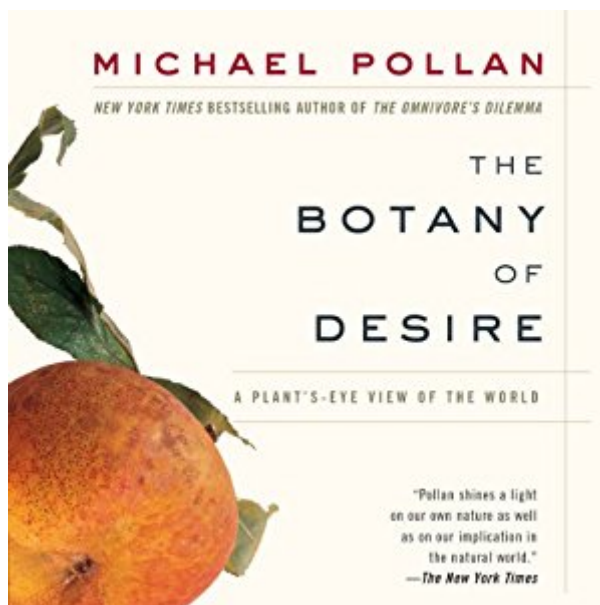


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# The Botany Of Desire



## Synopsis

In 1637, one Dutchman paid as much for a single tulip bulb as the going price of a town house in Amsterdam. Three and a half centuries later, Amsterdam is once again the mecca for people who care passionately about one particular plant. This time the obsession revolves around the intoxicating effects of marijuana rather than the visual beauty of the tulip. How could flowers, of all things, become such objects of desire that they can drive men to financial ruin? In *The Botany of Desire*, Michael Pollan argues that the answer lies at the heart of the intimately reciprocal relationship between people and plants. In telling the stories of four familiar plant species that are deeply woven into the fabric of our lives, Pollan illustrates how they evolved to satisfy humankind's most basic yearnings and by doing so made themselves indispensable. For, just as we've benefited from these plants, the plants, in the grand co-evolutionary scheme that Pollan evokes so brilliantly, have done well by us. The sweetness of apples, for example, induced the early Americans to spread the species, giving the tree a whole new continent in which to blossom. So who is really domesticating whom? Weaving fascinating anecdotes and accessible science into gorgeous prose, Pollan takes us on an absorbing journey that will change the way we think about our place in nature.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 54 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audio Evolution

Audible.com Release Date: May 23, 2006

Language: English

ASIN: B000FTCJEG

Best Sellers Rank: #4 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Lifestyle & Home >

Gardening #13 in Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Horticulture #53

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## Customer Reviews

Michael Pollan leads one through horticulture, culture, science, time, space, and even into the future in support of his intriguing theory about who we are, who we think we are, and our relationship with the natural world. The thesis is fascinating and the prose is brilliant -- at times I found myself

savoring the language nearly at the expense of the ideas -- conversational and gentle, it is as if Michael is right there with the reader enjoying the moment as well. Each section begins from a wholly disparate point in time or space and then gradually carries the reader to the central point of the book. If the point of non-fiction is to provide one with a new and unique way of seeing the everyday, then Michael Pollan has succeeded beyond all measure. A terrific way to spend some hours this summer -- especially to the sights and sounds of summer. Have sent nearly every relative I have a copy -- some of their remarks have informed this review.

The Botany of Desire, A Plant's-Eye View of the World by Michael Pollan (270 pages) I borrowed this book and, after reading it, decided I needed to buy a copy, as it's a book I want to keep and have available to loan out. Environmental journalist Michael Pollan explores the relationship between humans and plants' coevolution. He presents intriguing chapters on desires: Sweetness -- the apple (Johnny Appleseed and the evolution of the apple to today's highly domesticated fruit); Beauty -- the tulip (Bred to the Turks' idea of beauty, the tulip took over and transformed Holland); Intoxication -- Marijuana (altered to satisfy human desires for intoxication, the marijuana plant has been bred to avoid detection. Small female clones are grown inside, under controlled conditions); Control -- the potato (Why the Potato Famine caused devastation in Ireland and dangers of genetic engineered Monsanto's NewLeafs. The NewLeafs are resistant to blight. The danger is that potato diseases resistant to today's chemicals will develop).

Arrived on time, in new condition, and is filled with interesting and profound text. A great buy for anyone interested in agro-economy, botany, and the relationships between plants and people.

Michael Pollan brings a unique perspective on nature, food, and animals. Very vivid imagery and inspires interesting conversation about our place in the world.

A true masterpiece. As informative as it is captivating. Pollan takes you through the ages connecting the dots of how mother nature and man interconnect in a brilliant display of his own marvels and startling revelations about the mother earth and our place among her. Delving deep into what this world has become with the absence of love and trust we once had in the Earth and how the true way.. the old way... was more ingenious.. emotionally and spiritually intelligent and connected

ancestors were wider than the modern day, disconnected toxic profit driven mess we live in.

Pollan's books are generally very good. This starts the sequence for me. I find myself oft-quoting the lessons of this book. The next book, *The Omnivore's...*, is very important and readable, until the last hundred pages or so. Read *The Botany...* book, then the *Omnivore's...* book. Then watch the dvd *Food Inc.* and *The Vanishing of the Bees* dvd, and you will be reasonably up on the dangers besetting our food supply and environment. Among other things, I produce cows on our farm for discriminating nose-to-tail chefs. We are thereby rescuing the rarest American cow from extinction. If animals do not have a "job", and thereby a monetary value, they disappear. I find that the US is losing massive gene pools of all species and breeds, domestic and wild, fish, animal and fowl. And this may indeed end badly if left to continue. Unfortunately for all of us, most of the dire things you read about USDA, FDA, Monsanto, Big Agribusiness, etc. are indeed true. Trust me

This is an awesome, informative book. The audio book is also exceptional!. It is well written that is typical of Michael Pollen and full of his humor. The chapter on cannabis is enlightening, full of little known facts. But if touching on that subject is offensive to you, skip over it until you can revisit it with an open mind. You might find your opinion challenged in that chapter. I have listened to the book several times. It's one of my go to road trip listens.

This is a book that makes you think not just about food but about the nature of mankind, the power of what we call Nature and the element of chaos or unpredictability that drives the results in the course of human affairs. This was a very informative book that challenges me to look at how we fit into the overall pattern of living things on this planet. Well written, intimate and with a beguiling understated self depreciating wit the book was a pleasure and happy page turner. It should be as well for anyone with a good sense of curiosity about such things. Gave it to my daughter for her birthday when I saw that she was actually interested (for once) in one of the nerdy books I am always reading. She loved it.

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