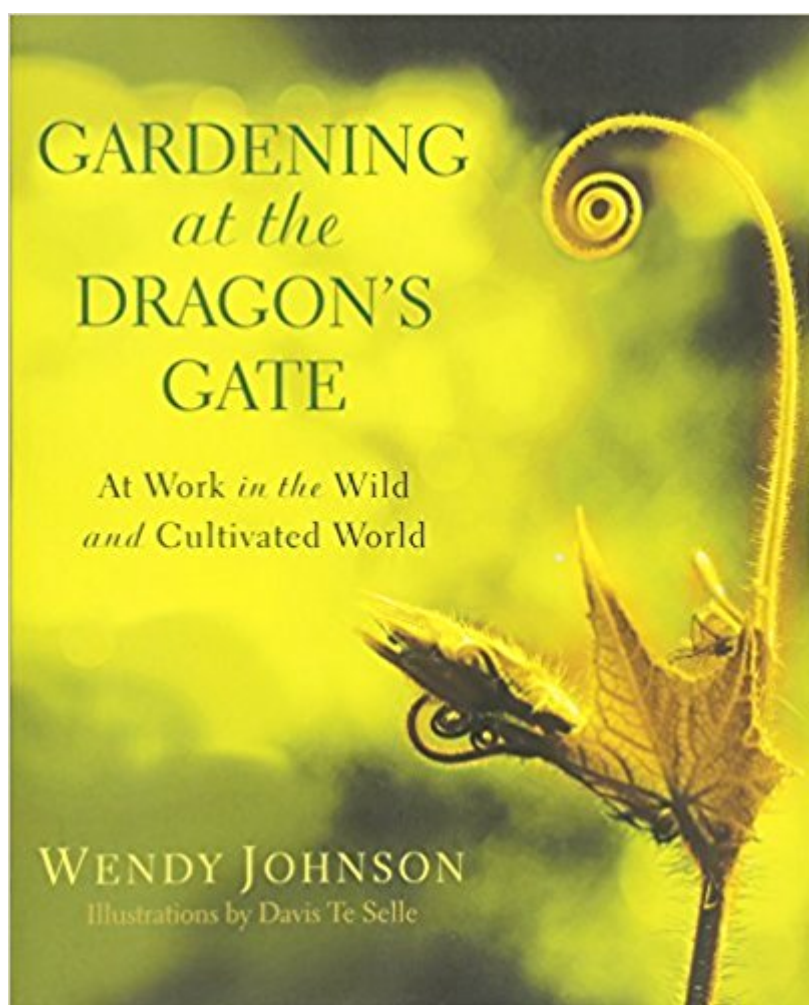


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Gardening At The Dragon's Gate: At Work In The Wild And Cultivated World



Synopsis

Gardening at the Dragon's Gate is fundamental work that permeates your entire life. It demands your energy and heart, and it gives you back great treasures as well, like a fortified sense of humor, an appreciation for paradox, and a huge harvest of Dinosaur kale and tiny red potatoes. For more than thirty years, Wendy Johnson has been meditating and gardening at the Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in northern California, where the fields curve like an enormous green dragon between the hills and the ocean. Renowned for its pioneering role in California's food revolution, Green Gulch provides choice produce to farmers' markets and to San Francisco's Greens restaurant. Now Johnson has distilled her lifetime of experience into this extraordinary celebration of inner and outer growth, showing how the garden cultivates the gardener even as she digs beds, heaps up compost, plants flowers and fruit trees, and harvests bushels of organic vegetables. Johnson is a hands-on, on-her-knees gardener, and she shares with the reader a wealth of practical knowledge and fascinating garden lore. But she is also a lover of the untamed and weedy, and she evokes through her exquisite prose an abiding appreciation for the earth—both cultivated and forever wild—in a book sure to earn a place in the great tradition of American nature writing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps a more appropriate subtitle would have been *Zen and the Art of Horticulture Maintenance*, since Johnson infuses every aspect of gardening with the philosophy that has been her guiding light

for more than 30 years. A Zen Buddhist master, Johnson has served as head gardener for San Francisco's Green Gulch Farm Center, a place of exceptional tranquility and vibrancy where her daily devotional meditation practices became as essential to the health and productivity of her gardens as they were to her body and soul. Espousing seven essential principles that demonstrate respect for the land through organic gardening and ecological farming, Johnson relates practical information about botanical basics, such as planting, growth, and propagation, as well as the craft of gardening, such as designing, tending, and harvesting. Viewed through the prism of an elemental understanding of the unbridled life that exists in every garden, Johnson's wisdom is conveyed with a lyrical, poetic, yet pragmatic sensibility that both calms the mind and excites the imagination. --Carol Haggas

"Wendy Johnson shows how the garden and the shared table reconnect us in a profound and visceral way to the earth. A beautiful book and an invaluable resource."

• Alice Waters, founder, Chez Panisse

"Wendy Johnson follows in the footsteps of Thoreau . . . Her book is succulent, full of surprises, wise, tender, tough, and delicious to read. It is for everyone who wants to live a rich, deep, life."

• Jack Kornfield, author of *A Path With Heart* and *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*

"A glorious book . . . deep philosophy with dirt beneath its fingernails."

• Bill McKibben, author of *The Bill McKibben Reader: Pieces from an Active Life* and *The End of Nature*

"Truly magnificent, a treasure--one of those rare books that you hope, without knowing, will appear in your life. It will keep you in good company for years and years."

• Deborah Madison, author of *The Greens Cookbook* and *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

"A bountiful harvest of wisdom, humor and passion by a master gardener who has spent a lifetime cultivating the soil and the spirit."

• Will Rogers, President, The Trust for Public Land

"This book is a long memory of a relationship with earth. I am in utter awe of the gusto with which Johnson tells her story. Read one paragraph and you'll long to hold dirt in your hand."

• Natalie Goldberg, author of *Writing Down the Bones* and *Wild Mind*

"Part Zen Koan, part love poem to the land, part master's manual in the art and craft of gardening, *Gardening at the Dragon Gate* satisfies body, mind, and soul like a really good meal."

• Michael Ableman, farmer; author of *Fields of Plenty*

"Flower and fruit of a lifetime's horticultural experience, this master work goes far beyond the practical gardening advice it offers in abundance. *Gardening at the Dragon Gate* is full of profound meditations on the chemistry and poetry of botany, geology, and natural history, all rendered in Wendy's unmistakably rich voice. An instant

classic. • Norman Fischer, teacher and founder, Everyday Zen Foundation; author of Taking Our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up "If Earth took a human voice, it would be Wendy's: wry, fierce, passionately attentive to detail, and so startling in its wild freedom it's almost scary. . . . This book is a tonic to the soul. I dare anyone to read it and not be shaken into a fuller, gladder life. • Joanna Macy, author World as Lover, World as Self

The most beautiful book I've read and I read a lot. If you enjoy any form of nature or gardening, Buddhist thinking, and informed discussion on the two you will love this book. Highly recommended. One of my top ten.

I read this book years ago while working at Southern Dharma, a silent, contemplative retreat center in WNC. I actually used to go to week-long work-studies at Green Gulch Farm (Zen Center) in the North Bay where Wendy wrote this book...so when she speaks of the land and the natural phenomena...I can draw from experience... A beautiful, heart-warming, and soulful account of a woman connecting so deeply with the land around her...

Gardening At The Dragon's Gate is for the Earth Starved - I love gardening and do not take the time to do it enough; however, Wendy Johnson's well written, heartfelt, intelligent, humorous, historical and motivating novel has brought me back to my own love of the earth - Each day I read it, I vow to go back to dirty fingernails and the rich taste of earth dust as I crawl around digging and planting - This book rivets you back to your own lovely moments communing with your own garden, however great or small it might be - This book is informative too. I lived in San Francisco and visited Muir Beach and the area many times - I wish I had known of Green Gulch - I plan on visiting now - Any one who has any affinity to the earth, to gardening, to eco-consciousness and to living a life near the soil of their home will be completely pleased, and engrossed in this timely and lovely rich writing and teaching of how to love, and to care for our earth, simply by loving it where ever you are -

This is a beautiful considered and written book about a contemplative and celebrating approach to the practice of gardening. It is both reflective and as earthy as gardening itself, with wonderful illustrations, and some history of the movement to restore organic practices to gardening in recent decades. There is also a lot of information about plants along the way. The style of writing is a bit like a most excellent and trusted friend confiding what it's been like to be gardening all these years. And it addresses the question - do we create our gardens, or do our gardens (if we're really into it)

create us?

Every so often (if you're fortunate), you can stumble upon a book that resonates so deeply with your essential experience that it becomes a permanent field marker, a 'north star', for measuring the growth of your inner life. In "Gardening at the Dragons Gate" the author has gifted us with a wondrous book which cannot be pigeon-holed.....a how-to manual for life? a gardeners treatise? a Zen prayer book? Wendy Johnson has woven many beautiful strands into an enthralling, inspiring book that gently calls on us to re-connect and re-learn our place in the natural world. P.S. I have tried to purchase at chain bookstores, in order to gift others, but it is not available, so thank you, , for giving us access to hard-to-find books!

This book is more of a gardening narrative than a how-to book. However, hidden in this engaging book are little nuggets of information that could lead to discoveries in your gardening experience. Take a needed break from dry gardening information and treat yourself to this.

For the first time, i feel the condition of the book was misrepresented. It had library labels on the inside and outside covers as well as a few pages. In addition, the labels had green markers written over the label. The book was going to be a gift.

Best Book EVER!!!

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