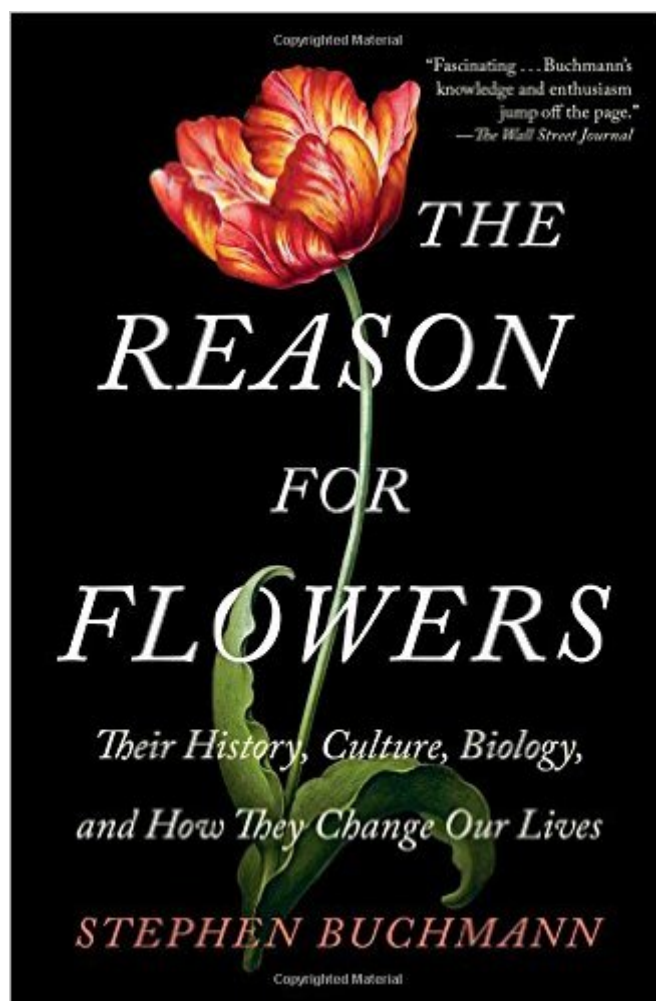


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The Reason For Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, And How They Change Our Lives



Synopsis

A fascinating (The Wall Street Journal), engaging, and expert account of the botany, ecology, history, culture, and meaning of flowers, written by a passionately devoted scientist, photographer, and writer, and illustrated with his stunning photographs. Flowers, and the fruits that follow, feed, clothe, sustain, and inspire all humanity. They have done so since before recorded history. Flowers are used to celebrate all-important occasions, to express love, and are also the basis of global industries. Americans buy ten million flowers a day and perfumes are a worldwide industry worth \$30 billion dollars annually. Yet, we know little about flowers, their origins, bizarre sex lives, or how humans relate and depend upon them. Stephen Buchmann takes us along on an exploratory journey of the roles flowers play in the production of our foods, spices, medicines, perfumes, while simultaneously bringing joy and health. Flowering plants continue to serve as inspiration in our myths and legends, in the fine and decorative arts, and in literary works of prose and poetry. Flowers seduce us—and animals, too—through their myriad shapes, colors, textures, and scents. And because of our extraordinary appetite for more unusual and beautiful super flowers, plant breeders have created such unnatural blooms as blue roses and black petunias to cater to the human world of haute couture fashion. In so doing, the nectar and pollen vital to the bees, butterflies, and bats of the world, are being reduced. Buchmann explains the unfortunate consequences, and explores how to counter them by growing the right flowers. Here, he integrates fascinating stories about the many colorful personalities who populate the world of flowers, and the flowers and pollinators themselves, with a research-based narrative that illuminates just why there is, indeed, a Reason for Flowers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First off, this is less a coherent book about flowers as it is a collection of blurbs that might appear in the top corner of a magazine page. Each little blurb will have a name like "The different kinds of floral honeys" and be less than a page long. It may or may not have anything to do with the blurb before it or after it in the same chapter. That is not the kind of book I thought I was buying when I got this. Secondly, this book is not particularly factually accurate, which obviously is a problem, and on top of that it contradicts itself in many places as well. For instance, on page 129 of the hardcover version, the author asserts that "roses, grown mostly in California" are the most popular flower in the United States. Well over 90% of the roses sold in the USA are grown outside of the country, mostly in South America. Most of the US grown roses are grown in California, but there are not enough grown there to make much of a dent in the over all market. The author mentions this in passing on page 138 when he visits the Los Angeles flower market but its confusing and wrong. Then, bizarrely, on page 151 the author asserts that the flower growing business in the USA is mostly dead, and almost all the production has moved to the equator, which is pretty much true, but no attempt is made to reconcile this with the earlier blurb. For some reason the author feels a compulsion to say "long stemmed" any time he mentions roses in any context, as if there were no other kind worth talking about. Unfortunately most of the roses sold in the US are not long stemmed and many of them are quite short because they're harvested for wedding work or for mixed bouquets.

The Reason for Flowers – Their History, Culture, Biology and How They Change Our Lives by Steven Buchman is a book to be embraced, enjoyed, and cherished. This book is brilliantly written in a style that is, at times, poetic. The beauty of The Reason for Flowers is that it appeals to such a broad audience – from scientists to students and everyone who admires and appreciates flowers. Steven Buchman's great sense of humor is evident throughout the book, but especially in subtitles, such as "Sinful Hybrids (Rated X)". The photography is superb and adds a new dimension to each chapter. The author paints a colorful picture as he shares personal stories and draws the reader in for both an entertaining and educational journey. Science, art, history, literature, and culture are beautifully integrated to produce a wonderfully interwoven work that is sure to stimulate curiosity, questions for discussions, and future career interests. Scientists as well as non-scientists are able to understand and enjoy scientific information presented. He encourages the

reader to actively experience flowers with all senses – to investigate, smell floral fragrances, research information on their own state flower, and even taste edible flowers. I enjoyed reading the entire book. I do, however, have my favorite parts. The first is when Steven Buchman describes the time when he visited the rare book collection at the Missouri Botanical Garden. – Before me was arguably the most famous work of botanical scientific illustration of all time, the unique The Temple of Flora by Englishman Robert John Thornton (1768-1837). – Another favorite part is in the section – Healing Views of Nature Outdoors: Hospitals. – – In St.

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