

## The Meaning of Gardens

*From The MIT Press*  
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**From The MIT Press : The Meaning of Gardens** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Meaning of Gardens:

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A rich and inspiring look at gardens!By A CustomerI found this an excellent and far-reaching book, beautifully organized into six "metaphors"--faith, power, ordering, cultural expression, personal expression and healing. This is a book for someone interested in exploring the deeper meaning and symbolism of gardens throughout history and in a variety of cultures, as well as the contemporary art of the garden and the exciting trend in community gardening. I found the section on healing particularly moving.4 of 14 people found the following review helpful. generally good but a bit esoteric and queer at timesBy A CustomerThis book was very theoretical, not very practical. It had a lot of examples, some of which were very interesting. But some of the

examples were quite strange and weird which makes the book sometimes a bit nonsensical. I would recommend it if you are looking for examples of overly-spiritual gardens not for normal everyday gardening.

Gardens reveal the relationship between culture and nature, yet in the vast library of garden literature few books focus on what the garden means - on the ecology of garden as idea, place, and action. *The Meaning of Gardens* maps out how the garden is perceived, designed, used, and valued. Essays from a variety of disciplines are organized around six metaphors special to our time - the garden muses of Faith, Power, Ordering, Cultural Expression, Personal Expression, and Healing. Each muse suggests specific inspirations for garden and landscape design.

[ *The Meaning of Gardens* ] is thought-provoking on almost every page. It will help us to understand the why of gardening. I think I know a little better now what Lawrence Johnston was up to at Hidcote, or Pierre Du Pont at Longwood, and what in fact I am up to when I take pruner in hand and go out into the garden. (Christopher Reed, *Horticulture*) Each of the thirty contributions has thoughtful and provocative things to say about gardens and gardening, as well as about society and nature and our place within them. Taken as a whole, they stretch the mind, push back the boundaries that delimit our perception of the garden, and challenge us to create landscapes that are right for today. (Pacific *Horticulture*) About the Author Mark Francis, FASLA is Professor and former Chair of landscape architecture at the University of California, Davis. He is author of *Urban Open Space*, *Village Homes*, *Public Space*, *The California Landscape Garden*, and *Community Open Space*.