



Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book

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Jefferson's love of gardening is well known. In his day Jefferson not only planned but also worked in the gardens at Monticello, aided by his family members, slaves, and European workers. His delight in gardening is also revealed in his correspondence with leading horticulturists worldwide, bringing to Virginia curiosities such as peppers from Mexico, figs from France, and bean varieties collected by the Lewis and Clark expedition. Jefferson family letters are filled with a "garden gossip" that belies a child-like enthusiasm for the strawberries, tulips, and sugar maples at home. Of course, the greatest evidence of Jefferson's horticultural passion thrives in the restored gardens at Monticello, admired the world over.

Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book documents his varied approaches to gardening, whether as landscape architect, pleasure gardener, or horticultural scientist. In his Garden Book, the horticultural diary which he kept from 1766 until 1824, Jefferson noted such observations as how the gardens were sown, the extent of frost damage to his and other area gardens, and when vegetables came "to table."

To these detailed but lapsing records, the late Edwin Morris Betts, professor of biology at the University of Virginia, added his own commentary, as well as selections from Jefferson's other writings--compelling letters, unpublished memoranda, sketches, and related entries from Jefferson's Farm, Account, Weather, and Memorandum Books. Completing this collection is a new introduction by Peter J. Hatch, Director of Gardens and Grounds at Monticello for more than two decades.

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