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A Garden of Words

Martha Barnette



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Did you know that the tulip gets its name from a kind of headwear? What's the linguistic link between the lovely gladiolus and a fierce gladiator? A rose by any other name may smell as sweet-but why do we call it a rose? In this charming, witty volume, Martha Barnette leads a tour through the language of the garden, stopping along the way to coax out the many secrets that flowers have to tell about history, culture, psychology, folklore, and science. "Everything in it is delightful to learn. Barnette takes us through languages and across millennia in a charming style that, starting with words describing things we eat, turns out to offer endless food for thought. "-The New Yorker"Sheer etymological garden fun Barnette begins with the flower's name and immediately jumps off the neat garden path into the wild underbrush of mythology, history, folk tales and scientific investigation. "-Linda Yang, The New York Times Book Review"Martha Barnette's anthology (literally, 'a gathering of flowers') is more than just a garden-variety book of word origins. With loving cultivation, the author shows how flower names yield up the fragrance and light stored from the past and tell us whence we came and who we are. "-Richard Lederer"A Garden of Words is one to stroll through, sniffing the blossoms, admiring random artful paths and intriguing byways. "-Calvin Ahlgren, San Francisco Chronicle

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