Book Recommendations for Children

I. Suggested by the Children's Department of the MPPL and listed by age group, and available to purchase or check out. Both story-oriented and instructional or project-oriented books are included:

A. YOUNG CHILDREN –

*Bloom Boom* by April Pulley Sayre (non-fiction) — photo illustrations capture blooming flowers in springtime

*Rose's Garden* by Peter Reynolds (picture book) — Rose finds a neglected patch of earth in the middle of the city where she can plant the flower seed collection from her travels in her magical teapot.

*Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner (picture book but factual) — “Up in the garden, the world is full of green leaves and sprouts, growing vegetables, ripening fruit. But down in the dirt there is a busy world of earthworms digging, snakes hunting, skunks burrowing, and all the other animals that make a garden their home. In this exuberant book, discover the wonder and activity that lie hidden between the stalks, under the shade of leaves ... and down in the dirt.”

*Planting a Rainbow* by Lois Ehlert (a favorite picture book)

B. MIDDLE GRADES –

*Easy Peasy: Gardening for Kids* by Kirsten Bradley — An introduction to easy gardening so you can grow everywhere and anywhere. (non-fiction)

*Grow It, Cook It: Simple Gardening Projects and Delicious Recipes* (non-fiction book published by DK)

*A Little Guide to Gardening* by Jo Elworthy (non-fiction) — A garden can be anywhere – in pots, on a balcony, an allotment or a garden at home or school – and this is the perfect book to get you started! Packed full of simple gardening tips, interesting information, recipes and gorgeous illustrations, learn how to plant, nurture and even eat the things you grow!

*The Ultimate Guide to Gardening: Grow Your Own Indoor, Vegetable, Fairy, and Other Great Gardens* (non-fiction)

C. TEENAGERS –

*Community Gardens: Grow Your Own Vegetables and Herbs* by Susan Burns Chong (non-fiction)

*Wild Beauty* by Anna-Marie McLennore (fiction) — For nearly a century the Nomeolvides women have tended the grounds and lush estate gardens of La Pradera. They have a tragic legacy: if they fall in love too deeply, their lovers vanish. When a strange boy appears in the gardens, he is a mystery to Estrella and to her family, but he's even more a mystery to himself. He knows nothing more about who he is or where he came from, than his first name. As Estrella tries to help Fel piece together his unknown past, they uncover secrets as dangerous as they are magical.

*Eco-Gardening, Food, and Cooking* by Jen Green
II. Suggested by Jan Riggenback in her Midwest Gardening column, Daily Herald
Do you want to pass on the joy you’ve found in your garden to the children in your life? Books offer a fun way to capture kids’ imaginations.

Katie Cottle's *The Green Giant* (Pavilon Children's Books, 2019) is a story of a girl bored on her vacation until she discovers a magical greenhouse. Adventures ensue, and she receives an important memento at the end of her stay, which changes her life back home ... for the better!

*We Are the Gardeners* (Thomas Nelson, 2019) by Joanna Gaines of TV’s Fixer Upper series tells about her experiences gardening with her whole family – kids and parents. There is a lot of good explained (for instance, pollinators, how to start seeds) and also some bad discovered (rabbits, aphids); and plenty of guidance in the ways to maximize the first and overcome the second.

*Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* (Philomel Books, 2019) by Justice Sonia Sotomayor takes place in a garden. Twelve differently-abled children work together and discover that each can contribute something different and worthwhile to their joint project. Different plants + different birds and animals + different people, doing different things, enables patience, curiosity and learning.

*Layer by Layer, Row by Row* (Blurb, 2018) by David and Tracy Wood provides techniques for grownups who want creative ways to get kids excited about growing their own vegetables.