



Paths of Desire: The Passions of a Suburban Gardener

Dominique Browning

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With the same warmth, wisdom, wit, and accessibility that readers have come to love and trust in her monthly column, *House & Garden* editor in chief Dominique Browning offers this lively, charming, and instructive story of restoring a neglected suburban garden.

When a retaining wall in Browning's New York suburban garden collapsed, she was forced into action. *Paths of Desire* is the enchanting, amusing, and moving account of making a garden -- and confronting the essence of suburban gardening, with its idiosyncratic ecosystem. This meant struggling with depraved skunks and raccoons, marauding teenagers, plastic jungle gyms, toppling garbage cans, uncontrollable eyesores, potholed drives, and all the grinding, honking, and buzzing of the neighborhood.

Browning's delightfully frank prose conveys the very sense of being deep in a garden, with all its organic smells and textures, and the myriad joys of deciding what to plant and watching as the vision is realized. It contains a rich store of advice and illustrative anecdotes for enthusiasts and novices alike, as Browning amusingly documents the missteps she took in the planning of her garden and the satisfactions of finally getting it right. In *Paths of Desire* she teaches us how to embrace our plots of land -- no matter their size, beauty, or proximity to the city -- and make them our own. But she also reminds us that the life of a garden can never be separated from the people who wander in and out of it: characters like the charming but useless children; the philosophical tree doctor and the band of Helpful Men; the neighbors -- legalistic on one side, aesthetically challenged on the other -- and, best and worst of all, the True Love.

By the end of the book, Browning has transformed her garden -- and her life -- and has created a place of enchantment, which is most of all what a garden should be.

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