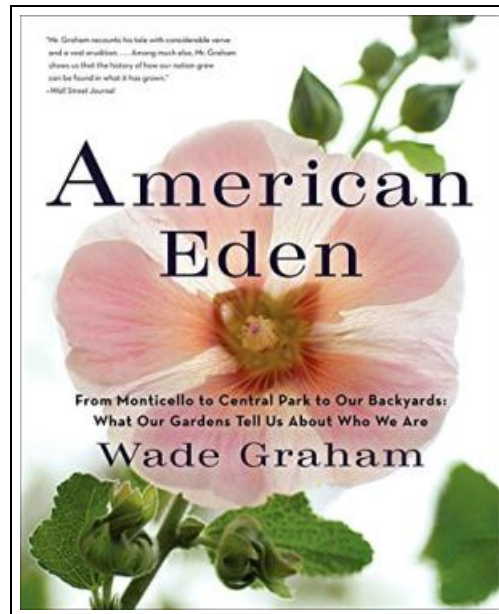


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Reviews

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AMERICAN EDEN: FROM MONTICELLO TO CENTRAL PARK TO OUR BACKYARDS: WHAT OUR GARDEN



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Harper Perennial. 1 Paperback(s), 2011. soft. Book Condition: New. "Garden designer and historian [Wade] Graham takes a panoramic perspective in his bold interpretation of the form, function, and meaning of American gardens. Thomas Jefferson is the first, and most complex, of the many pioneering gardeners Graham incisively profiles, and Graham's frank dissection of the profound paradoxes implicit in Jefferson's landscape vision for Monticello in a time of slavery and genocide against Native Americans sets the groundwork for his central insight, the fact that wilderness was a catalyst for the American imagination even as we rapidly destroyed it. Other intriguing garden designers include the 19th-century advocates for middle-class gardens as 'emblems of virtue' A.J. Downing and Charles Platt, and their heir, the ever-ambitious Martha Stewart, as well as Beatrix Jones Farrand, Jens Jensen, and Lawrence Halprin. As Graham unwinds the DNA of American garden design from grandiose to utilitarian, he matches garden aesthetics with the social mores of each era to surprising effect. His discussion of the pastoral dream underlying suburban sprawl is of particular resonance, and his comparisons between Eastern and Western gardens are fascinating. This blazingly fresh, critical, and ecologically astute masterwork brilliantly traces the great cycles of American life through a spectrum of gardens that embody our devotion to the art of cultivation for beauty and status, sanctuary and sustenance."Booklist (starred review) 459.



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