herblock political cartoon, and even before the book reviews and the editorial pages. It is glorious to report that "How the garden grows and grows" is included in the ninety gardening delights in "One Man's Garden." The essays are arranged in 12 sections, using the tried-and-generally-true approach of sharing what is happening each month of the year. Thus for June, the essay titles are:--Roses, the secrets of success--The right bedfellows for roses--I try not to do stupid things--Foliage for nooks and crannies--Daylilies by the bouquetful (he was quite addicted to puns)--Small gardens: the big picture--The grand and noble magnolia Mitchell's essays are lively first person stories, rich with opinion and information. For example, he was slaughterous regarding Norway maples and disdained spraying to control bugs and weeds. His article on "Staying in the pink" emphasizing carnations' strong preference for a gravelly, dry soil and their other foibles may help newish gardeners reach their hearts content as to these charming clove-scented flowers. He clearly had a long affair with iris, not at all clandestine, which contributed to his advocacy of planting a lot of what makes you happy even if it blooms only a few weeks each year. He knew full well gardens are not only place of joy life, but also struggle death, and shared his more shadowed feelings. And so on and on and mostly happily on to December, where Earthman suggests "Gifts for the gardener," ending with "I never knew anyone easier to please than myself or the guys I know. Someone once gave my wife and me an old Meissen soup tureen that thrilled my wife witless for a month. It was lovely and most generous and I like to see people happy, but, my G\*d, do you have any idea how much rabbit wire you could buy?" (p. 254) Reader Alert: As these examples suggest, this is not a how-to book on gardening. The 3 or 4 page essays, adapted from the newspaper columns, are too brief, the organization is not sufficiently sequential for a how-to, nor are topics adequately covered. The nuggets throughout, however, can help make us better gardeners and better persons. There is an index which splendidly locates the specific plants that happen to be discussed (both botanical and common names) and honest as to what else is considered: thus, 13 entries on water lilies and two on wisterias, one entry on pruning and 14 on soil. Readers who want to learn more adequately about lilies, wisterias, pruning, soil and such will have to find in-depth, specialized books on these topics. Also, although this book was copyrighted in 1992, the articles may go back to 1975, and reflect plants available then, not those available now some of which may have more admirable habits or features. (The date when each article first appeared is not given. It should be.) And while many essays transcend space and time, such as Mitchell's recollections of the gardens of his southern youth, he mostly gardened in Zone 7. No matter, really. "How the garden grows and grows" is among my favorites because it encapsulates Mitchell's own passion for gardening in his quarter-acre Washington D.C. home. The lady of whom he spoke was besotted with plants, wanting to grow them all even to the point of accepting a sequoia seedling. Although Mitchell advocated looking on gardens more architecturally than botanically, his own stories make clear he was perpetually re-arranging the furniture, trying out this rose here and that crinum there. Many gardeners may recognize a fellow spirit, rejoicing in his wit--he was often a very funny writer---wisdom, and humanity. Highly recommended for readers who like to garden or gardeners who like to read in any zone whatsoever. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Satisfaction Guaranteed for a Reader-Gardener By T.U. Scott I know this book is going to stay for a long while. That's why I am sewing the book-cover. It is a reference book as well as a good read. It is very rare to see these two factors in one book. This is the book of the year for me. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Relax: triumphs, trials errors make you a gardener By Leslie Frates A great gift for serious gardeners or newbie gardeners like myself looking to learn more and understand the trials, triumphs, and errors that all gardeners make. Mitchell has an appealing down to earth style of writing that made me nod in agreement, smile and even laugh out loud at times. If you know your plant taxonomy, it will make reading this book more enjoyable. Mitchell often refers to various plants by their genus. For example, knowing what plants constitute the genus epimedium, commonly called fairy wings, will make Mitchell's comments both more instructive, and at times, even more humorous. Reading this gave me pleasure and will hopefully help me to relax and enjoy my garden more -- Mitchell makes clear that great gardeners understand that the joy in gardening is about the process, not the finished product, because there will always be a new plant to try or a plant to move to a "better" place.

In the sequel to *The Essential Earthman*, the Washington Post columnist offers a harvest of sharp observations and humorous adventures gathered during a year in his garden, along with much down-to-earth advice on horticulture.

.com Mitchell is a miracle in the world of garden writing, where so much careful prose instructs with patronizing intent. Henry Mitchell blazes, bullies, roars, then whispers, awed by the beauty he enables us to see through his eyes. This is a man who once took two weeks off from work so that he could watch his iris bloom. Here his failures and foibles are cataloged along with his triumphant successes. He grew water lilies from seed, achieving a single plant instead of the expected 50, but as he admits, 50 would really have been a bit much, while one seedling water lily became a source of considerable delight to the proud parent. To prevent heat stroke in water-lily season (Washington, D.C., summers are fierce), he cooled off by eating iced Walla Walla onion sandwiches as he gazed at the flowers for

two or three minutes at a stretch before the intense heat won out. Quirky, funny, wise, and impassioned, this book is a lasting treat, the kind that rewards each year's rereading with fresh insights and heartfelt laughter. From Publishers Weekly Washington Post columnist Mitchell ( The Essential Earthman ) brings together a year's worth of wry observations about the peculiarities and pleasures of gardening in this anthology. His book, designed primarily for small town gardens of less than a quarter-acre, and written from the relatively balmy perspective of Washington, D.C. (climatic zone 5), is the perfect makings of a winter read for those planning next year's garden. Mitchell's chatty style is entertaining as well as informative, and he mixes details of garden advice with liberal doses of Johnsonian philosophy, appropriately noting the vanity of human wishes, the defeat of a gardener's best intentions, and the joy of the unexpected and unplanned. While it contains some unnecessary repetition (perhaps less noticeable when the material was published as a weekly column), the collection manages to include a surprising range of topics, plants and personal asides. Water gardeners in particular will enjoy Mitchell's obsession with water lilies, other aquatic plants and fish. Other essays touch on wildlife in town gardens, and the ineradicable nature of bindweed. The book is divided into 12 chapters corresponding to months of the year, each introduced with an attractive line drawing by Susan Davis. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Gardeners will smile at the wit that Washington Post garden writer Mitchell displays in this collection of short essays arranged loosely by the gardening year. Most gardeners will agree with Mitchell's sensible philosophy: "Gardening is full of mistakes, almost all of them pleasant and some of them actually instructive." This is an experienced gardener/environmentalist who mixes solid gardening information along with the right blend of humor and human interest to hold the attention of gardener readers. His book offers an instructive and mellow look at year-round garden activities. Suitable for most public libraries.- Dale Luchsinger, Athens Area Technical Inst., Ga. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.