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978-1-108-03713-6 - A History of English Gardening: Tracing the Progress of the Art in  
This Country from the Invasion of the Romans to the Present Time

George William Johnson

Frontmatter

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In this informative study of Britain's rich horticultural history, first published in 1829, George W. Johnson (1802–66), a chemist, political economist and practising gardener, traces the history of gardening in England. He argues that the pursuit is an art which, like other art forms, developed by way of experiments and chance discoveries. The basic facts we know today, such as that vines must be watered, that plants flourish on exposure to the sun, and that animal manure helps to cultivate vegetables, all came about as a result of findings being passed down through many generations, and practice being improved through experience. Tracing the cultural importance of gardening back to biblical times, and relating it to the works of classical writers such as Hesiod, Cato and Cicero, as well as modern scholars such as Linnaeus and Banks, Johnson's work remains of interest to horticulturalists and botanists today.

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# A History of English Gardening

*Tracing the Progress of the Art  
in This Country from the Invasion  
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GEORGE WILLIAM JOHNSON



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**A HISTORY OF**  
**ENGLISH GARDENING,**

**CHRONOLOGICAL, BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY,  
AND CRITICAL.**  
**TRACING THE PROGRESS OF THE ART IN THIS COUNTRY  
FROM THE INVASION OF THE ROMANS TO THE  
PRESENT TIME.**

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**BY**  
**GEORGE W. JOHNSON.**

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*“Incescunt quotannis Scientiæ, emendantur quotidie, et ad fastigium  
suum optatum sensim sensimque, plurimum virorum opera et studio junctis,  
feliciter properant.”*

**THUNBERG.**

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TO  
***THOMAS ANDREW KNIGHT, Esq.***  
PRESIDENT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,  
&c. &c.  
AS A  
DEMONSTRATION OF RESPECT AND ESTEEM  
FOR HIS TALENTS AND KINDNESS,  
THIS WORK  
IS DEDICATED,  
BY,  
***THE AUTHOR.***

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## PREFACE.

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It is usual for an author, in his prefatory remarks, to dwell upon the importance of the subject of his work, but the Art of which the following pages contain a portion of the History is too highly and generally appreciated to render such remarks necessary.

To the general reader this work offers entertainment from its historical details; to the man of literature it affords notices of the authors on Gardening with statements of their various works and their editions; to the Gardener all of its contents possess some degree of interest for be-

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sides being a record of his Art in every age of which we have any history, it may serve as a guide to such authors as contain information on subjects relating to it of which he may be in search.

The chief qualifications required of the author were diligence and care, and on these points he can assure his readers that he sought his references in the original authorities but in such instances as he has otherwise specified, and where he has relied upon others, it has been on such as are known to be trustworthy.

Among his guides to such authorities he has particularly to acknowledge his obligations to *Weston's Tract's*, Professor Martyn's edition of *Miller's Gardener's Dictionary*, *Watts's Bibliotheca Britannica*, and to *Loudon's Encyclopædia of Gardening*.

The author's reasons for fixing upon the reigns of Edward the III, Elizabeth, and George the I, as eras in the History of our national Gardening are founded upon an attentive examination of our annals, and most of them will be developed in the body of the work whilst considering the literature of Gardening.

Of any critical remarks that occur in the course

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of the subsequent pages, the author has to observe that they are always the result of consideration, and if upon literary subjects were not formed until after a careful perusal of the works upon which the criticisms are made. In none of such remarks has he given vent to any personal feelings of jealousy or pique, for the best of all reasons, viz. that not a shadow of such feelings exist. He has only expressed his opinions, and those who differ with him in these, will do him but justice by considering him, if really wrong, as guilty of no greater crime in such instances than an error of judgment.

The author has the ungrateful task of confessing his knowledge that his work is very far from perfect. Owing to the very numerous authorities he has had to consult, and in the extracts made, errors it is feared may have arisen ; but there are none that diligence could prevent. In confessing such imperfection he follows the example of a labourer in the same field with himself, "I see daily, says Professor Martyn, *Complete Systems*, and *Complete Dictionaries* ; but I cannot discover this perfection in any of my performances, which after all my labour and pains, most provokingly still continue incomplete and erroneous." This confession is no affectation of humility, the author of the following pages employed his best

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efforts, endeavoured to be correct and perfect,  
and confesses that in many instances he has failed  
that at the same time he may express how open  
he is to correction; for any such whether in the  
form of additions or errata, he will always be  
grateful.

Great Totham,  
Essex.