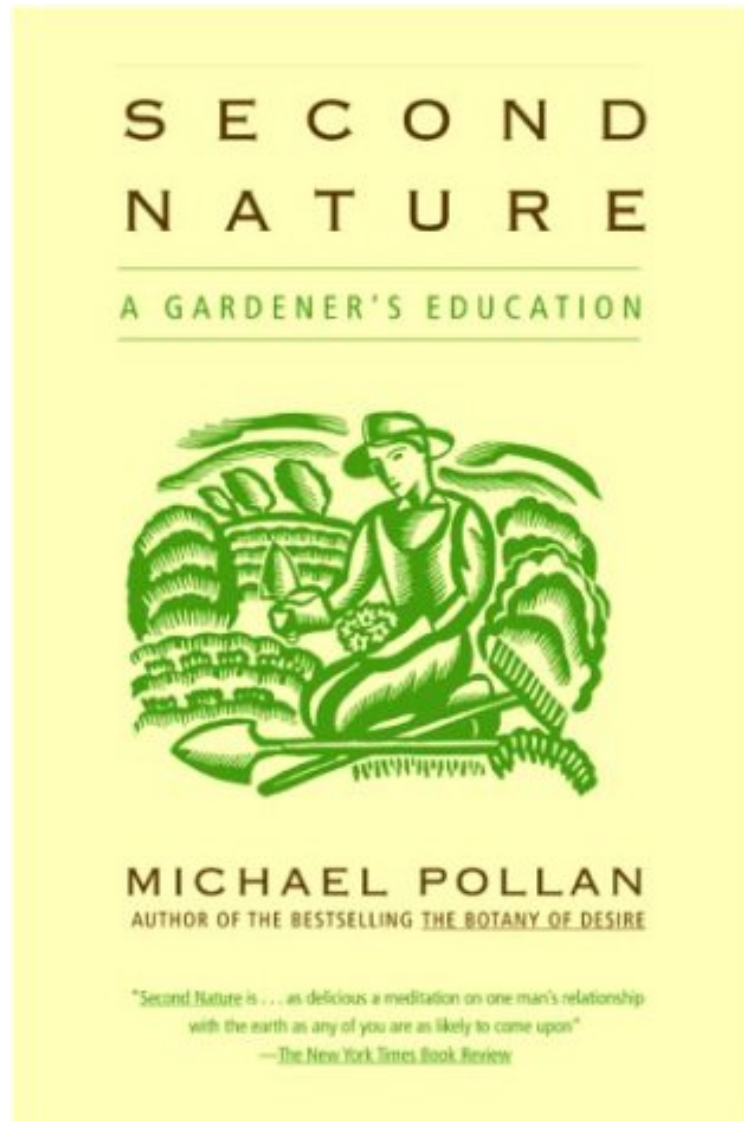


(Read now) Second Nature: A Gardener's Education

## Second Nature: A Gardener's Education

*Michael Pollan*

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**Michael Pollan : Second Nature: A Gardener's Education** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Second Nature: A Gardener's Education:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Pollan on gardeningBy Phillip SchultzI didn't expect a book about gardening to be quite so engaging. Pollan takes the reader on a journey starting with his earliest memories of being in the garden through the establishment of his own garden. In the end though it is less about gardening tips and techniques and more philosophical. Pollan explores why we garden and some of the similarities and differences

between British and American gardens. I've read many of Pollan's other books and I enjoyed this one almost as much as the others. The way he writes makes the topic accessible to the reader even if it isn't what you expect. There are some parts that are less interesting to me, specifically the very early portion and parts of the last chapter on seed catalogs. But there is humor and insight sprinkled throughout that make it enjoyable and worth picking up. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Comfortable like Grandma's porch swing  
By Sara Eden  
I discovered Michael Pollan's book, *Botany of Desire*, through required reading when taking a botany class during my undergraduate years; *Second Nature* was a natural follow-up companion, proving just as illuminating and fascinating. Pollan has created a niche for delicately crafting humor, advice, and contemplation about the relationship of humans with nature, and in the case of *Second Nature*, with both the physical and philosophical garden. As a teacher, writer, and gardener myself, I found some of my subconscious thoughts unearthed and glistening on the pages, as Pollan took me on a journey through otherwise unvoiced notions such as the sexuality of roses, the morality of compost, and man's obsession with non-native lawns. The voyage was delightful, and it created more questions for me than it answered. For that reason, it did its job by unleashing further fascination about human coexistence with this awesome and powerful earth. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Pollan gets a little verbose in his love of quoting Thoreau  
By Tim Pierce  
Overall enjoyable read. Pollan gets a little verbose in his love of quoting Thoreau, and diving into the history of gardening, but otherwise good narrative. It's a good read in what motivates us to garden, his story of his grandfather, and childhood any gardener could relate to in their own way. Don't read necessarily for advice, but more for enjoying what another gardener has to say about the subject.

In his articles and in best-selling books such as *The Botany of Desire*, Michael Pollan has established himself as one of our most important and beloved writers on modern man's place in the natural world. A new literary classic, *Second Nature* has become a manifesto not just for gardeners but for environmentalists everywhere. As delicious a meditation on one man's relationships with the Earth as any you are likely to come upon (*The New York Times Book Review*), *Second Nature* captures the rhythms of our everyday engagement with the outdoors in all its glory and exasperation. With chapters ranging from a reconsideration of the Great American Lawn, a dispatch from one man's war with a woodchuck, to an essay about the sexual politics of roses, Pollan has created a passionate and eloquent argument for reconceiving our relationship with nature.

From *Publishers Weekly*  
Despite some overheated prose, Pollan's 2003 book on his many years gardening proves to be an enjoyable and instructive listen. The account moves seamlessly from the humble and personal the minor and major decisions Pollan must make for his garden each season to a larger inquiry of gardening through historical, philosophical, environmental, and practical lenses. Pollan's soft and slightly nasal voice is rhythmic and engaging, but Scott Brick, who narrated *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*, would have been a better choice. Pollan can't match Brick's ability to marshal information and move an audience, and this one consequently lacks the impact and nuance of his previous audiobooks. A Grove Press paperback. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.  
From *Library Journal*  
Pollan, executive editor of *Harper's* and self-proclaimed amateur gardener, has written a book that is by turns charming and annoying, insightful and shallow, droll and banal. His collection of a dozen essays arranged by season is based on his experiences over a seven-year period in his Connecticut garden, along with vignettes from garden history. Unfortunately, Pollan's text is characterized by dubious and unsupported generalities, self-conscious humor, and extended, labored metaphors, and his lack of gardening authority dooms the book to superficiality. Experienced gardeners and devotees of garden literature will find little here that is original. Only for comprehensive gardening collections.- Richard Shotwell, Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Mass. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. Delightful. . . . Part autobiography, part gardening book, part intellectual odyssey. . . . [Second Nature] is a large spirited and ultimately hopeful work.  
Frank Levering, *The Washington Post Book World*  
A joy to read...[Pollan] writes with humor, acerbity, magnanimity...and all those good qualities that lead to charm and one almost dares say it wisdom.  
Henry Mitchell, *The Los Angeles Times*  
The best book about Americans and their gardens in decades. *Second Nature* reads like brilliant entertainment, but it is serious wisdom. Michael Pollan is a genuine heir to my favorite nature write, Mark Twain.  
Simon Schama, *The Boston Globe*  
One of the distinguished gardening books of our time.  
Noel Perrin, *USA Today*  
*Second Nature* is as delicious a meditation on one man's relationship with the earth as any of you are as likely to come upon.  
*The New York Times Book*  
Deft and often dazzling about gardening, but only in the same way that Dantes *Divine Comedy* is about getting lost in the woods I know no book on gardening that is quite as illuminating and fascinating as this one.  
Allen Larcy, *The New York Times*  
The appeal of this book is its ability to inspire readers to contemplate the meanings and implications of their gardens. *Second Nature* was first published in 1991. Luckily for the reader, and to Michael Pollan's credit, the book's main concepts do not become less meaningful or thought-provoking with the passage of time. Pollan's aims aren't to persuade, but to encourage us to take a second look at ourselves, our world, and our gardens.  
Scott Atkinson, *Garden Solutions*  
Wonderful. . . . Pollan brings the shrewd eye of a social historian. . . . Most things in Pollan's book work upward toward metaphor even though he takes care to root every metaphor in aerated soil, rich with

the compost of organic experience. Richard Dyer, *The Boston Globe* He's written a book about gardening that even nongardeners might want to read. . . . Pollan can still remember that there are readers of intelligence and curiosity whose gardening habits amount to no more than a stroll through the yard every month or so to see what's died. Malcolm Jones Jr., *Newsweek* As a nongardener, I never expected to stay up late and laugh out loud at a book like this, but I've been permanently Pollan-ated. Christopher Buckley, *Vanity Fair* Second Nature is to gardening what Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* is to fishing. Combining humor, natural description, and advice, it's not so much about compost, seeds, seasons, and pests as it is about human nature. Thomas DEvelyn, *The Christian Science Monitor* Wonderful writing. . . . These elegant, lively, and impeccably crafted essays [offer] us a provocative new way of approaching our environmental problems. . . . At a time when it seems we must choose between unchecked development or no development at all, Pollan's idea of the world as a garden could offer us a way out of the wilderness. Inga Saffron, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* Pollan is a hybrid—a gardener-philosopher-humorist-polemicist who has written a book that manages to amuse while it muses, a book that lures even the non-gardener into the physical and metaphysical garden. Jocelyn McClurg, *The Hartford Courant* The best gardening book I have read in memory, perhaps ever. . . . [Pollan's] essays are funny and profound, elegant and basic. . . . [Second Nature] is the story of Pollan's effort to coexist with nature, forging a middle ground between allowing nature to fulfill its tendency to run rampant . . . and restraining it completely in a la American suburbia and its broad, picture-perfect lawns. Nancy Brachey, *The Charlotte Observer* A bounty of food for thought. . . . [Pollan] takes a deep look at our spiritual, ethical, environmental connection to the garden and land itself, philosophically exploring our attitude toward nature and wilderness and how each should be tended. Karen A. Cleath, *The Tampa Tribune* A serious undertaking and an important book, a reasoned argument with Thoreau and others about the wilderness ethic and how much or little it can tell us about what our attitude toward nature ought to be. Christopher Reed, *Horticulture* An important and profoundly original book. . . . A well-developed philosophy of life and nature in a technological world. Kirkus sQuirky and pleasing. . . . The debut of a fresh and provocative voice in American writing. Annie Dillard, author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* As a gardener, I read this charming and ultimately profound book with admiration and, I must admit, some envy; as a writer, with pleasure. Witold Rybczynski, author of *The Most Beautiful House in the World* You don't have to be a gardener to love Second Nature. Pollan is a marvelous essayist: indeed he is to gardens what Lewis Thomas is to medicine—expert, witty, and original. Frances FitzGerald In the March 24, 2008 issue of *Newsweek*, Alice Waters, chef and food writer of *Chez Panisse* fame, listed Second Nature as one of her Top Five Most Important Books, saying, A funny, wonderful teacher who takes your hand and introduces you to Mother Nature.