

I am most happy when I can combine my two passions, gardening and reading, and even happier when I can read outside in my garden! My reading list runs the gamut from "How To" to Fiction and Non-Fiction. Here are a few suggestions. I hope you enjoy and learn from them as much as I did. And, yes, you do have time!! Enjoy!

Sue Becker

Bedford Extension Master Gardener (BAMGA)

FICTION FAVS!

Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver

Kingsolver's fictional story deals with the plight of the Monarch butterflies and their loss of habitat. I am a fan of Kingsolver's work and I particularly liked this one.

The Worst Hard Time by Timothy Egan

Egan's book deals with the worst environmental disaster in the US, the Dust Bowl, and the "nesters" that stayed. Much of his research was used for the Ken Burn's Dust Bowl documentary and while it was not an easy read, it was fascinating. I really liked learning about Hugh Bennett, a soil conservationist for FDR, whose soil retention and farming techniques saved the "bread basket" of our nation. Practices, I might add, that are still in use today.

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

A classic! It is the story about a little girl who becomes more in touch with the world through a "Secret Garden".

NON-FICTION NATURALS!

Onward and Upward in the Garden by Katherine S. White

Mrs. White, an editor for the New Yorker in 1925 and an avid gardener, wrote a series of 14 gardening articles for the New Yorker over a span of 12 years. After her death, her husband, author, E. B. White (*Charlotte's Web*), compiled these articles into a book. It is a fun read and a great insight to gardening in the 1920's.

Garden Voices, Stories of Women and Their Gardens by Carolyn Freas Rapp

Ms. Rapp's compilation of the stories of twelve women and the inspiration they received from their gardens is great. Some of the best times I have ever spent have been with friends, men and women, discussing our gardens and our love of dirt!

"HOW TO" DO ITS!

Yes, I actually like to read gardening books. My kids look at me and sadly shake their heads, muttering "Seriously, Mom, You need a life!" Some, I will admit, are more readable than others. Those that are able to combine humor, personal experiences, and down to earth, non-technical tips and practices are my favorites. Written on a 5th grade level works just fine for me!!

Grow Organic, Over 250 Tips and Ideas for Growing Flowers, Veggies, Lawns and More (For First Timers and Old Timers) by Doug Oster and Jessica Walliser

I love this book. It was easy to read, making it easy to start organic gardening. I especially liked the way they help you go green while you are weaning yourself off the spray bottle!

Lasagna Gardening by Patricia Lanza

This terrific "How To" walks you through the steps in creating "No Till" gardens. Ms. Lanza brings you along on her journey of learning of how to grow healthy and productive gardens in all kinds of terrain.

Mike McGrath's Book of Compost by Mike McGrath

Mike McGrath, host of Public Radio's "*You Bet Your Garden*" is such a hoot. Once again, it is an easy read and an easy way to get that compost pile started.