

The Garden Interior: A Year of Inspired Beauty

David Jensen

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Jensen broadens The Garden Interior through recollections of a traveled and well-read life.

David Jensen's *The Garden Interior* beckons down the garden path—literally, and without a single bud of deception. In this memoir of gardens past, present, and even imaginary, Jensen recounts a near lifelong fascination with plants, soil, and sun, and how he and his particular plot of land have “formed and cared for each other” for decades.

With rich and thoughtful language, Jensen sets out a course of monthly chapters, detailing how each season has its purpose in the yearly creation of a garden. Focusing on his south New Jersey home and the grounds therein, Jensen begins with January, which despite its frozen quiet just can't keep a true gardener from dreaming of spring's arrival. After weeks of planning and contemplating, active growing season begins, followed by summer's heat and garden glory, then the autumn chill and dormancy of winter again.

Though his knowledge of flora, fauna, and things that buzz and fly is quite impressive, Jensen broadens *The Garden Interior* through recollections of a traveled and well-read life. His painterly eye is keen, with allusions to Van Gogh's irises, Renoir's brushstrokes, and landscapes reminiscent of Thomas Moran. Jensen's wife and children are also a warmly vivid part of his gardening experiences, as is the faithful presence of Cosimo, Jensen's Sheltie dog and “assistant gardener,” almost always by his side.

The Garden Interior will surely appeal to both veteran and novice gardeners, but it has an accessibility that reaches beyond the technical aspects of seeding, weeding, and horticulture. Seasonal recipes are included—enticing dishes like Farmer's Market Pie, Spring Harvest Salad, and Savory Sweet Potatoes—and along with the flow of prose and love of place, *The Garden Interior* brings to mind Frances Mayes's *Under the Tuscan Sun*, though in a more stateside and family-focused manner.

Jensen best describes his memoir himself, as “eclectic and idiosyncratic, and made up of many parts and pieces and ornaments, just like any good garden is.”

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