



The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession

Andrea Wulf

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This is the fascinating story of a small group of eighteenth-century naturalists who made Britain a nation of gardeners and the epicenter of horticultural and botanical expertise. It's the story of a garden revolution that began in America.

In 1733, the American farmer John Bartram dispatched two boxes of plants and seeds from the American colonies, addressed to the London cloth merchant Peter Collinson. Most of these plants had never before been grown in British soil, but in time the magnificent and colorful American trees, evergreens, and shrubs would transform the English landscape and garden forever. During the next forty years, Collinson and a handful of botany enthusiasts cultivated hundreds of American species. *The Brother Gardeners* follows the lives of six of these men, whose shared passion for plants gave rise to the English love affair with gardens. In addition to Collinson and Bartram, who forged an extraordinary friendship, here are Philip Miller, author of the best-selling *Gardeners Dictionary*; the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, whose standardized nomenclature helped bring botany to the middle classes; and Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander, who explored the strange flora of Brazil, Tahiti, New Zealand, and Australia on the greatest voyage of discovery of their time, aboard Captain Cook's *Endeavour*.

From the exotic blooms in Botany Bay to the royal gardens at Kew, from the streets of London to the vistas of the Appalachian Mountains, *The Brother Gardeners* paints a vivid portrait of an emerging world of knowledge and of gardening as we know it today. It is a delightful and beautifully told narrative history.

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