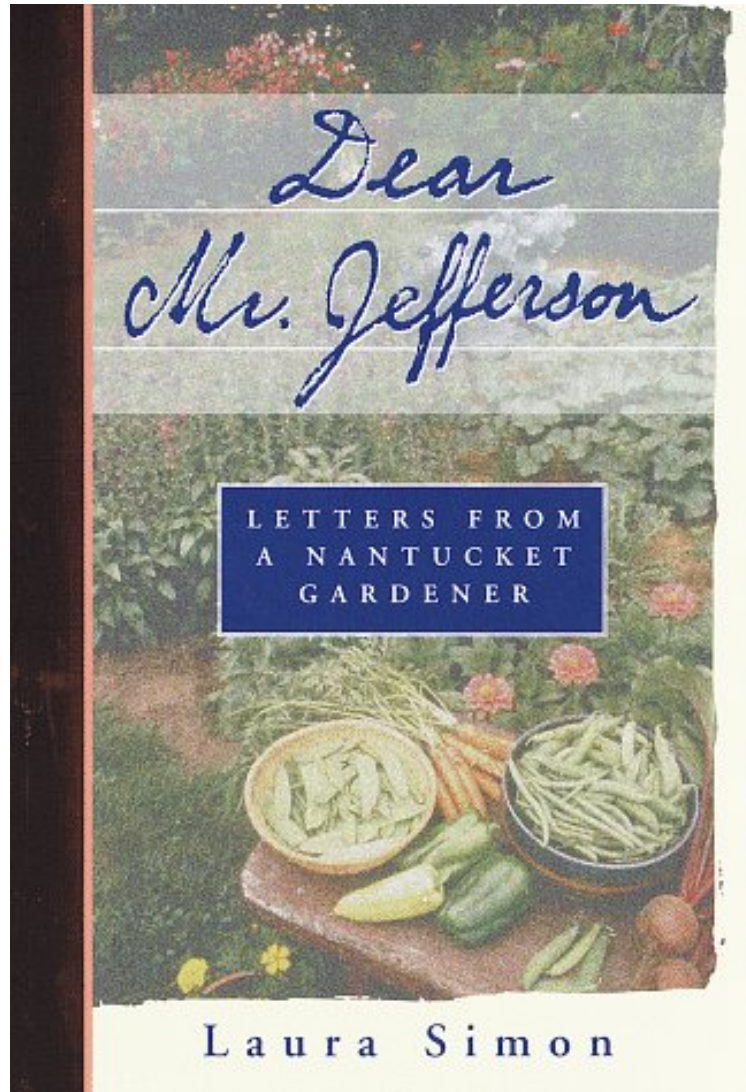


## Dear Mr. Jefferson: Letters from a Nantucket Gardener

Laura Simon

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**Laura Simon : Dear Mr. Jefferson: Letters from a Nantucket Gardener** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dear Mr. Jefferson: Letters from a Nantucket Gardener:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Gardening Inspiration By national park poster-wolves Not only do I enjoy reading this every spring, but through Laura Simons vivid description, witty prose, candid observation, gardening tips and trivia and most importantly her obvious love of gardening... she has caused me to fence in my own 1/4 acre and try my hand at a kitchen garden. Since I had only raised flowers before (and a few from seed), this was quite the major enterprise. I ordered a lot of the same catalogues she used, and raised from seeds every kind of

delectable vegie I've ever loved. The garden has been a success (with very few small failures) from the first season. What a joy to start my garden every year from beginning to end - not only the veggies and fruit, but the bees and butterflies as well. This year I ordered asparagus and fruit bushes, and then will be ordering trees for a small orchard. Laura's delight in her own garden has a way of making you want to start your own garden. Thank you Laura, I wouldn't have done it without you!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A treat for garden lovers  
By Miranda Barry  
Absolutely charming and beautifully written letters from an obsessive Gardener to Thomas Jefferson brings the 18th century botanist up to the present.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Charming  
By Kindle Customer  
What a delight it was to read this book. I couldn't put it down and it was just the tonic this gardener needed in the dead of winter.

Laura Simon's garden in Nantucket is extraordinary in its beauty and its abundance. In her first work of nonfiction, she imagines a correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, another gardener extraordinaire. The result is an epistolary adventure with life lessons, history, and personalities amongst the blooms. Ms. Simon, looking for a way to express the gardening thrall she'd found herself in, wanted to talk shop, to discuss soil tilth and tillage, to compare varieties of carrots, and to analyze the relative merits of manure. One evening, while the author was sitting by her wood stove, feet buried beneath her dog and a stack of seed catalogs by her side, she wondered, "Why isn't there a 'Thomas Jefferson' around I can talk to?" After all, continued her musing, popular history has it that it was Thomas Jefferson who, at the dawn of our republic, convinced his countrymen that tomatoes weren't poisonous. So began the imagined conversations with Thomas Jefferson. Ms. Simon, whose previous books were historical romances, now finds inspiration from her peppers and peas. Dear Mr. Jefferson is a passionate, sometimes whimsical, always fascinating narrative, construed as letters to Thomas Jefferson. In these letters she tells him of the trials and tribulations of growing vegetables and flowers while relaying Jefferson's own gardening stories and passions as if she were having a dialogue with him. The book's charm and humor is heightened with personal anecdotes borne out of the author's attempt to explain the conundrums and advances of modernity to the eighteenth-century renaissance man. Simon weaves personal anecdote with anecdotal history creating an engaging narrative that titillates, educates, and entertains.

From Publishers Weekly  
Simon's imaginary correspondence with Thomas Jefferson about her horticultural efforts on Nantucket, where she has lived for the past 25 years, is a diverting hybrid just right for gardeners interested in history and historians interested in gardening. Whether telling Jefferson about her own life or sharing her thoughts about seed propagation, garden design and heirloom vegetables, Simon does a terrific job of replicating the pleasures of 18th-century epistolary prose, an elegant language that sports lively digressions and tangents. Though the correspondence is one-sided, readers gain an appreciation for Jefferson, a passionate gardener himself, through tidbits about his plantation at Monticello and well-placed quotes from his diaries and letters. Much of the entertainment comes from Simon's attempts to update the founding father on the evolution not only of horticulture but of American civilization: "In the supermarket we were able to give full expression to another national trait. Our admiration of hugeness.... You could slide Monticello between the dairy cases and the dog food aisle of the average Stop Shop." She offers bracingly opinionated comments about topics such as daffodil breeding: "I like pink flowers even more than I don't like yellow ones, but pink has no business intruding on daffodil territory." Filled with quirky facts from gardening's vast history, as well as updates on progress in Simon's own backyard, this is the mature fruit of a well-seasoned gardener, an engaging work that deserves a spot of honor on every gardener's nightstand. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
When garden writer Simon failed to find a communication outlet for her extensive interest in gardening, she decided to express her thoughts through letters. And what better recipient than the historical gardening enthusiast Thomas Jefferson? These engaging "letters," written during the course of a year from Simon's Nantucket garden, range from such topics as the demise of the kitchen garden in America to a fascinating account of the evolution of the seed catalog. Simon is also effective in using Jefferson's own writings to discuss how things have changed since his day. Whether extolling the benefits of manure or praising asparagus, Simon clearly shows a passion for gardening. Gardening fans will really love this book. Recommended for all gardening collections.  
?Phillip Oliver, Univ. of North Alabama Lib., Florence  
Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Booklist  
A writer of historical novels, Simon is a passionate gardener who tends a thoroughly enthralling plot of land on the island of Nantucket. Her fascination with Thomas Jefferson's considerable contributions to this country's edible and ornamental plantings led Simon to concoct an idea that promises to delight, instruct, and motivate many a like-minded gardener. In her first nonfiction work, written with great verve and a richly descriptive style, Simon presents an imaginary correspondence with the horticulturally influential former president. Capturing the essence of Jefferson as both a historical figure and the incredible gardener that he was, Simon also shares--in the way great correspondents will do--all manner of musings having to do with life's vagaries. As Simon records the rhythms of garden chores, decisions on what to plant and how to plant it, harvesting triumphs, and a wealth of valuable lessons learned while cultivating her patch of earth, the reader is drawn along in a tapestry of everyday events woven through

with fascinating details of the Jeffersonian era. Alice Joyce