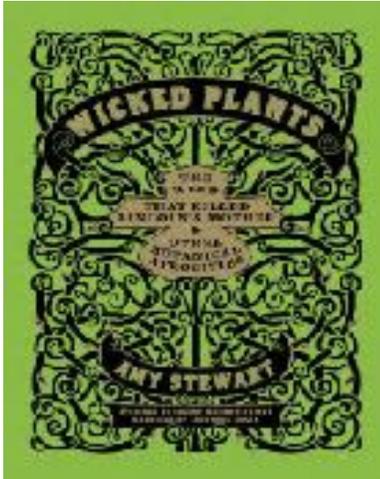


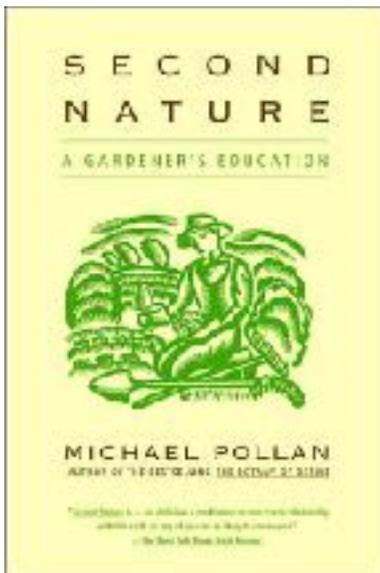
May 2017 Garden Book Review

The Garden Club of South Carolina



What a fun book! Amy Stewart's **Wicked Plants-The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities** is a 2009 book published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. The author really doesn't want to scare you with these stories of "Wicked Plants" but just to warn you to be cautious and beware that although plants can nourish and heal, some can also kill. So from "A"-Aconite to "Y"-Yew, the author describes plants and their side effects in a historical narrative with illustrations that make this book look as if it is an ancient manuscript. The Aconite family which includes Monkshood and Wolfbane looks like the edible root, horseradish, cooked and eaten, it killed 2 dinner guests. Your common potato can also cause severe gastrointestinal problems if eaten when it has turned a green

color from exposure to light. This produces a chemical called solanine and it is a member of the nightshade family. All parts of the Yew tree, a slow growing evergreen, is poisonous except for the red berrylike fruit. But before you dig up and throw out your Yew, realize that good effects can come from toxic plants also. The cancer drug, Taxol used in breast, lung and ovarian cancers was discovered in the 1960's, came from the Yew tree. So be informed and stay safe.



This second book, **Second Nature - A Gardener's Education** is written by Michael Pollan and was published in 1991 by Grove Press. This book is the author's personal journey and philosophy as he discovers his garden, the one in his memories and childhood and his own personal struggles to cultivate his garden of 5 acres of rocky hillside in Cornwall, Connecticut. He has a witty and articulate writing style. A quirky sense of humor as he explains his father's rebellion against the suburban lawn in The Great American Lawn essay or his personal vendetta against a woodchuck that would frequent his garden. In the end, do we look at natural landscape as something to dominate or do we acquiesce and let it just be its own entity. Are we a developer or a naturalist? This is not a coffee table book or "leave in the potting shed" book, but an enjoyable reading book.

Until September, Happy Gardening
Anna Sheets GCSC Website Chair-Garden Book Review