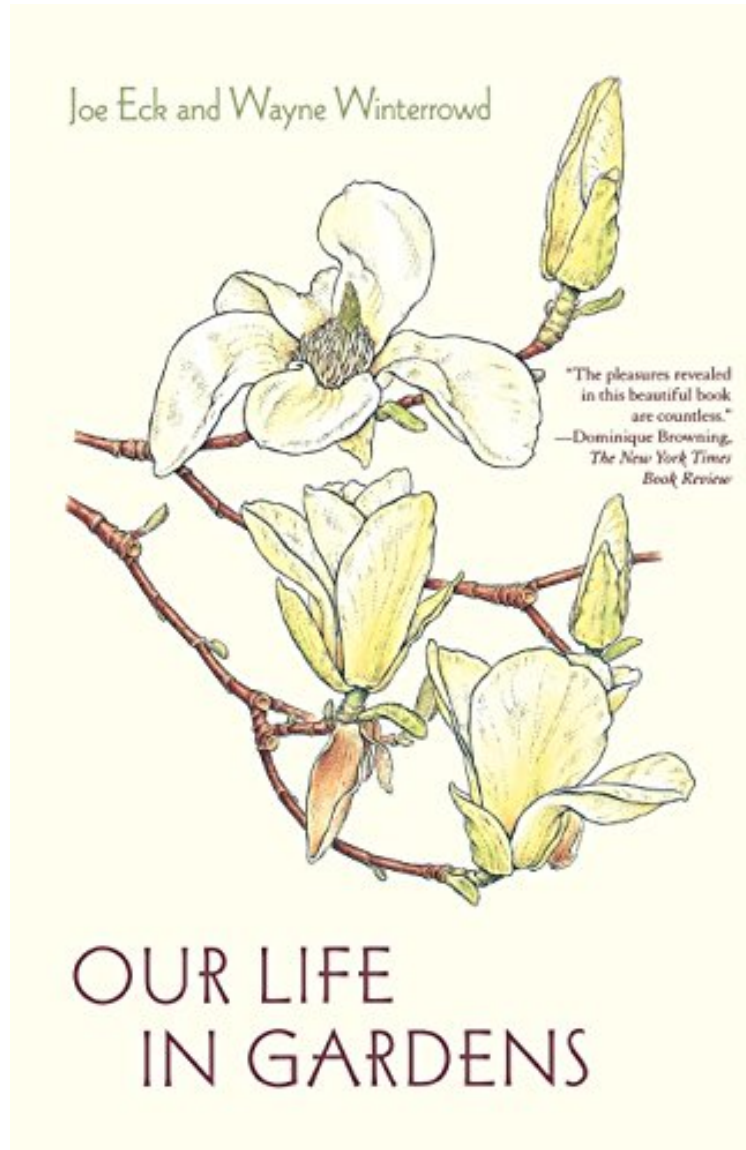


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## Our Life in Gardens

*Joe Eck, Wayne Winterrowd*  
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**Joe Eck, Wayne Winterrowd : Our Life in Gardens** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Life in Gardens:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Here Groweth Love, Courage, Laughter, and DelightBy OwlThis marvel of a book is a love story: a love of life, a love of plants, a love of friend and friend. Wayne Winterrowd and Joe Eck begin their story in the ballroom of a converted Boston mansion, in which dwell a bantam hen and her ten chicks,

a tree o'ertopping the ceiling, and two young teachers who can barely make it to the end of the month yet fulfill the Greek passion for beauty: "If of all things you are bereft save one, Sell it. One half for bread and with the dole, buy hyacinths to feed thy soul." Hyacinths they do buy, more kine and cattle, an old farm in Vermont, and plants and plants and plants and plants. In luminous prose, a delight to read, they tell us of the terrace and its plants, their adventures with the fussy fronds, how they saw this bulb and nurtured it and rejoiced in its multiplying. Year after year---thirty years---their garden grew to be a legend and a wonder, and season by season we share this marvel, including the glasses of wine in the arbors, the good meals supplied by their kitchen gardens and shared with friends. There is something in Wayne and Joe---one thinks of them as friends---of Ausonius, a poet who had tutored an emperor and retired full of honors to his garden what is now France, sending baskets of fruits to his friends, together with little poems: "But do you also read this high-flown and dilutior, for it is not fit that a poet sober should judge one who is not." In the last chapters they reflect on death: their own passing, what has become of glorious gardens only a few of such---such as Sissinghurst, such as Longwood---survive. The voices we have come to love ourselves in this book are sad and hopeful, remembering perhaps this about beauty.... "For what is so nameless as beauty, which poets, who give it a name, are only unnamings forever, content though it go that it came." Wayne is dead; the garden that he and Joe created, lives on---so they say, and so may it be. When I shared this book with friends, they went out and bought copies for themselves and for THEIR friends. It is that good.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I am a gardening enthusiast and I loved this book. By Nom de plume This is a love story. I enjoyed reading about the lives of these two Vermonters and their love of gardening, cooking, entertaining friends, and each other. I had the pleasure of touring the gardens in the home they shared. As I walked about I could envision their joint endeavors to personalize the work they put into making their lives just as they wanted it. However, I am a gardener, and so this was especially gratifying to me. Others who don't have that interest may not share my enthusiasm. Recipes are included. I've read a few of Joe Eck's books. His partner has since passed away. This is a nice gift for a person with an interest in gardening.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. must read for lovers of gardening and life. By T. J. BURTON This book was given to me as a birthday gift by my companion Patrick. I started reading it when we went on a trip to Big Bend National Park in Texas. I inadvertently lost it at the hotel we were staying at and was so enamored of it that upon our return home I had no qualms about purchasing the hard cover of the book myself even though the gift had been a paperback copy. In this book the writers, who have established a substantial garden over many years on their property in Vermont, explore a different plant or plant related topic in each chapter. To each chapter they bring their hard won expertise about the given topic and generously dispense their acquired wisdom. At the same time they also engage in a detailed discussion (to include offbeat and little known facts) pertaining to the topic at hand. The book is so much more than just a compendium of plants however. In their articulate and charming discussion of each topic they reveal their own personal approach to life and its accompanying joys and tribulations that cannot help but appeal to anyone of gentle spirit. One might call it a philosophical approach to life through gardening. Although the book has two authors, it is written in one voice. A truly delightful find and a must have for any one truly passionate about gardening and ultimately life!

This is the third book we have written together, though separately we have written others . . . But to say written separately' makes no sense, for when two lives have been bent for so many years on one central enterprise in this case, gardening there really is no such thing as separately." With these words, the renowned garden designers Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd begin their entertaining, fascinating, and unexpectedly moving book about the life and garden they share. The book contains much sound information about the cultivation of plants and their value in the landscape, and invaluable advice about Eck and Winterrowd's area of expertise: garden design. There are chapters about the various parts of their garden, and sections about particular plants roses and lilacs, snowdrops and cyclamen and vegetables. The authors also discuss the development of their garden over time, and the dark issue that weighs more and more on their minds: its eventual decline and demise. Our Life in Gardens is a deeply satisfying perspective on gardening, and on life.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Plants, like words in poetry, observe Eck and Winterrowd (founders of the Vermont garden design firm North Hill), are both beautiful in themselves and also for the associations they trail behind, the histories they have in the world and in one's own life. In nearly 50 erudite and entertaining essays stretching alphabetically from Agapanthus to Xanthorrhoea quadrangulate, Eck and Winterrowd share the history of their Vermont garden, writing about the plants they have lived with, nurtured and nourished, in a sort of inverse family memoir, where the parent remembers the children the trouble-free, the troubling and the troubled. *Helleborus orientalis*, for example, is an entirely amiable plant, while the wisteria flower most freely under abuse... violent root pruning and frequent hacking back of top growth to encourage abundant flower. Any gardener may find its specific (and sometime technical) advice helpful, but walkers among gardens and those who dream of gardening will find special pleasure in plant lore and history and in the lucid descriptions that render them visible. Eck and Winterrowd describe their book as a mixed bag, a gypsy trunk of this and that, but treasure chest is more accurate; the essays are gems, not baubles.

(Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine The admiration and genial frustration from critics-cum-amateur gardeners is palpable in the positive reviews of *Our Life in Gardens*. They take heart from the knowledge that these master gardeners face the same hurdles as most casual horticulturists, but a hint of jealousy creeps through in comments like this from the San Francisco Chronicle: "Eck and Winterrowd don't say how much outside help they have -- a frustrating omission for gardeners who exhaust themselves trying to keep up much smaller plots." Nongardeners, furthermore, may need a reference book at hand. Neither a how-to book nor an autobiography, *Our Life in Gardens* captures the best of both while maintaining focus on the authors' deep connection with their land. Copyright 2009 Bookmarks Publishing LLC From Booklist One of those marvelous books that answers the often confounding gardening question, What plant should I buy? this beguiling addition to the genre is as noteworthy for the breadth of material covered as it is for the depth of personal perceptions shared. Although the specific recommendations for exceptional perennials, annuals, vegetables, and shrubs are enticing enough to encourage any inquisitive, and acquisitive, gardener to start preparing a wish list, equally valuable are the authors' crystalline insights on the vision, time, and commitment gardeners must make to nurture their leafy charges through good times and bad. That new cultivar may be spectacular now, but how will it fare in the long run? With several decades of experience under their belts, the authors now find themselves in the enviable position of being able to reflect on their successes and failures, even as they are poignantly aware of the bittersweet reality that their best gardening days may, in fact, be behind them. --Carol Haggas