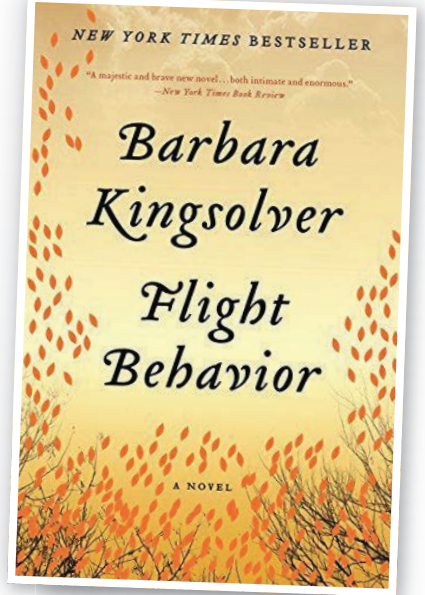
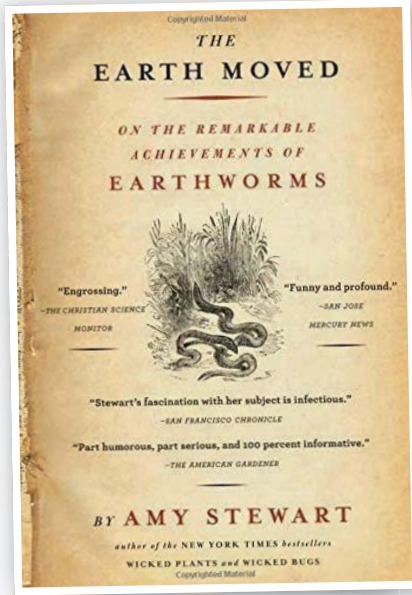
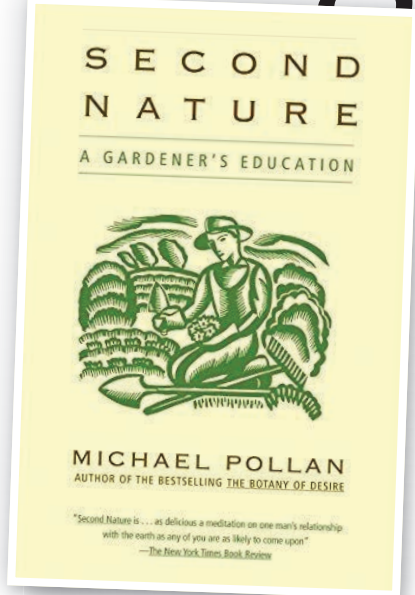
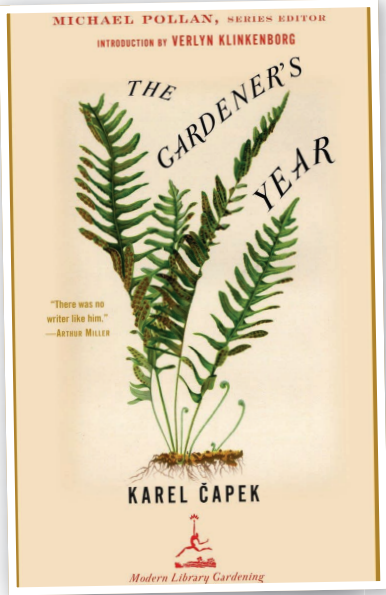


Relaxing in the shade

Summer garden reads



BY LIZ DOUVILLE

For The Bulletin

Summer reads are different. Winter is the time for reading that requires researching, taking notes and learning. By the time gardening season starts, you are armed with an assortment of do's and don'ts, try this, rip out that, and above all, the mantra of wear your hat and use sunscreen.

Summer days are always busy. By mid-afternoon, it's time for an iced drink and some reading in the shade. I have a few favorites I revisit every summer, at least for a chapter here and there.

My very favorite is **"The Gardener's Year,"** by Karel Capek. The book is a collection of wry observations about all the things that can go wrong in the garden and what mad-men gardeners are.

Capek (pronounced chop-uk) was 39 years old in 1929 when he published the book in Prague. He was a Czech writer internationally famous for his play R.U.R., which introduced the word "robot" to the world in 1921.

Capek uttered prayers that didn't include so much as a holy please or a grateful thank you. He was pretty direct as to what he asked for: "that there may be plenty of dew and little wind, enough worms, no plant-lice and snails, no mildew, and that once a week thin liquid manure and guano may fall from heaven. Amen."

The purpose of Michael Pollan, author of

"Second Nature: A Gardener's Education"

was not to teach gardening but to help the reader understand the "troubled borders between nature and culture, our attitudes towards wilderness and animals." The book contains a fair amount of gardening methods, but mainly the focus is the philosophy of gardening. Especially funny is his writings of the "curious politics of the American lawn and the moral dimensions of landscape."

Pollan also wrote "Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World." Pollan links four fundamental human desires—sweetness, beauty, intoxication and control with the plants that satisfy them: apple, tulip, marijuana and potato. Pollan illustrates how the plants have evolved to satisfy humankind's most basic yearnings.

Amy Stewart is one of my favorite authors. Stewart writes in her author's note for **"The Earth Moved: On the Remarkable Achievements of Earthworms,"** that she is not a scientist, but rather a gardener who is curious about earthworms.

Why do we never find a dead earthworm in the soil, or in a worm bin? Did you know the Palouse region of Washington state was the home of the giant Palouse earthworm, *driloleirus americanus*? There hasn't been a sighting in over 20 years. If you happen to see a pinkish white earthworm, two feet or longer when fully extended, that smells like lilies — rush it to the nearest university for documentation. Your fame on the nightly news will be guaranteed.

In 2009, Stewart received The American Horticultural Society Book Award for **"Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother & Other Botanical Atrocities."**

Stewart also wrote the best seller **"Wicked Bugs: The Louse That Conquered Napoleon's Army and Other Diabolical Insects."** Both are fast and interesting reads.

On my list for this summer is Stewart's true story series about Constance Kopp and her sister, the first women in law enforcement in 1914. Stewart's interest in the Kopp sisters has resulted in seven novels.

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of "Eat, Pray, Love," wrote an engrossing novel of adventure and discovery titled "The Signature of All Things." It is the story of a woman born in 1800, the daughter of a botanical explorer. The story reaches from America to Tahiti. Alma's research takes her deep into the mysteries of evolution. The story takes many dips and turns when she falls in love with a man who draws her into the world of the spiritual, and the magical. I read the novel several years ago and would read it a second time.

"Flight Behavior," by Barbara Kingsolver was written in 2012 and was a bestseller. I didn't read it until this past year and I am glad I waited. I don't think it would have had the same impact years ago—it seems timelier now that we are recognizing that there is climate change and also that we are more concerned with Monarch Butterflies. Kingsolver has roots in the Appalachian

culture which makes the dialog and the philosophies more authentic. The main character, Dellarobia is 27, married to an unimaginative man, has 2 kids and lives in a small house on her in-laws property. Life was pretty dull and bleak until hordes of Monarch were discovered that changed the small town life in many ways

Henry Mitchell's name would be more familiar to you if you were from the East coast. Mitchell wrote for the Washington Post every Thursday under his "Earthman" column for many years. He has been considered the best garden writer in America and a master essayist.

The month-by-month content may not be totally relevant to our climate but his words and thoughts are inspirational. Mitchell died in 1993 at which time a collection of his writings were published in "Henry Mitchell on Gardening."

Ciscoe Morris is a highly respected Pacific Northwest garden writer and public speaker. "OH, LA LA!" is an entertaining, humorous accounting of his 45 years of gardening, part of which was as head gardener at Seattle University. He writes of subjects familiar to us: deer, moles, birds, rats and the secret lives of insects.

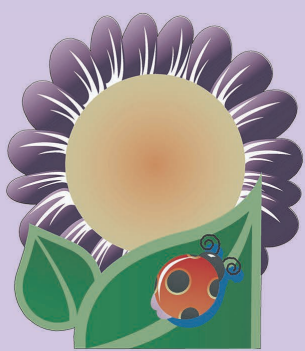
So much to read, so little time. Hopefully you will find these brief reviews enticing enough to turn off your devices and spend time with the written word in the shade of your favorite tree.

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