



Amy Stewart

Thorny Issues

Author and garden guru Amy Stewart knows all the thorny issues of the botanical world. Like all good investigators, she knows how to follow the clues and dig deep to find out what's behind the plants in our everyday lives.

Called “a passionate and inquisitive writer” by *The Boston Globe* and noted for her “ease in gliding from worms to plants to humans” by *The Providence Journal*, Stewart is the best-selling author of *Flower Confidential: The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful in the business of Flowers*.

Flower Confidential, a *New York Times* bestseller, is an around-the-world, behind-the-scenes look at the flower industry and how it has sought...for better and worse...to achieve perfection. Does it matter that a bouquet of roses travels halfway around the world before it arrives at your supermarket or florist? Or that growers force tulips to bloom in December? Are we being tricked when a scientist engineers a lily that doesn't shed pollen?

For over a century, hybridizers, geneticists, farmers, and florists around the world have worked to invent, manufacture, and sell flowers that are bigger, brighter, and sturdier than anything nature could provide. Almost any flower, in any color, is for sale at any time of the year.

Stewart travelled the globe to track down scientists' intent on developing the first genetically modified blue rose. She also found the eccentric horticultural legend who created the world's most popular lily, the Star Gazer; a breeder of gerberas of every color imaginable; and an Ecuadorian farmer growing exquisite, high-end organic roses that are the floral equivalent of a Tiffany diamond.

What has been gained, and what has been lost, in tinkering with Mother Nature? Should we care that roses have lost their scent? Or that most flowers are sprayed with pesticides? In a global marketplace, is there such a thing as a socially responsible flower? Stewart has found the fascinating intersection of nature, technology, sentiment, and commerce.

Her recently released new book, *Wicked Plants: A Book of Botanical Atrocities*, has already hit *The New York Times* bestseller list and has been featured on CBS Sunday Morning, NPR, *O: The Oprah Magazine* and a walk through her poison garden for *The New York Times*. In the book, Stewart takes on Nature's most appalling creations—A tree that sheds poison daggers; a glistening red seed that stops the heart; a shrub that causes paralysis; a vine that strangles; and a leaf that triggered war.

It's a A to Z of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate and otherwise offend. Drawing on history, medicine, science and legend, this bloodcurdling tale of botany will entertain, alarm, and enlighten even the most intrepid gardeners and adventurers.

Stewart is also the author of several other books including, *The Earth Moved: On the Remarkable Achievements of Earthworms*, which *The New York Times* called “a completely original combination of science and passion,” and *From the Ground Up: The Story of a First Garden*.

Her essays and commentaries have appeared in *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Garden Design*, *Organic Gardening*, and she has been featured on NPR, Good Morning America, and CBS Sunday Morning.

An NEA grant recipient in 2006, Stewart lives in Eureka, California.