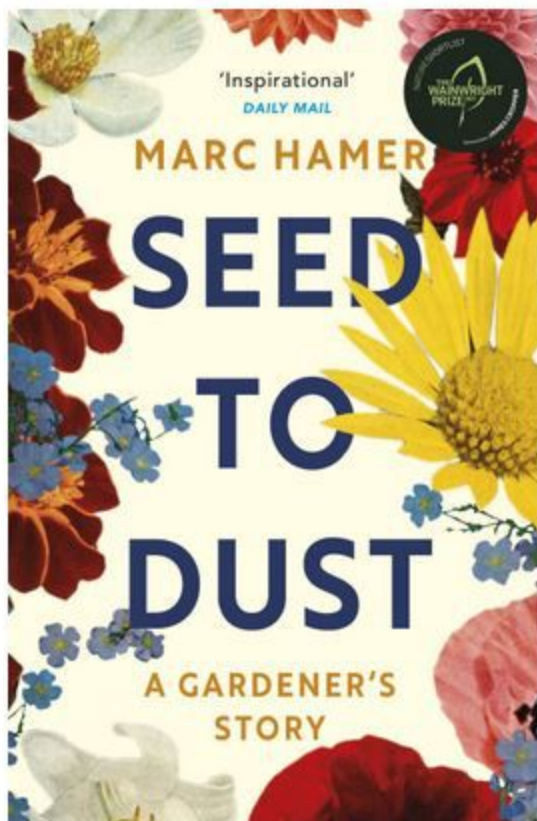


# July 2022



Any garden belongs to everyone who sees it – it is like a book and everybody who visits it will find different things.

Marc Hamer has designed and nurtured 12 acres of garden for over two decades. It is rarely visited so he is the only person who fully knows its secrets; but it is not his own. His relationship with the garden's owner is both distant and curiously intimate, steeped in the mysterious connection which exists between two people who inhabit the same space in very different ways.

In this life-enhancing book Marc takes us month-by-month through his experiences both working in the garden and outside it, as the seasons' changes bring new plants and wildlife to the fore and lead him to reflect on his past and future. Through his peaceful and meditative prose we learn about gardening folklore and wisdom, the joys of manual labour, his path from solitary homelessness to family contentment and the cycle of growth and decay that runs through both the garden's life and our own.

Seed to Dust is a moving and restorative account of a life lived in harmony with nature.

You've seen gates like that at the side of the road, you've wondered what's behind them. They really are the entrance to the wonders you imagined

He is adamant that his gardening the 12 acres belonging to an elderly widow, Miss Cashmere, is "work". But through his salaried labour comes an almanac of meditations or parables or thoughts-for-the-day, got from dandelions and roses, lawnmowers and secateurs, dead-heading and mulching.

Hamer writes his plants well but finds knowledge awkward. His flower biographies (a striking number are poisonous) include the species' scientific name, but he resists any other book learning and repeatedly says he knows very little – "I like my head to be clean and empty"

We are always in or nearby the garden but Seed to Dust also references Hamer's hardscrabble "Old North" childhood and early-adult "vagrancy" (a rootlessness felt acutely by the gardener), his love for poetry ("the language of the birds") that got him bullied and mocked, his discovery of his own creativity after decades of outdoors work silently communing with non-talking existence. And then, more recent and calmer adjuncts to his main narrative, we learn of his writerly life with his writer wife, his dandyish interest in dressing well, a heart health scare, his love for whisky and for his "Buddha" cat: he is a life-hardened man who has made himself soft, we are to understand, a man who has come through. With acknowledgement to The Guardian

Our members enjoyed this book which has 'a lovely glow to it' as well as the rhythm and contentment in simplicity, a gentle and healing read.

Ratings: Jenny 4.5, Cheryl and Viv 4, Jen and Patrick 3.5, Margie 3

Advertisements



[REPORT THIS AD](#)

*Due to the venue being painted in the early days of August, our next meeting will be Tuesday 16/08/2022 at 6:30pm at the QCWA Mermaid Beach Centre located in 43 Ventura Rd, Mermaid Beach.*

Come and join us to discuss *The Natural Way of Things by Charlotte Wood* by Charlotte Wood. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

The 2022 Reading List can be found [here](#).

# Other Books We Read

July 2022

The English Patient by Michael Ondaatje, 4

The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak, 3.5

Joyful by Ingrid Fetell Lee, 4

The Butterfly Man by Heather Rose, 4

A Woman is No Man by Etaf Rum, 3.5

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks, 3.5

The Prettiest Horse in the Glue Factory by Corey White, 3.5

Foreign Correspondence: a Pen Pal's Journey from Down Under to All Over by Geraldine Brooks, 3

Holy Cow: an Indian Adventure by Sarah Macdonald, 2.5