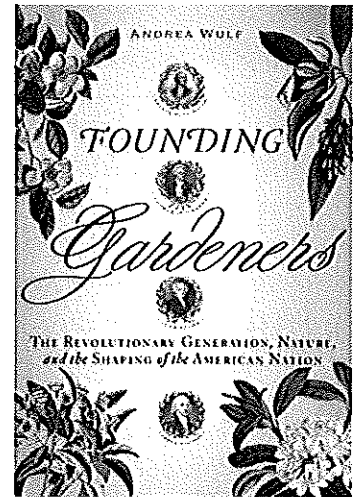


Reading Guide:

Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature and the Shaping of the American Nation

Andrea Wulf (2011)



Thought Questions:

1. Andrea Wulf's hybrid of gardening history and political history is an interesting combination. Did you think that it worked? Did you learn anything new from looking at America's early political history through a gardening lens?
2. If you had to shelve this book in a library, would you file it under political history, gardening, or another subject? What makes you say that?
3. What is the most important or memorable thing you will take away from having read this book? What do you wish the author had explored more deeply?
4. Wulf focuses specifically on the first four presidents. Do you think the focus works, especially given that John Adams' home was so different from those of the three Southern presidents? Were there other historical characters who should have been included?
5. The first four presidents are some of the best-documented Americans in history. Did this book give you a new perspective on any of them? In what way?
6. Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Do you want to read other works by this author? Are you inclined to read more books on this topic? Why or why not?
7. Are there related books, museum exhibitions, websites, or other resources that you would like to share with fellow readers of this book?

Author Biography

Andrea Wulf was born in India and moved to Germany as a child. She lives in Britain where she trained as a design historian at the Royal College of Art. As well as *Founding Gardeners*, she is the author of *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession* and the co-author of *This Other Eden: Seven Great Gardens and 300 Years of English History*. Her next book "Chasing Venus" will be published in eight countries in May 2012 in conjunction with the last transit of Venus in our century. She has written for New York Times, the LA Times, Wall Street Journal, the Sunday Times and the Guardian and many others. She is a three-time fellow of the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. (andreawulf.com)

If you liked *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*, you may enjoy these other books (descriptions courtesy of Amazon.com):

Also by Andrea Wulf:

***The Brother Gardeners: A Generation of Gentlemen Naturalists and the Birth of an Obsession*. New York: Knopf, 2009.**

The Brother Gardeners is the story of how six men created the modern garden and changed the horticultural world in the process. It is a story of a garden revolution that began in America. In 1733, colonial farmer John Bartram shipped two boxes of precious American plants and seeds to Peter Collinson in London. Around these men formed the nucleus of a botany movement, which included famous Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus; Philip Miller, bestselling author of *The Gardeners Dictionary*; and Joseph Banks and David Solander, two botanist explorers, who scoured the globe for plant life aboard Captain Cook's Endeavor. *The Brother Gardeners* paints a vivid portrait of an emerging world of knowledge and gardening as we know it today.

Howell, Catherine H. *Flora Mirabilis: How Plants Have Shaped World Knowledge, Health, Wealth, and Beauty*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2009.

From prehistory to the present day, *Flora Mirabilis* blossoms with legend and lore as it culls the most engrossing mysteries and adventures of plant exploration, science, and discovery and garlands them with astonishingly beautiful illustrations. These lavish pages are abloom with the rich details and engaging allure of beloved flowers, stunning gardens, ancient trees, medicinal herbs, and valuable plants of all varieties from around the world. Unique "plant profiles" chronicle the especially remarkable roles each plant has played in matters of economics, politics, and taste.

Stewart, Amy. *Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2009.

In *Wicked Plants*, Stewart takes on over two hundred of Mother Nature's most appalling creations. It's an A to Z of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate, and otherwise offend. You'll learn which plants to avoid (like exploding shrubs), which plants make themselves exceedingly unwelcome (like the vine that ate the South), and which ones have been killing for centuries (like the weed that killed Abraham Lincoln's mother).