



Master Gardener Bookworms Stephenson County Master Gardeners 2021 Reading Schedule

2021

January 2021

Shirlee Iverson: *My Family and Other Animals*, Gerald Durrell

"As a self-described "champion of small uglies," English writer Gerald Durrell (1925-1995) devoted his life to writing and the preservation of wildlife, from the Mauritius pink pigeon to the Rodrigues fruit bat. *My Family and Other Animals* was intended to embrace the natural history of the Greek island of Corfu, but ended up as a delightful account of his family's experiences that were, according to him, "rather like living in one of the more flamboyant and slapstick comic operas."

February 2021

Ruth Eilers: *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*, Florence Williams

From forest trails in Korea, to islands in Finland, to eucalyptus groves in California, Florence Williams investigates the science behind nature's positive effects on the brain. Delving into brand-new research, she uncovers the powers of the natural world to improve health, promote reflection and innovation, and strengthen our relationships.

March 2021

Jean Korte: *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest*, Mark J Plotkin, PH.D.

The fascinating account of a pioneering ethnobotanist's travels in the Amazon—at once a gripping adventure story, a passionate argument for conservationism, and an investigation into the healing power of plants.

April 2021

Shirlee Iverson: *A Blessing of Toads: A Gardener's Guide to Living with Nature*, Susan Lovejoy

Through this collection of delightful essays and beautiful illustrations, Lovejoy shares the boundless joys of a country garden. Lovejoy has chosen to focus on animal life in the garden, including hummingbirds, caterpillars, and dragonflies, but her informative and witty prose also covers traditional plant care.

May 2021

Group discussion, originally selected by former member Carol Ahrens: *Vegetables: A Biography*, Evelyne Bloch-Dano

"To speak of vegetables," says the author, "is to travel in search of a territory, a culture." Bloch-Dano, a literary critic and biographer of writers, guides us through a historical and literary farmers' market of vegetables. "This is a wonderfully evocative and indeed mouthwatering celebration of vegetables and the joys of gardening.... Bloch-Dano takes ten vegetables, from the carrot and the cabbage to the pumpkin and the pea, and explores their history, drawing on literature, art, language, geography, genetics, and horticulture. She even throws in some recipes." Guardian

June 2021

Jean Korte: *Ripe for Change: Garden-Based Learning in Schools*, Jane Hirsch

"Book takes a big-picture view of the school garden movement and the state of garden-based learning in public K-8 education." Amazon.com

July 2021

Mary Blair: *The Invisible Garden*, Dorothy Sucher

A longtime city dweller and expert storyteller takes a fresh look at gardening in Vermont, tapping the connection between the mysteries of the earth and those of the human spirit. Dorothy Sucher explores both her corner of Vermont and the many aspects of gardening - the satisfaction of shaping a landscape, the spirit of generosity in a land-based community, and the individuality expressed in a neighbor's flowerbeds.

August 2021

Jill DeGraw: *Flower Confidential : The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful*, Amy Stewart (2007)

"An around-the-world, behind-the-scenes look at the flower industry and how it has sought—for better or worse—to achieve perfection." Book jacket

September 2021

Joan Oliver: *Onward and Upward in the Garden*, Katharine S. White

"You don't have to be a gardener to love this collection of essays. White observes that a talent for the soil and a taste for writing and editorializing often go together, and she proves it—creating her own distinctive voice in the process." Newsweek

October 2021

Shey Lowman: *The Food Explorer: The True Adventures of the Globe-Trotting Botanist Who Transformed What America Eats*, Daniel Stone

"In the 19th century, American meals were about subsistence, not enjoyment." David Fairchild visited 5 continents and more than 50 countries to bring back fruits, vegetables and other useful plants that could be grown by American farmers. He's the man who brought the cherry trees to Washington D.C. and kale, mangoes, hops, peaches, avocados, pomegranates, bananas and much more to America. Fairchild was later married to Alexander Graham Bell's daughter.

November 2021

Barb Schaefer (group discussion for this book selected by our dear friend whom we lost last year): *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, Michael Pollan

"This isn't so much a how-to on gardening as a how-to on thinking about gardening. It follows the course of the natural year, from spring through winter, as Pollan, an editor at Harper's, chronicles his growth as a gardener in Connecticut's rocky Housatonic Valley. Starting out as a "child of Thoreau," he soon realized that society's concept of culture as the enemy of nature would get him a bumper crop of weeds and well-fed woodchucks but no vegetables to eat." Amazon.com

December 2021

Joan Oliver: *Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney (a children's book)

Barbara Cooney's story of Alice Rumphius, who longed to travel the world, live in a house by the sea, and do something to make the world more beautiful, has a timeless quality that resonates with each new generation. The countless lupines that bloom along the coast of Maine are the legacy of the real Miss Rumphius, the Lupine Lady, who scattered lupine seeds everywhere she went. *Miss Rumphius* received the American Book Award in the year of publication

2022

January 2022

Ruth Eilers: *Winter Bloom* by Tara Heavy

A quick read with predictable romantic happenings, mid-way through we are introduced to a story of survival in the concentration camps that made the book worth the read, for me.