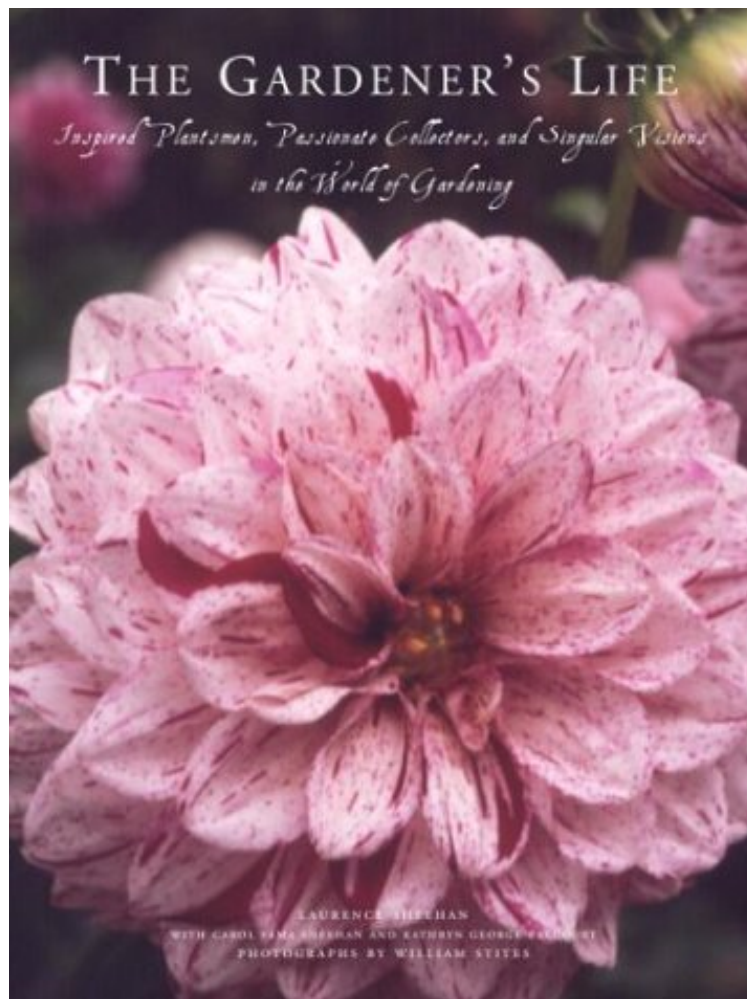


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The Gardener's Life: Inspired Plantsmen, Passionate Collectors, and Singular Visions in the World of Gardening

Larry Sheehan, Carol Sheehan, Kathryn Ge Precourt, William Stites
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Larry Sheehan, Carol Sheehan, Kathryn Ge Precourt, William Stites : The Gardener's Life: Inspired Plantsmen, Passionate Collectors, and Singular Visions in the World of Gardening before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gardener's Life: Inspired Plantsmen, Passionate Collectors, and Singular Visions in the World of Gardening:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. PERFECT TRANSACTION By mymimisthebest I have wanted this fabulous book since it was published in 2004! Arrived in perfect condition and impeccably packaged for shipping, and much earlier than expected. A wonderful value for the price and exceeded all expectations of advertisement. And all the sweeter for the waiting. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

DisappointedBy J. B. McKibbenThe book has never arrived. The vendor has promised to "resend" - no results yet. Order placed in late April. Today is Memorial Day. I'll update when/if the book arrives.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. pretty and thinBy J. Barrypretty pictures and pleasant anecdotes but not much else. if you are looking for something of substance you can do a lot better. a nice coffee table book but somewhat overpriced.

For those who love the garden, it is not just about planting and growing, but about collecting garden-themed china, painting orchids and violets, visiting botanical gardens, reading and repairing rare horticultural books, competing in shows, and dreaming about the garden all winter long. In a book that celebrates the particular passionperhaps obsession is a more accurate termof the gardeners life, Laurence Sheehan (with Carol Sama Sheehan, Kathryn George Precourt, and photographer William Stites) presents a diverse array of treasures that will delight every garden lover. In this select society, everyone understands why a collection of colorful seed packets could grow to fill many rooms, why one species of plant could preoccupy a lifetime, and why those with concrete patios as well as acres of ranch land could share a vision. In the first section, *Inspired Plantsmen*, *The Gardeners Life* introduces a group of people whose passion focuses on the plants themselvesgrowers of herbs and roses from Connecticut to California who have spent lifetimes devoted to their favorite plants. *Passionate Collectors* presents aficionados of garden books, garden watercolors, garden ornaments, and even well-worn, much-used, and lovingly restored antique lawn mowers. Finally, whether they possess a desire to throw the perfect flowerpot or to create a miniature yard on a city terrace, the free spirits in *Singular Visions* offer new ways of looking at, and loving, the garden demonstrating that each garden and each gardener who tends it is unique. Mixed among the stories of these individuals are photographic excursionsvisits to flower shows and wildflower gardens that illustrate how vast and varied the gardeners world truly is. More than a how-to gardening book, *The Gardeners Life* works its way to the heart of why gardeners have unlimited fascination with their pastime, and why the garden is a place where art and nature, technique and toilnot to mention joie de vivre meet to create paradise.

About the AuthorThe team of Laurence Sheehan, Carol Sama Sheehan, Kathryn George Precourt, and photographer William Stites has created four other books together: *The Sporting Life*, *The Anglers Life*, *A Passion for Golf*, and *Living with Dogs*. Their work has appeared in numerous magazines. In addition to his many writing credits, Larry Sheehan spent a summer as a nursery manager in Connecticut. Carol Sheehan is the editor in chief of *Country Home* magazine. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.1 *Inspired Plantsmen*I am led to reflect how much more delightful to an undebauched mind is the task of making improvements on the earth, than all the vain glory which can be acquired from ravaging it. George Washington, *Letter to an English farmer* (1790)There are gardens of the heart, gardens of the mind, and gardens of the pocketbook, and most of us find something pleasing in all of them. *Plantsmen and plantswomen* bring those preoccupations together by virtue of their livelihoods. They need to grow that which is both sentimental and sensible in order to stay in business. In their delightful tribute *Legends in the Garden* (2001), Linda Copeland and Allan Armitage single out dozens of plantsmen, both professional and amateur, who discovered cultivars that have become gold-standard offerings in the American plant palette. The diversity of the gardeners who first recognized the special virtues of certain garden plants is matched by their acuity in observation. These men and women are on a first-name basis with all that grows in and out of their gardens. Like Elizabeth Lawrence, the beloved chronicler of the world of country gardeners who subscribed to southern market bulletins and who, in her own words, "garden for love," such gardeners have a compulsion to put a name on things, especially plants that seem to stand apart from others of their kind. Thus, Harriet Kirkpatrick, out for a horseback ride in the hills outside Anna, Illinois, in 1910, came upon a hydrangea with a bloom like a snowball, and thought so much of it that she transplanted it into her own garden. Many years later it was finally registered and propagated commercially as *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'. Before Allen Lacy became a nationally recognized garden writer, he taught philosophy at a small college in Linwood, New Jersey. He saw an aster in his neighborhood that no one seemed to know anything about, one that grew to four feet tall and produced violet-blue flowers with bright yellow centers. He guessed correctly that it might be a new variety useful to gardeners and subsequently named it after his wife, thus creating *Aster* 'Hella Lacy'. Henry Ross, who singlehandedly created *Gardenview Horticultural Park* on sixteen acres in Strongsville, Ohio, has introduced dozens of cultivars through his work on the park over the years, from his white-leaved *Ajuga* 'Arctic Fox', to his mildew-resistant *Monarda* 'Gardenview Scarlet' (which he points out is actually a clone, not a cultivar, because it is vegetatively reproduced). This brings to mind the greatest plant-namer of all, 18th-century Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus, who subdivided the kingdom of plants according to the form and function of the reproductive parts of individual specimens. By this method, which changed the course of science's inquiry into Nature, he arrived at twenty-four classes and numerous orders, genera, and species for further differentiation. When a German botanist named Johann Siegesbeck attacked his sexual system as "loathsome harlotry," Linnaeus saw fit to name after his detractor a particularly obnoxious weed, still known to this day as *Siegesbeckia*. More typically, however, the plantsman displays an inherent generosity of spirit, and "passes along," as they say in the South, wonderful plants, not weeds, to fellow gardeners. As Elizabeth Lawrence of Charlotte, North Carolina, wrote *The New*

Yorker editor Katharine S. White of Maine and Manhattan, early in their twenty-year-long correspondence about plants and people, "I wish you lived next door and I would fill your garden up." *Plantsman's World* The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. Vita Sackville-West, *Country Notes* (1939) Like Picasso, legendary plantsman Allen Haskell (who also studied painting, once) doesn't get around much. Instead, the world comes to the artist. In his case, the artist's studio is Haskell's historic home and garden center, a patch of Eden surviving amid the shopping-mall sprawl of New Bedford, Massachusetts. This is where the Pope got a pair of rose standards for the Vatican. This is where Jackie O. got her favorite flowers, cosmos and daisies, to decorate the church for her daughter's, Caroline Kennedy's, wedding. This is where the proprietor offhandedly pronounces, "If you ever have a problem with a flower arrangement, put blue in it." So, leave the highway behind, take a right on Shawmut Avenue, and turn at the sign of the peacock, announcing "allen p. haskell, plants compliments" (sic). Enter a world of botanical wonders, for the term garden center is hardly adequate to describe the crazy-quilt of beautiful gardens here. Repeat visits are obligatory, because change is always in the air. Haskell thinks nothing of uprooting plants, even mature trees, and moving them from one end of the property to the other, for improved aesthetic effect. As one admirer, the artist and garden writer Abbie Zabar, has observed, "Nothing can stop Allen Haskell from doing it again if he can do it better." Every fall he plants ten thousand bulbs of green tulips. After they have bloomed in the spring, loath to look at their expiring foliage, he digs them all up and gives them away to his favorite customers. Some seventy-five rare camellias, from peppermint pink to deeper hues, are sprinkled throughout the display gardens. Near one of Allen's classic Lord Burnham greenhouses stands a huge and gorgeous flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*, a specimen more than 250 years of age that, Haskell believes, may well be the oldest of its kind in the United States. Next to it stands another rarity: the Chinese dove tree, *Davidia involucrata*, which he started from a cutting taken from a tree in Harvard's Arnold Arboretum two decades ago. Also known as the handkerchief tree or ghost tree, it bloomed for the first time one recent spring, cause for joyous celebration among the family and friends who make up Haskell's loyal staff. Son David, a talented landscape designer in his own right; Allen's daughter, Felecia; and wife, Ellena, all work in the garden center, as does Briton John Mitchell, the head propagator, and Gene Bertrand, Allen's longtime companion, also an accomplished grower. In the gardening world, Haskell is an American original, seamlessly juggling his deep-seated Puritan work ethic with an appreciative taste for Dewar's, chilled, no ice, at his daily lunch stop, Rosies, up the road from the nursery, and shamelessly balancing contradictory opinions, about color, say. One minute he will tell you, "Every color has its place in the garden. Don't be prejudiced...just find the right place for it." The next (on a drive through town), he'll remark, "Godawful magenta azaleas grouped around a chartreuse Japanese maple! What insipid nerds dreamt up that combination?" At the same time, he admits, "I'm known to knock on the doors of strangers to tell them how good their garden looks." When Richard Churchill, himself a horticulturist, was assigned to write a magazine story about Haskell, he gingerly made inquiries about the man, and heard him described, variously, as "revered, eccentric, New England's horticultural legend, outrageous, a mentor to many, an artist, a visionary, a perfectionist, kind-hearted, savage, able to paint with plants, a plant promoter, a trend setter, a cutting-edge horticulturalist...and a man who suffers no fools." Actually, Haskell says he has thrown out only two customers in fifty years, most recently a man who insisted on standing in a bed of his green tulips. Allen has a wicked sense of humor, which he says he inherited from his father. His parents made a fateful decision in his behalf when he was two and diagnosed with brain cancer. They were told that by removing the tumor through an eye socket, sacrificing one eye, the boy's chances of survival would be better, and that was the course chosen. The surgery was successful. About convalescing in his backyard, Haskell recalls, "I got to know every bug and living thing." A star plantsman was born. "I'm in love with horticulture," he says today. "I sleep it, eat it, drink it, live it." Allen, well-versed in the psychology of the average gardener, points to a favorite bit of doggerel posted on the wall in his office: Oh Lord of little things, Reward all my labors And make my garden A little bit better than my neighbor's. Haskell is as famous for his plants as his personality, for example his collection of azaleas, many of them more than fifty years old, and none of them magenta. He is famous for his collection of hosta, a jumbo version of which he recently hybridized and named 'David Allen Haskell', after his son. All proceeds from the sale of the Haskell hosta go into a scholarship fund for a grandson. (A Boston-area garden of his design contains more than six hundred hosta plants from his nursery.) He is famous for his "impeccable topiary designs," as friend and fan Martha Stewart has described them, "that reveal the beauty of the plants' textures, shapes, and forms." He produces thirty thousand topiaries a year, among them elegant spheres of ivy, bay laurel and rosemary, three-tiered myrtle with pineapple-shaped tops, lollipop heads of lavender, westringia and santolina, and stately scented geraniums. "His creativity with plants," declares Martha, "is unrivaled in the world of horticulture." Haskell loves animals almost as much as he loves plants. Golden pheasants, peacocks, and fancy fowl strut within their handsomely crafted pens at the north end of the garden center, an unexpected delight for first-time visitors. The birds are housed a few steps from Haskell's own Federal-style home, originally part of a farmstead dating from 1725, listed on the Massachusetts Registry of Historic Houses. Haskell keeps numerous other animals, includ...