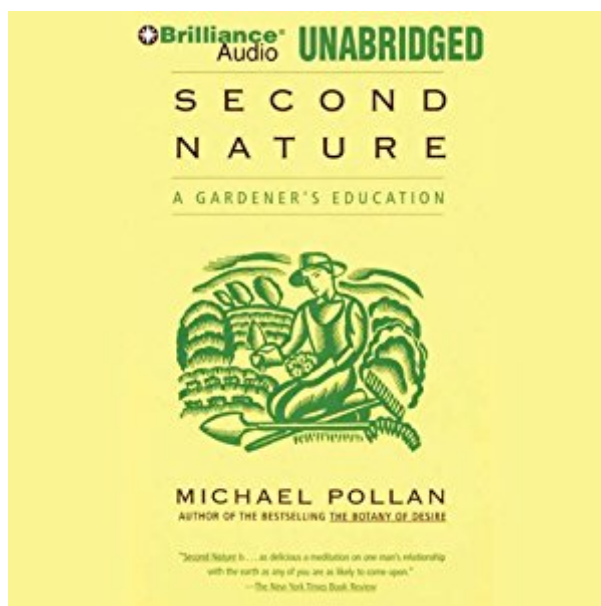


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# Second Nature: A Gardener's Education



## Synopsis

In his articles and in bestselling 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. Chosen by the American Horticultural Society as one of the seventy-five greatest books ever written about gardening, *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. "Second Nature reads like brilliant entertainment, but it is serious wisdom. Michael Pollan is a genuine heir to my favorite nature writer, Mark Twain." • Simon Schama, *The Boston Globe* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I 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.

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.

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.

This is a good read covering many attitudes about gardening and plants, forest and field. Pollan's style evolved from here to become more entertaining as well as informative but hints of that style are in this book. Like all of his books this is thought provoking.

I am a gardener. I have to start with this statement, because I relate so very well to Pollan in this regard that I am not able to step outside myself and make a guess if it's a book for every homeowner or more for those who are interested in gardening. If you have even a passing interest in horticulture, landscaping, or possibly American history/philosophy I would highly recommend this book. It felt so good to read about someone else's journey through idealism to pragmatism in their own yard, as so much of it reflects my own experiences. There are oodles of quotes and thoughts from other garden writers, many of which I plan to follow up on and read as well. I learned a lot from

Second Nature and enjoyed every minute of it.

This is NOT a how to garden book. It is a thinking about the garden book. Even if a person never touched a shovel to earth, this is a wonderful series of essays about man and living with other life forms. This is science and philosophy, maybe back to the original meaning of natural philosophy. I especially liked the weed chapter. I have always had difficulty being ruthless in the garden. Now I understand that I should keep my part of the contract I make with the plants who feed me and let me live in beauty.

I downloaded this book when my fiancé and I planted our first garden, last Spring. I became a Pollan fan when I read "The Omnivore's Dilemma," so when I saw he had written a book on the experience of gardening, I knew I had to read it. There is so much contained within these pages. The description of his lawn, and the history of lawns in the United States, is something that everyone should read. To understand how the American Dream came to be, we need to also have a grasp on the history of home and landscape designs in this country. His description of lawns, and then of forests, made the issue come to life for me. His description of his grandfather's garden was priceless. I felt like I was sitting in his grandfather's garden, eating tomatoes with the two of them. And his fight with the hedgehog--I was taking swats at him, too! Planting my first garden was a real treat. Reading this alongside enriched that experience.

I enjoy the book and especially its info on old roses. Michael is a little pretentious in his use of big words, it seems some are thrown in there just for fun! Good thing I am reading it on a Kindle...one finger dictionary, otherwise I would be consulting the dictionary often and getting derailed. I do like a story when I am reading about someone's building of their garden. Makes it very interesting for the reader. I am not finished with the book, but will use it as a reference.

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