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David E. Cooper

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David E. Cooper : A Philosophy of Gardens before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Philosophy of Gardens:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Garden appreciationBy Mark MontebelloThis book is an interesting philosophical discussion on the appreciation of gardens. To be sure, very little has been published on the subject, and rarely from a philosophical point of view. The author gives special attention to distinctions that may be glossed over by an inattentive mind. Gardens are sometimes dealt with superficially. But here we have a serious reflection on their possible meanings to various people and within various cultures. Gardens vary tremendously, and, to be able to

appreciate their full potential, one must maybe view them in a holistic manner, such as is done in this book. In this sense, Cooper's little treatise is refreshing and illuminating. What I found a bit irksome was his way of making references to and fro within his own text. Some more clear system was maybe needed in the writing process. Frequently postponing arguments and themes for later may not, I think, be a good example of systematic writing. A better internal structure to the book would perhaps have produced more pleasurable reading. Also, the name of the book maybe would have been more precise if it took the form of something like 'A Philosophy on the Appreciation of Gardens', than 'of Gardens' as such. After this book, I still see the need for a true and proper 'philosophy of gardens'.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A rare and delightful read!By MetaphysicIntelligent writing about gardens and gardening is rare. I was delighted to find a used copy of this book that I will read more than once. The logic is solid and the basis for an intellectual approach to garden appreciation is the soundest I have discovered yet. It needs a wide audience.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Not for the casual gardener.By Michigan RiflemanThis is a work of philosophy with abundant references to Kant and other philosophers. So the casual reader of garden books should be forwarded!Professor Cooper's approach is interesting and welcome to the relatively small number of rigorously philosophical treatments of gardens. I would like to say that Cooper is a philosopher in the Anglo-Analytic tradition, especially for his fine attention to language; some readers may be put off by his near obsession with precision of language. However, I was pleased to find numerous references to some of the analyses of gardens coming from literature, even quotations from Rumi and Japanese Zen.Overall, a rigorously philosophical approach to the place of gardens in human life. Worth reading IF you have a strong background (I'd say nothing less than a BA) in Western philosophy.

Why do gardens matter so much and mean so much to people? That is the intriguing question to which David Cooper seeks an answer in this book. Given the enthusiasm for gardens in human civilization ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, it is surprising that the question has been so long neglected by modern philosophy. Now at last there is a philosophy of gardens. Not only is this a fascinating subject in its own right, it also provides a reminder that the subject-matter of aesthetics is broader than the fine arts; that ethics is not just about moral issues but about 'the good life'; and that environmental philosophy should not focus only on 'wilderness' to the exclusion of the humanly shaped environment. David Cooper identifies garden appreciation as a special human phenomenon distinct from both from the appreciation of art and the appreciation of nature. He explores the importance of various 'garden-practices' and shows how not only gardening itself, but activities to which the garden especially lends itself, including social and meditative activities, contribute to the good life. And he distinguishes the many kinds of meanings that gardens may have, from representation of nature to emotional expression, from historical significance to symbolization of a spiritual relationship to the world. Building on the familiar observation that, among human beings' creations, the garden is peculiarly dependent on the co-operation of nature, Cooper argues that the garden matters as an epiphany of an intimate co-dependence between human creative activity in the world and the 'mystery' that allows there to be a world for them at all. A Philosophy of Gardens will open up this subject to students and scholars of aesthetics, ethics, and cultural and environmental studies, and to anyone with a reflective interest in things horticultural.

` from previous edition It is refreshing to find an author who unapologetically takes on the challenge of analyzing what is distinctive or irreducible in a realm of human experience, in this case the appreciation of gardens and engagement in the practice of gardening. His conclusions will surprise most readers, even those who love gardens or enjoy gardening, as he concludes that gardening is a practice that, if engaged in with an appropriate sensibility, embodies more saliently than any other practice the truth of the relation between human beings and their world. Cooper's thoughtful and engaging book is indeed A Philosophy of Gardens - his rather unique and stimulating way of conceptualizing how, carefully reflected upon, gardening practices and appreciation can engender an epiphany of sorts on the mysteries of existence.'Donald Crawford, Notre Dame Philosophical s`intriguing'Neville Hawcock, Financial Times Magazine`impressive'Jennifer Potter, Times Literary Supplement`This is a challenging book intellectually, but eminently readable...and would make an excellent Christmas present for any thinking gardener.'Tim Richardson, Daily Telegraph`Durham University's David Cooper has a good stab at filling this "green gap" in a book which places garden appreciation on the same level as the appreciation of literature ... Cooper argues a strong case for placing gardening at the centre of any "good" or ethical life ... He certainly makes you think.'The Northern Echo`eminently readable by non-philosophers and as well as philosophers...contains many interesting citations from a host of historical, philosophical and religious authorities.'Philosophers' MagazineAbout the AuthorDavid E. Cooper is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Durham.