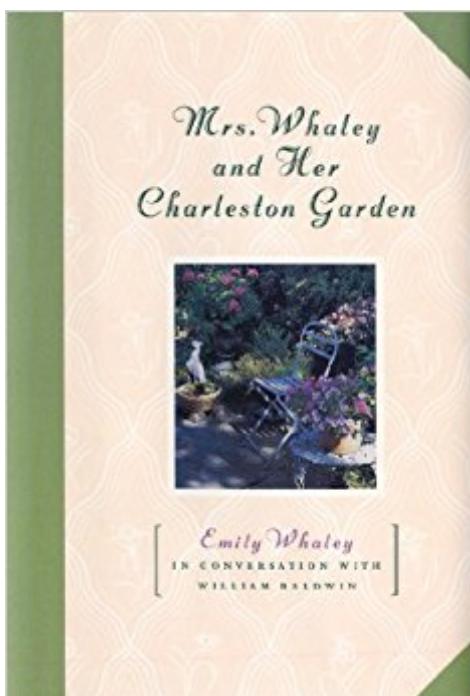


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# Mrs. Whaley And Her Charleston Garden



## **Synopsis**

In conversation with William Baldwin. Emily Whaley's garden on Church Street in Charleston, South Carolina, may be the most visited private garden in the country. And no wonder. It is the life's work of a vibrant, sociable, opinionated, determined, forceful woman who has spent the last eighty-five years cultivating whatever life offered her. **MRS. WHALEY AND HER CHARLESTON GARDEN** captures and preserves Emily Whaley's distinctive voice and braces us with a clear understanding of how one might cultivate a practical personal philosophy alongside one's garden. "An ageless and captivating visit." --Publishers Weekly; "South Carolina gardener grows into phenom." --USA Today, cover story; "Emily Whaley is wonderful, both in and out of her garden."--Rosemary Verey, author of **THE AMERICAN WOMAN'S GARDEN**. As seen on CBS Sunday Morning. Now in its 6th printing.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In the event a visit to coastal South Carolina is not possible, the next best thing is an introduction to Mrs. Whaley by way of William Baldwin's engaging conversation with this grande dame of Charleston's gardening world. Mrs. Whaley, who has reached her eighty-fifth year, is happy to share details of a rich, full life, and her thoughts meander through an extensive range of topics. Baldwin's approach is to let Mrs. Whaley do all the talking, so the narrative is her's alone--and a delightful, rather breathless account it is, incorporating the evolution of her own renowned garden with reminiscences of childhood and a personal history of southern life lived most graciously. Gardens cultivated by other generations of her family feature prominently in Mrs. Whaley's tales, and as she

reveals how the gardening tradition fostered her own avid dedication, it is apparent how tending one's plants can enrich the spirit and forge admirable connections with friends and acquaintances.

Alice Joyce

A sweet but slight bouquet: a gardening memoir told in a Southern drawl. Whaley, an 85-year-old South Carolina gentlewoman, sits down, as it were, in her Charleston garden to summon up memories of camellias past. Baldwin, a South Carolina architect and novelist (*The Fennel Family Papers*, 1996, etc.), observes that she ``moves with the imperial bearing of a grand Southern matron. But on the inside she's a knobby-kneed 14-year-old country girl.'' The matron's account of life and gardening can come across as regrettably mild. ``It's an awful lot of fun to live into your eighties,'' she declares. ``It helps to have some money, though.'' Likewise, she remarks, ``People are the greatest--the most fun that life offers.'' But Whaley also delivers some choice comments and vignettes: ``Dad said if everything Nan planted had taken, a rabbit couldn't have run across the yard.'' And she can be folksily tart: ``You have a muscle here between your ears. When you play tennis, when you do exercises, you use muscles. The muscle up top is the same. Unless it's used it is going to be flabby.'' Whaley devotes chapters to her rural childhood, her parents, and her lawyer husband; she also offers her thoughts on her dog, on self-esteem, and on her favorite recipes. Discussions of her Charleston garden, measuring 30 by 110 feet, takes up about a third of the book, and though her description of it is charming, one doesn't walk away with a convincing sense of place. Her gardening advice is pretty basic: ``DO water your plants in the morning so that the leaves are dry by nightfall. You'll have less trouble with fungal diseases.'' And too many of the non-gardening vignettes seem slender, unrevealing. It would have been better to drench those portions with details, which count for as much in life stories as they do in gardens. (illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

A great book, since I'm new to the southern area, wanted to learn more about traditions and life in the south. Such wonderful, descriptive novel, almost like being there, would Highly recommend this book! When you visit Charleston you'll be able to appreciate the book all the more

If you are a gardener, especially a Southern gardener, this book is for you and all your friends! This is the most charming book about an older Charleston gardener called Mrs. Whaley who talks about her life, grace in growing older, and maintaining her Charleston garden. My mom bought it for me, and we have both bought it many times over for our friends. Wonderful book to treat yourself or any

good gardening friend!!

I've read a great many books about gardening, garden designers and other related topics. This is one of my favorites! It's a small, charming book filled with the wit and wisdom of Emily Whaley, delivered in chapter length vignettes. It's a book you'll want to pick up and read on a chilly winter's afternoon when you're looking forward to spring and being in your own garden. It will immediately transport you into the typically "southern" life and times of this interesting and delightful woman. I keep it on my bedside table to read when my life gets crazy and I just want a little peace (and a smile).

This is a perennial favorite and a wonderful book to transport the reader back to Charleston in all its glory. I purchased for a friend in CA who loves all things Southern and is a big gardener. She loves it. Highly recommend this and her second book, too.

Great if you're going to Charleston--read before you go and then check out the gardens in that area. Unfortunately, I began reading it after I left Charleston. It gave the address and would like to have peeked in to see if there were any remnants of her garden. Bits of her life and life in and around Charleston--a little southern flavor.

Having recently had the opportunity to tour Mrs. Whaley's real Charleston garden, I was most interested to read her book about the creation of the garden itself. The book was delightful. It made me wish I had had an opportunity to meet her and talk with her. She was apparently a spunky, confident Southern lady who was never intimidated by anyone! The book talks about the creation of her garden, which amazingly still looks much like what she describes in her book. But the book is more than the description of her garden--it also relates details about her life in Charleston and about her philosophy of life as well. This is a book well worth reading. It is one I will keep and read again.

Excellent read! I look forward to exploring Charleston gardens on my next visit. Very inspiring.

Mrs. Whaley's garden has been one of the most photographed gardens in America. In this book she imparts her wisdom with regard to gardening, shares vignettes about her life, and provides you with some recipes to go along with it all. I believe this book would be interesting for gardening pros and well as those interested in learning how to garden.

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