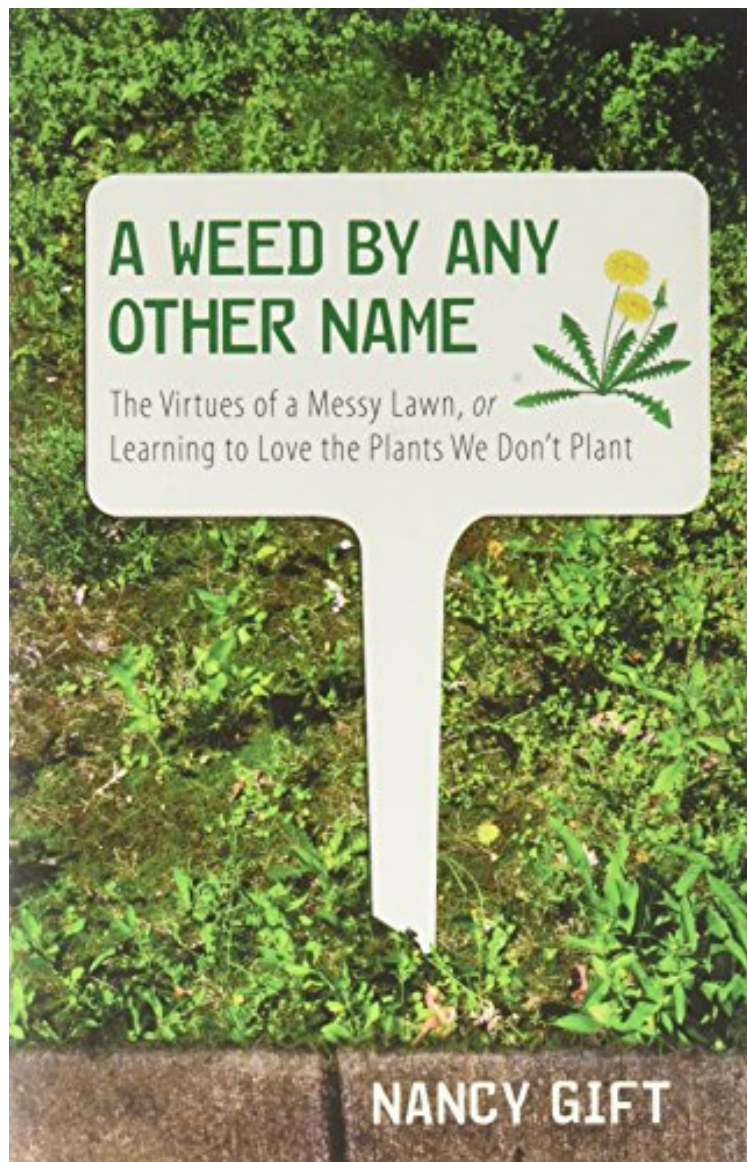


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## A Weed by Any Other Name: The Virtues of a Messy Lawn, or Learning to Love the Plants We Don't Plant

*Nancy Gift*

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**Nancy Gift : A Weed by Any Other Name: The Virtues of a Messy Lawn, or Learning to Love the Plants We Don't Plant** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Weed by Any Other Name: The Virtues of a Messy Lawn, or Learning to Love the Plants We Don't Plant:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. OKBy Gale MillerIt is OK just not what I was looking for, I wanted more illustrations and more information about growing plants or weeds.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining usable essays within!By Sheila RA Weed By Any Other Name is an excellent introduction to weeds and lawns in our neighborhoods. Dr. Gift's approach is very entertaining and gives lots of information in a non-accusatory manner to those of us who are just getting started into caring for our own lawns. It is a great companion to her second book, Good Weed Bad Weed. I'm glad to know that my laid back manner to lawn care is just the right approach!5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A solid and recommended read for those sick of de-weeding their lawnBy Midwest Book ReviewWeeds are still life, and there can be a certain beauty to them. "A Weed By Any Other Name: The Virtues of a Messy Lawn, or Learning to Love the Plants We Don't Plant" is a gardening manual with a new approach to weeds. Nancy Gift preaches a new method of gardening, pushing people to instead embrace the natural life on their lawn. With recipes to use some of these so called 'weed', Gift presents an intriguing gardening book. For this reason, "A Weed By Any Other Name" is a solid and recommended read for those sick of de-weeding their lawn.

Is that a weed? This question, asked by anyone who has ever gardened or mowed a lawn, does not have an easy answer. After all, a weed, as suburban mother and professional weed scientist Nancy Gift reminds readers, is simply a plant out of place. In *A Weed by Any Other Name*, Gift offers a personal, unapologetic defense of clovers, dandelions, plantains, and more, chronicling her experience with these "enemy" plants season by season. Rather than falling prey to pressures to achieve the perfect lawn and garden, Gift elucidates the many reasons to embrace an unconventional, weedy yard. She celebrates the spots of wildness that crop up in various corners of suburbia, redeeming many a plant's reputation by expounding on its positive qualities. She includes recipes for dandelion wine and garlic mustard pesto as well as sketches that show the natural beauty of flowers such as the morning glory, classified by the USDA as an invasive and noxious weed. Although she is an advocate of weeds, Gift admits that some plants do require eradication—she happily digs out multiflora rose and resorts to chemical warfare on poison ivy. But she also demonstrates that weeds often carry a message for us about the land and our treatment of it, if we are willing to listen.

What's a good garden without a few weeds? Weeding them out on summer mornings is one of my favorite pastimes, and as Gift points out, they are good indicators of what lies beneath. About time someone did a book singing their praises. John Hanson Mitchell, author of *The Wildest Place on Earth: Italian Gardens and the Invention of Wilderness* "To see the world in a weed is Nancy Gift's approach to ecology, and she combines the knowledge of a scientist with the understanding of a parent of young children to remind us that taking care of the environment begins in our own backyards. Before you pull up that dandelion or spray the lawn ask yourself what difference it makes. It's not the grass that needs greenening—it's our lives. Gift follows in the tradition of Rachel Carson, and her entry as a writer is timely indeed." Emily Herring Wilson, author of *No One Gardens Alone: A Life of Elizabeth Lawrence and Two Gardeners*/Katharine S. White and *Elizabeth Lawrence: A Friendship in Letters* "Nancy Gift has written a persuasively green brief in favor of organic lawns and playing fields. Morning glory, plantain, wild garlic, scarlet pimpernel, clover, and others—let nature take its course, and rejoice that you need not mess with humanly hazardous herbicides. A delightfully contrary book that may just turn your weedy enemies into friends." Janet Lembke, author of *From Grass to Gardens: How to Reap Bounty from a Small Yard* "Nancy Gift's ruminations on weeds reflect her varied roles, from suburban gardener and soccer mom to highly trained weed ecologist; from conscientious neighbor to the passionate admirer of the wily and persistent plants others call pests. . . . If you live anywhere in the eastern half of the United States and know your weeds, you will find many old friends in this book—and recognize a few human characters as well." Laura Jackson, Department of Biology, University of Northern Iowa About the Author Nancy Gift is assistant professor of environmental studies and acting director of the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she lives with her husband, two daughters, and a lawn full of weeds.