

Community Read 2013—Suggested Reading List

We here at Longwood Gardens started thinking about Sand County Almanac as we began to seriously plan for our new Meadow Garden a few years ago. We have spent a considerable amount of time learning, reading, thinking and talking.

The Longwood Library and Archives staff encourage you to continue your reading beyond Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold.

Here, we review a short list of titles on the life of Aldo Leopold, the conservation movement (local and national), gardening thoughtfully in your own yard, and nature in our contemporary world. You will find these titles at public libraries, local bookstores, and elsewhere in your community.

Let us know if you find these suggestions interesting and useful. Email us your comments at library@longwoodgardens.org

Berry, Wendell. Bringing it to the table: On farming and food. Counterpoint, 2009.

This book, introduced by Michael Pollan, brings together a selection of Wendell Berry's best essays on farming, farmers and food. He writes cogently about the importance of connecting to one's local environment. Berry's writing centers around the fact that our connection to the land has been made abstract by the industrialized food system and, as a result, we are neglecting our care of it. He calls for a return to ethics in our relationship with the land through the food we eat and the local environments we live in.

Bowe, Alice. High-impact, low-carbon gardening: 1001 ways to garden sustainability. Timber Press, 2011.

This book is a good primer for gardeners wishing to start using more sustainable gardening practices. Focusing on the conscientious use of water and compost as the backbone of sustainable gardening, the book also discusses the ecological impacts of traditional gardening techniques and materials. The book devotes several chapters to gardening with local soil conditions, weather patterns, and wildlife in mind. There is a theme throughout the book that one need not compromise design and aesthetics to produce a more ecologically-sound garden. This book is more suited to the uninitiated rather than the seasoned, sustainable gardener.



Brewer, Richard. Conservancy: The land trust movement in America. University Press of New England, 2003.

One method that developed in America for protecting the land is for a private organization to own it and work at preserving it through a conservancy. This practice is certainly true in Chester and New Castle counties near Longwood Gardens. The Brandywine Conservancy, Delaware Nature Society, The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County, and Brandywine Valley Association, among others all were founded in whole or part with this idea as central to their missions. In this book Richard Brewer describes this movement's development, especially in the last few decades, the impact on land preservation in the United States, and problems these non-profit organizations face.

Browning, Ted. Notes from Turtle Creek: A collection of essays that first appeared in *The Kennett Paper*. Illustrations by Jane Scott. Brandywine Conservancy, 1991.

Ted Browning could be easily considered to be a "local Leopold." A Chester County resident, landscape designer, writer, and educator, he was deeply involved in local issues of landscape conservation and study. As with Leopold, Browning advocated for thoughtful use of the land. He felt strongly that land use should balance the needs of the larger community—residents, culture, land, flora and fauna. Browning worked toward these goals through his teaching at Longwood Gardens and University of Delaware as well as strong community engagement. Although this book may be a little difficult to find, it is worth the effort. His reflective essays on the Chester County landscape, wildlife and flora are well written and deeply felt. He was a man who cared for Chester County and worked to make it a better place.

Callicott, J. Baird (editor). Companion to Sand County Almanac. University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

Series of essays by scholars that examines Sand County Almanac from a number of perspectives. The literary, philosophical, and intellectual ideas in the book are discussed and examined. This title is definitely for the more scholarly-minded readers among us who want to deeply understand Leopold's book and its intellectual roots as well as its effects on American conservation thought.



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Christopher, Thomas (editor). The new American landscape: Leading voices on the future of sustainable gardening. Timber Press, 2011.

This book is written for those who are looking to make their garden more integrated with their larger local ecology. Chapters are authored by various experts covering a range of topics such as pest-management, water use, native plants, green roofs, soil ecology, and permaculture, all of which are facets of ecologically sustainable gardening. The contributors include Rick Darke (former Plant Curator of Longwood Gardens) and Douglas W. Tallamy (University of Delaware). The book asks readers to reconsider their conceptions of garden beauty and land use in order to allow for better integration between their home landscapes and the local ecologies which surround them. Theoretical discussions mixed with plenty of action-oriented alternatives to traditional gardening techniques give readers a holistic picture of how to garden more sustainably and live more closely within their local ecosystem.

Fox, Stephen R. The American conservation movement: John Muir and his legacy. University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Thorough scholarly (albeit highly readable for the interested layperson) writing that tells the life story of John Muir and his contributions to the American conservation movement in the late 19th Century. The importance of Muir to American conservation efforts cannot be understated. Muir's activism helped to preserve the Yosemite Valley, Sequoia National Park and other wilderness areas. In addition, he founded the Sierra Club. Muir valued nature for its spiritual and transcendental qualities and wanted to preserve nature and wilderness at its most pristine form. Muir and Gifford Pinchot are two highly influential leaders for the beginnings for the American conservation movement. They represent the foundational work that Aldo Leopold would extend and build upon.

Lee, Paul A. There is a garden in the mind: A memoir of Alan Chadwick and the organic movement in California. North Atlantic Books, 2013.

Decidedly more focused on Lee's involvement in the organic movement than it is on Chadwick himself, this book is a philosophical and historical romp framed by Lee's experiences. Having an almost equal emphasis on personal history and memoir as it does on questions surrounding "organic nature and industrial society," this book takes a step back from its self-proclaimed focus to discuss organic farming in a far larger context. Lee challenges the reader to see the organic movement as a philosophical, theological and historical battle, with frequent references to works written by notables from a variety of interdisciplinary fields.



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Markham, Brett L. Mini-farming: Self-sufficiency on ¼ acre. Skyhorse, 2010.

The self-sufficiency movement is a way in which individuals and families are able to have more agency in regard to what they eat, and how the products they consume impact the greater ecological environment. Markham's book covers topics from garden construction and crop rotation to raising animals for meat and preserving harvests. Readers will want to seek out more specific books on individual topics addressed by Markham, but for beginner gardeners and those interested in producing commercially on a small scale, this book is written both clearly and logically, and is a great place to start.

Marris, Emma. Rambunctious garden: Saving nature in a post-wild world. Bloomsbury USA; Reprint edition, 2013.

With the ambitious goal of presenting strategies for preserving nature through the abandonment of traditional conservation methods, this book skips along merrily for slightly less than two hundred pages. Marris's desire to challenge conventional conservation practices is thought-provoking. While it can be easy to get lost in Marris's story-telling abilities and easily-digestible prose, it is important to note that the author is not an ecologist. This book is a new and creative discourse on the way in which human beings interact with conservatism.

Meine, Curt. Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work. University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.

Meine's biography is a very thorough telling of Leopold's life story. This book is a highly readable exploration of the development of Leopold's approach to land and community, his foundational study and scientific work, and his pioneering ethical approach. Although the length of the book may be a bit daunting for some folks, the commitment to reading it is completely rewarded. This one is highly recommended for anyone inspired by Sand County Almanac and that wants to learn more about the life of Leopold.

Miller, Char. Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism. Island Press, 2001.

Gifford Pinchot was one of the towering figures in the development of conservation movement in America. Born in Pennsylvania, Pinchot eventually became the first leader of the U.S. Forest Service and then Governor of Pennsylvania. Pinchot's family home, Grey Towers, is a national historic site in Milford, Pennsylvania. Pinchot's philosophy of pragmatic conservation and renewal had significant impact on both Aldo Leopold's training at the Yale Forestry School and his early career. This book is full of the history and the political intrigue of early 20th Century environmental politics.



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Peterson, Russ. Rebel with a conscience. University of Delaware Press, 1999.

This memoir by Russ Peterson tells the story of his life, from humble beginnings to his rise to prominence in Delaware and on the national stage. Throughout all of these stages of life, Peterson worked to improve and preserve the natural environment. Peterson served as Governor of Delaware, headed federal agencies, and eventually led the National Audubon Society. This book is interesting reading about the environmental efforts of a man with deep Delaware roots.

Reichard, Sarah Hayden. The conscientious gardener: Cultivating a garden ethic. University of California Press, 2012.

Sarah Reichard is a Professor of Conservation Biology at the University of Washington. In this book she builds on Leopold's land ethic idea and applies it to one's own gardening efforts at home. The book is a helpful tool to become more informed about the choices the home gardener can make. She examines most elements of home gardening reality and asks questions about the broader impact for the land, flora and fauna. Reichard readily admits that sometimes there are no easy, solutions; only choices. Although Reichard's goal is to have one think about the impact of one's gardening choices, her writing isn't strident or preachy. The examined garden life often isn't the easiest path, but for most folks it's helpful to find a reasonable voice as a guide.

Rutkow, Eric. American canopy: Trees, forests, and the making of a nation. Scribner, 2012.

This book is a history of trees and the American experience. Rutkow covers the primeval forests of the new nation to 19th century clear-cut forestry, the birth of the American conservation movement, the managed forestry efforts of the U.S. Forest Services (led at its beginnings by Pennsylvania's own Gifford Pinchot), and up to the birth of the environment era in the last few decades of the 20th Century. Throughout American history, trees have been close companions to our industry, community-building, prosperity, and, in some cases, national defense.



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Shields, David and Benson, Bill. Catalyst for Conservation: The Brandywine Conservancy's success in saving King Ranch land in Pennsylvania. Brandywine Conservancy, 2011.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, concerned residents took on a major Chester County conservation effort. The Brandywine Conservancy and partnering friends and organizations successfully protected a major tract of land in southern Chester County when the King Ranch decided to part with its substantial land holdings. Forests, grasslands, and the Brandywine Creek watershed were effectively conserved for future generations. This was a major undertaking by many prominent conservation-minded Chester County residents. The impact of this major achievement on the landscape of southern Chester County is indeed remarkable. It is wonderful to learn more about the players, and the struggle of how such work is happening in our own region.

Tallamy, Douglas W. Bringing Nature Home: How you can sustain wildlife with native plants. Updated and Expanded edition. Timber Press, 2009.

Essentially this book is a how-to manual for the home gardener and land owner. Dr. Tallamy, faculty member at the University of Delaware, examines many native trees, shrubs, and perennials and relates them directly to specific insects and animals that rely on the floral species for food, shelter, and reproduction. Packed with pictures of both plants and animals, Dr. Tallamy makes identification easy. He provides helpful guidance for the beginner to promote and encourage our yards and gardens to be havens of rich natural variety and contributors to the larger landscape.



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