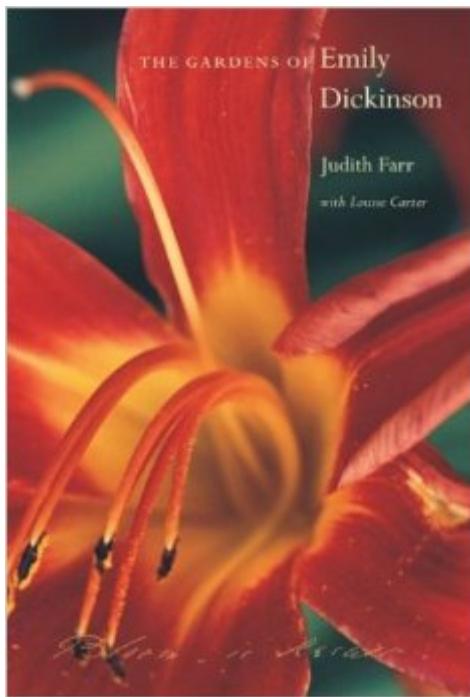


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The Gardens Of Emily Dickinson



Synopsis

In this first substantial study of Emily Dickinson's devotion to flowers and gardening, Judith Farr seeks to join both poet and gardener in one creative personality. She casts new light on Dickinson's temperament, her aesthetic sensibility, and her vision of the relationship between art and nature, revealing that the successful gardener's intimate understanding of horticulture helped shape the poet's choice of metaphors for every experience: love and hate, wickedness and virtue, death and immortality. Gardening, Farr demonstrates, was Dickinson's other vocation, more public than the making of poems but analogous and closely related to it. Over a third of Dickinson's poems and nearly half of her letters allude with passionate intensity to her favorite wildflowers, to traditional blooms like the daisy or gentian, and to the exotic gardenias and jasmines of her conservatory. Each flower was assigned specific connotations by the nineteenth century floral dictionaries she knew; thus, Dickinson's association of various flowers with friends, family, and lovers, like the tropes and scenarios presented in her poems, establishes her participation in the literary and painterly culture of her day. A chapter, "Gardening with Emily Dickinson" by Louise Carter, cites family letters and memoirs to conjecture the kinds of flowers contained in the poet's indoor and outdoor gardens. Carter hypothesizes Dickinson's methods of gardening, explaining how one might grow her flowers today. Beautifully illustrated and written with verve, *The Gardens of Emily Dickinson* will provide pleasure and insight to a wide audience of scholars, admirers of Dickinson's poetry, and garden lovers everywhere.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Emily Dickinson continues to fascinate the literary world, not only because of her unique, eerily beautiful poetry, but also because of the delicious mystery that cocoons her life well over one hundred years after her death. Some have painted her as a looney eccentric, some as a recluse shrouded in sexual ecstasy: she has been seen on theatre stages throughout the world as the Belle of Amherst, and her works have been incorporated into songs and symphonies - the most poignant being John Adams' "Harmonium". Yet few investigators have the quaint, informed pique as the highly admired Dickinson scholar, Judith Farr. This book THE GARDENS OF EMILY DICKINSON maintains the level of biographic study that began with her THE PASSION OF EMILY DICKINSON in 1994 and continued with the elegant, aptly eccentric epistolary novel I NEVER CAME TO YOU IN WHITE in 1996. Like the previous books, Farr does not confine her writing to academia (though she obviously has consumed every bit of available information on her subject and footnoted these books extensively): Farr prefers to open doors and windows of imagination to make the factual data supplied have a semblance to the radiance of Dickinson's gifts to posterity. During Emily Dickinson's lifetime (1830 - 1886) the poet was better known for her commitment to the oh-so-proper Victorian art of gardening. Books on Botany from that period held dominion over reading tables and bookshelves and Dickinson was as astute a garden scholar as the best of them. Flowers are frequently referenced in her poetry, her letters, her life, and Farr has used this other half of Dickinson's life as a means to explore the meanings of her poems. 'Flowers - Well - if anybody/Can extasy define -/Half a transport - half a trouble -/With which flowers humble men:....

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