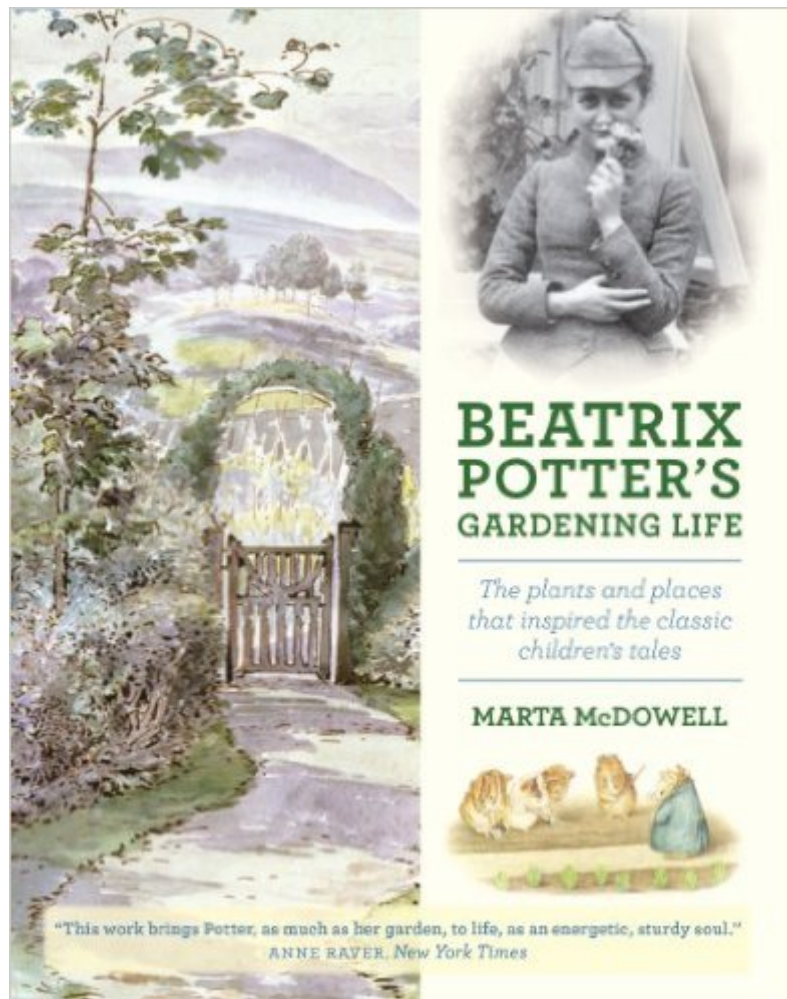


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# Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life: The Plants And Places That Inspired The Classic Children's Tales



## Synopsis

An enchanting and original account of Beatrix Potter's life and her love of plants and gardening. • Judy Taylor, vice president of the Beatrix Potter Society There aren't many books more beloved than The Tale of Peter Rabbit and even fewer authors as iconic as Beatrix Potter. More than 150 million copies of her books have sold worldwide and interest in her work and life remains high. And her characters "Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddle Duck, and all the rest" exist in a charmed world filled with flowers and gardens. Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life is the first book to explore the origins of Beatrix Potter's love of gardening and plants and show how this passion came to be reflected in her work. The book begins with a gardener's biography, highlighting the key moments and places throughout her life that helped define her, including her home Hill Top Farm in England's Lake District. Next, the reader follows Beatrix Potter through a year in her garden, with a season-by-season overview of what is blooming that truly brings her gardens alive. The book culminates in a traveler's guide, with information on how and where to visit Potter's gardens today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A Review of "Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life" The plants and places that inspired the classic children's tales By Marta McDowell Only rarely in a reader's life will a book come along a book that is so perfectly suited for the reader's character that it brings out the schoolgirl in her and perhaps a squeal of delight and a series of silly, wistful sighs. Reader, that is what Marta McDowell's latest

book has done for me. I admit I didn't exactly love her book on Emily's Dickinson's garden but perhaps it was just my lack of enthusiasm for Dickinson herself that underwhelmed me. What a contrast is this treasure before me now. Shall I tell you all the things I love about it? The cover is what delights the eyes at once. Part of the wonder of Beatrix Potter was that she was an amazingly accomplished artist, even from a young age. The cover is beautiful and includes a watercolor of a sweet garden gate, another of a handful of adorable little guinea pigs busy at their vegetable patch (both done by Potter, of course) and a wonderful old black and white photograph of Potter herself looking young and radiant with a posy under her nose. The colors are charming in the way that all her watercolors are. Of course that sent me, with schoolgirl squeals, diving into the book where I was happy to discover a most generous selection of photographs and examples of her art; watercolors, sketches and even maps of the places important in her life. The book is organized into three main parts. The first is about her life in general and all the people and places that influenced her work and her gardening. The photographs of these people and places are the best collection of such that I've seen. The second part is about "The Year in Beatrix Potter's Garden".

Marta McDowell's "Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life" is almost sure to delight all who lovingly remember the stories of Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, and Jemima Puddle-Duck which readied us for meeting Mole, Water Rat, Toad, and Badger. Even better, if these admirers of Beatrix Potter are slightly mad about gardens and wander in their dreams among the dreaming spires of English foxgloves & delphiniums. (In this review, as in McDowell's book, Beatrix Potter is sometimes referred to as Beatrix, sometimes as Beatrix Potter, and after her marriage, sometimes as Mrs. Heelis. Hopefully, this won't be confusing.) This richly created book offers on almost every page superbly reproduced water colors of landscapes, plants, and the small creatures of hedgerow and streams, or photographs of the more than 10 homes in which Beatrix lived and gardened. No one, not even Durer, has drawn bunnies like Beatrix Potter, bunnies with the softest fur, and on p. 106, the roundest tummies, as six lie together sleeping off the soporific effects of a lettuce orgy. Part One of this three part tale describes Beatrix Potter's life in McDowell's framework of a plant: germination, offshoots, flowering, roots, ripening, and setting seed (140 pages bursting with the child's precociously talented paintings through her final flowering as a conservationist who wills 4,000 acres of Lake District lands to the National Trust). Beatrix was the only daughter of second generation wealth. To her supremely status-conscious parents, almost no one was good enough for her company or her love, making her early life lonely. She turned to drawing & botanical research.

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