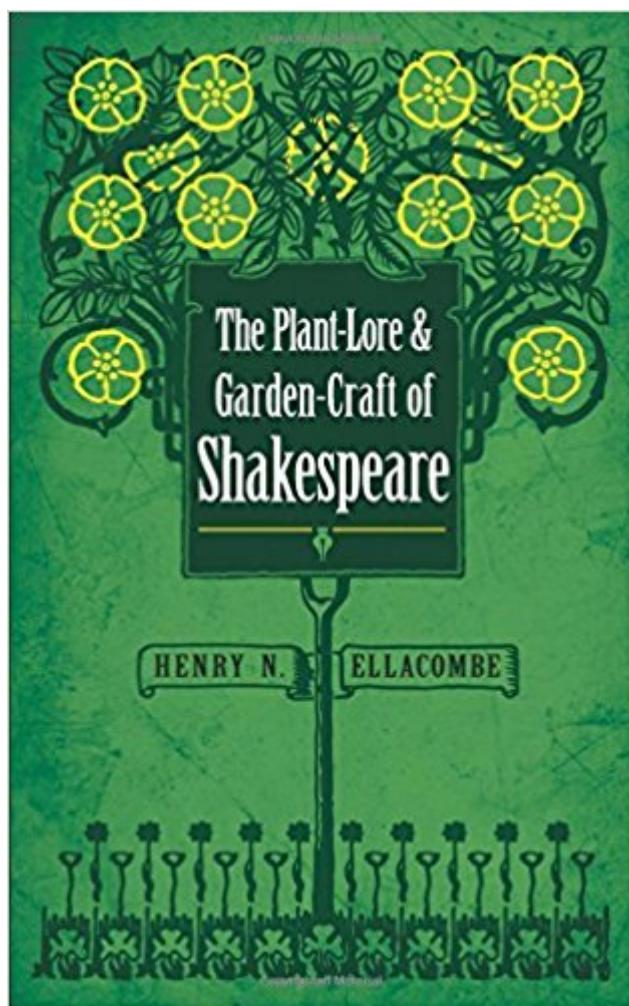


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The Plant-Lore And Garden-Craft Of Shakespeare



Synopsis

"A very readable and graceful volume." *"Saturday Review"* Entitled from its worth to a place in every Shakespearian library." *"Spectator."* As accurate as it is delightful." *"Gardener's Chronicle."* Deserves a place on the shelves of both the student of Shakespeare and the lover of plant lore." *"Journal of Botany"* The fullest and best book on the subject." *"The Literary World* From Ophelia's pansies and Lear's crown of weeds to Desdemona's song of the willow and the many botanical references in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the plays and sonnets of William Shakespeare abound in allusions to trees, flowers, herbs, and shrubs. This unique book explores a charming intersection of nature and literature, examining every plant mentioned by the playwright. An alphabetical glossary cites each plant, placing the quotation in context and discussing its symbolism. A synopsis of the plant's history is followed by practical advice for its cultivation. Dozens of engravings of plants appear throughout the book, in addition to full-page illustrations of Shakespeare's garden and other Avon sites. Shakespeare enthusiasts, historians, plant lovers, and gardeners will appreciate this comprehensive botanical survey and identification guide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Botanist and gardener Henry Nicholson Ellacombe (1822–1916) was vicar of the Gloucestershire parish of Bitton. He grew a tremendous variety of plants in his deanery garden and exchanged seeds with Kew and botanical gardens throughout Europe. Ellacombe's other books include *Shakespeare as an Angler* and *In My Vicarage Garden, and Elsewhere*.

How unusual to shelve a book as both literary and a nature guide. This thoroughly researched and charmingly illustrated book lists all the plants appearing in Shakespeare's works, in alphabetical order. We see the lines in which they appear and the contexts are explained. Do the lines refer to a feast, a potion-shop, a forest, a garden, a beauty? Aconite is a poison, apple edible fruit, aloes bitter; they all have a place. I like that trees are listed with what the timber was used for at the time, including aspen, not used for much but we learn, one of the earliest trees of Britain and used to make arrows, while related to women or the Crucifixion because of the trembling leaves. Apple was a term for a fruit, also seen in pine-apple and love-apple, so pomme from which we get pomade would have been an earlier word for this tree. Different kinds of apples and crabapples had their own names, like pippin. The name of apricot is a long trail also, from Eastern realms. All this and I'm still on A. Botanists, herbalists, and literary lovers will relish the pages. I love the illustrations of what Will's own cottage garden looked like, full of plants. We're told that Chaucer was the only other to have really listed many English plants and uses, because other poets such as Milton referred to classical influences which involved more Mediterranean plants. Shakespeare did name Mediterranean plants of course, such as bay, and anything which was found and used at the time, like saffron, mace and dates from *The Winter's Tale*. The last plant is Yew, poisonous, planted in churchyards (to safeguard cattle, not mentioned) and supplier of bows. The brief latter part of the book looks at Elizabethan gardens. This venerable book has small text and black and white line drawings both of plants and of locations linked to Shakespeare. I think readers could dip in and enjoy this one for years. I downloaded a copy from Net Galley. This is an unbiased review.

Thanks to netgalley and Dover Publications for the ARC of a beautiful new edition of an old classic.

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