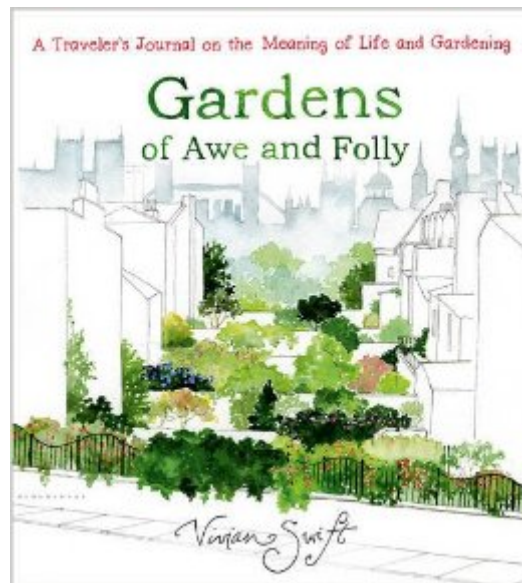


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# Gardens Of Awe And Folly: A Traveler's Journal On The Meaning Of Life And Gardening



## Synopsis

Nine masterpiece gardens. Nine stories of grandeur, sorrow, disaster, triumph, discovery, and joy. From Scotland to Key West, from Brazil to Paris--even right next door--there is always something to learn about being human from a great garden.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pop the champagne or brew a pot of tea, then settle in. This book is one to be savored s-l-o-w-ly, because it's full of beautiful paintings that you'll want to look at closely, and interesting botanical and historical details, knit together with Vivian Swift's intelligent, witty, personal point of view. I wish I had a travel companion like her to visit these gardens around the world (Morocco, Scotland, Brazil, New Orleans!) but this book is almost as much fun. (I mean, how cool is it that the author not only wrote the text, hand lettered it, \*and\* painted each of the 100s of paintings?) It would be a wonderful gift for anyone who appreciates gardens, watercolors, or simply a well-designed book with great visual flow. It's a book you can pick up to read again and again.

My personal gardening skills leave much to be desired and my painting skills are far from ready for prime time. So why would I leap into "Gardens of Awe and Folly" with difficult-to-contain enthusiasm? Simply because it is by the remarkable Vivian Swift, whose paintings and text (which is both fun and informative) highlight nine gardens from her own Long Island to such exotic or sophisticated locales as Rio, Marakkech, Paris and London, among others. With delightful humor, a

generous sprinkling of quotes, information about plants I never considered, an eye for architecture and enchanting paintings, the book is a journey into the worlds of poets, devoted amateur gardeners, gardening tips and the pecking order of the 17th century health care system! Added into the mix is a two page spread where the author demonstrates her painting technique for picture-perfect autumn leaves. Five reasons to love this book? The paintings, the humor, the gardening tips, intriguing back stories and finally, beautiful production values and the sheer beauty of the finished product. If I must find fault with Gardens of Awe and Folly it is quite simply because Vivian Swift stops at nine gardens, while I would have loved her to go on and on. Take this book, as I hope you would take the other two books by Vivian Swift ("When Wanderers Cease to Roam" and "Le Road Trip") and savor every second. Perhaps you'll be like me and start reading all over again -- after you order a copy or two for your favorite garden-loving friends!

What a joy for lovers of gardens and art and travel! Beautifully illustrated with Swift's lovely water colors - and featuring two of my favorite gardens in the world - The Chelsea Physic Garden and the Jardin Majorelle in Marrakesh - this book was a delight from beginning to end. Swift's commentary is both witty and informative. Highly recommended!

Another beautifully done book from Vivian Swift. I have all of her books and wish she could write more of them. I'm always anticipating her next adventure. She does beautiful drawings and the book is well written.

OK, so I could just squeal and drool and go on and on about how much I love Vivian Swift's books, but I'll try to be specific. I can't decide what I like most about this book - the detailed watercolor illustrations, the writing, the hand-set type (swoon) - because I love it all. Her illustrations make the gardens come alive and the writing makes me want to see every garden in person. Perhaps the best is Ms Swift's attention to detail in every part of the book (and her others, too)- the precise watercolors, the clear, thoughtful, and funny prose, and the typography - no detail too small to be addressed with perfection. This is a book to savor in bits, taking in all the art and descriptions while trying to make the book last as long as possible.

This is my first Vivian Swift book and I am enthralled by it. I began reading about Paris because I am most familiar with that location, however I quickly let go my own memories and allowed myself to be led by Swift's words and paintings. Touring her 9 gardens is a delight. The prose is clever

and full of interest, even for a non-gardener. The illustrations are marvelous, miniature paintings with exquisite detail. This is a travel book like none other and I look forward to following Ms. Swift on future journeys.

Don't get me started about Vivian Swift and her joie de vivre which bounces off the pages of her latest book. It's charming, quirky, filled with fun and interesting unknown, at least to me, facts about the different gardens she showcases. Did I mention her watercolors? How about her sense of humor? Okay, I'm a fan, a big one.

Garden friends? You will LOVE this one. It is like taking a stroll with your favorite jet-setting garden friend and getting the DL on her favorite gardens. There are 9 gardens featured, starting with Paris where a little 2/3 acre garden juts out in the very middle of the Seine. Each garden walk is full of sketches, pointing out little details and mundane magicalities. I wish I had written this book -- not only because it is SO GOOD, but because it would also mean I would have traveled to these most magical gardens. Gardens of Awe and Folly: A Traveler's Journal on the Meaning of Life and Gardening[...]

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