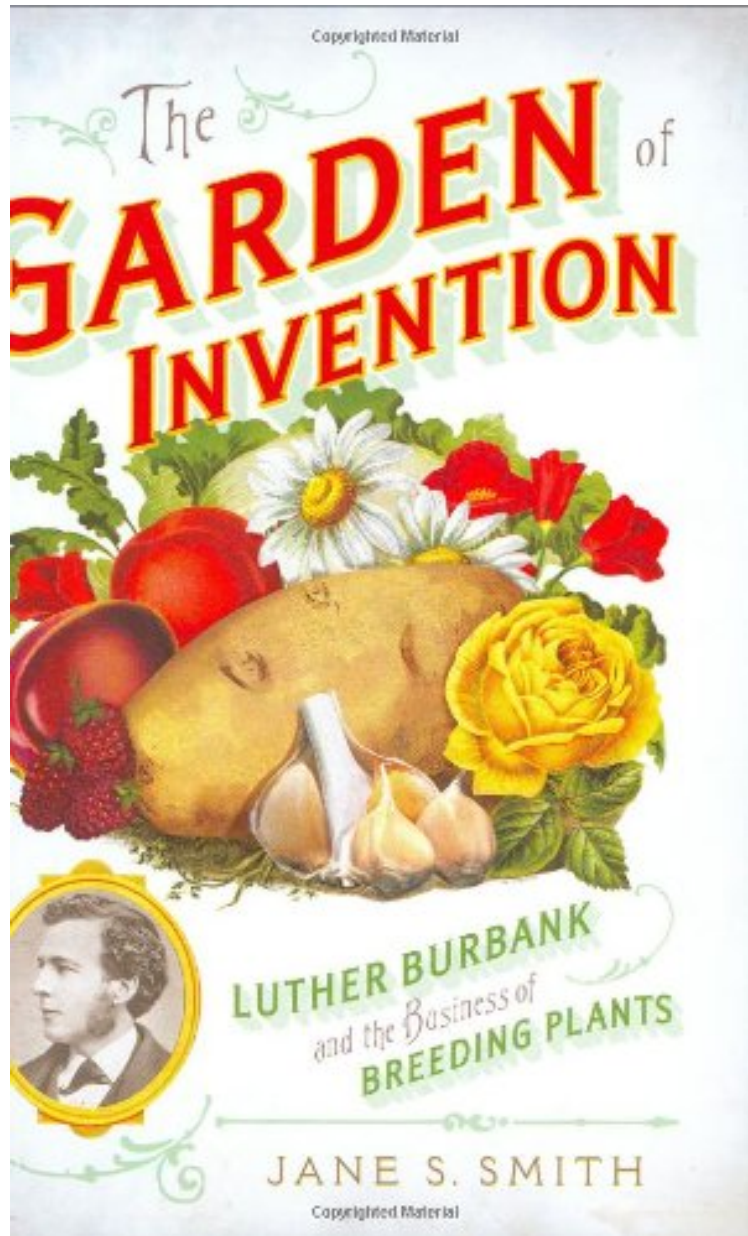


The Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants

Jane S. Smith

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Jane S. Smith : The Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. I'm pretty sure it's all hereBy CustomerIf you want to know about Luther Burbank, I'm pretty sure it's all here. In fact, if there is a downside, it's probably that you might not want to know -this- much about him. I was very interested in his gardening techniques, and while this was in the book, it was a small part. This is a comprehensive biography. It's a thorough, historical account of his life, his personality, his path to success, and people's reaction to him at the time. The book is kind of dry, but let's be honest...this is a book about the premiere gardener of the early 1900's. You kind of know what you're in for.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a fascinating book that really explains the wonder of hybridsBy catsimA great read if you are interested in plants. Burbank was a great hybridizer and really ahead of his time with his drive to come up with new and better varieties . A slightly quirky character, he managed to accomplish so much with slightly unorthodox and not extremely scientific methods.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Winner!By cheryl roetherVery interesting! Anyone Interested in gardening will love the history and information, which is bountiful, in this book. He was famous for his progress with the potatoe and I also learned he branched out to many other foods!

The wide-ranging and delightful history of celebrated plant breeder Luther Burbank and the business of farm and garden in early twentieth- century America At no other time in history has there been more curiosity or concern about the food we eat-and genetically modified foods, in particular, have become both pervasive and suspect. A century ago, however, Luther Burbank's blight-resistant potatoes, white blackberries, and plumcots-a plum-apricot hybrid-were celebrated as triumphs in the best tradition of American ingenuity and perseverance. In his experimental grounds in Santa Rosa, California, Burbank bred and cross-bred edible and ornamental plants-for both home gardens and commercial farms-until they were bigger, hardier, more beautiful, and more productive than ever before. A fascinating portrait of an American original, *The Garden of Invention* is also a colorful and engrossing tale of the intersection of gardening, science and business in the years between the Civil War and the Great Depression.

From Publishers WeeklyThough as famous in his day as Thomas Edison, agricultural pioneer Luther Burbank (1849-1926) is little remembered; in this straightforward, engaging biography, author and historian Smith (*Patenting the Sun: Polio and the Salk Vaccine*) recounts Burbank's life and its context, chronicling also agribusiness's turn-of-the-century growth and industrialization. Smith covers Burbank's rural New England childhood; the influence of Darwin on his horticultural ideas; his move to Santa Rosa, Calif.; and the establishment of his experimental gardens and nurseries. Amazingly, Burbank discovered independently the Mendelian principles that form the basis of genetics, and developed more than 800 varieties of fruits, nuts, vegetables and flowers. He made little money, largely owing to insufficient patent law (plants were not covered at the time) and his own paranoia, but he gained ample fame amid the 19th-century vogue for progress. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the AuthorJane S. Smith received her Ph.D. in English from Yale University and has taught at Northwestern University on topics ranging from twentieth-century fiction to the history of public health. Her history of the first polio vaccine, *Patenting the Sun: Polio and the Salk Vaccine*, received the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Science and Technology. She has served as a commentator, consultant, and writer for numerous documentary film projects. She works in a very small room with a very large window.