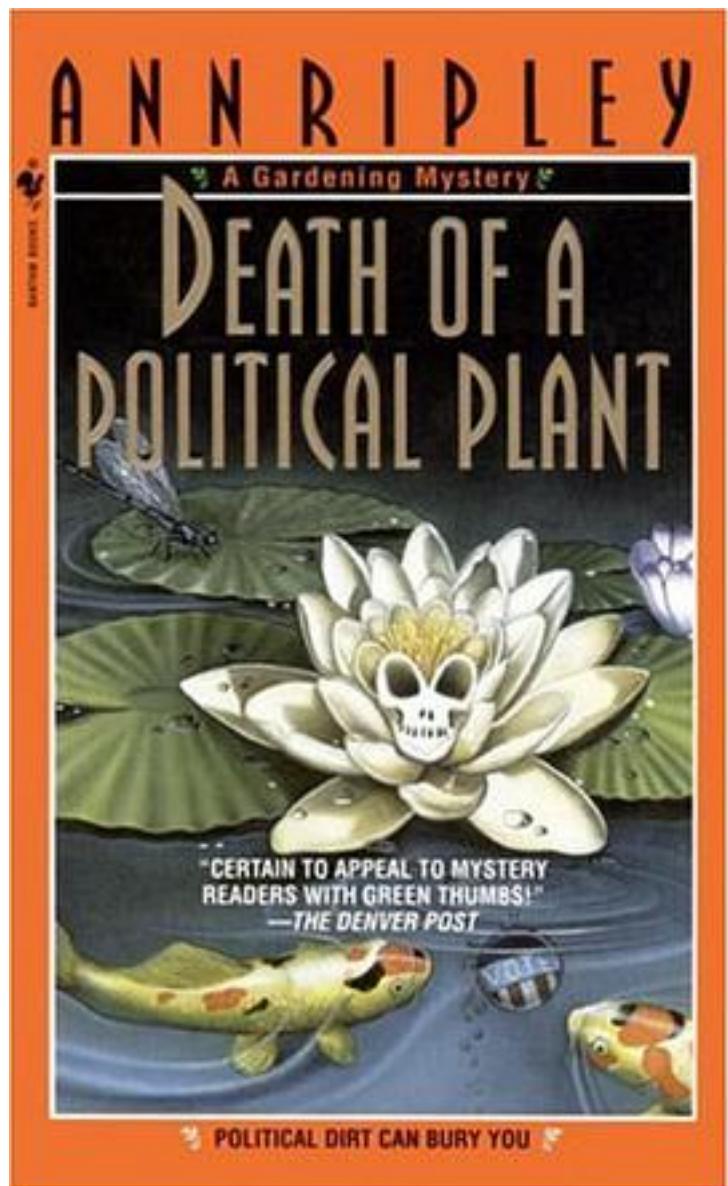


Death of a Political Plant



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Ann Ripley's horticultural heroine, Louise Eldridge, enchanted mystery lovers of all varieties in Death of a Garden Pest and Mulch

. Now she returns in a witty new tale of muckraking, murder, and deeply buried--and very dangerous--secrets. Louise's TV show, *Gardening with Nature*, has made her a celebrity, sweeping her from lawn-mower commercials all the way to the president's National Environmental Commission. Not that Louise is about to get her hands dirty in the mudslinging campaigns of an election year. As usual, her main concerns are right in her own backyard. Here, in Washington's suburban Sylvan Valley, she is subject to an unwelcome infestation of houseguests that threatens to crowd out her houseplants. Least welcome of all are three bossy busybodies in town for the Perennial Plant Society convention, who fete Louise as official "Plant Person of the Year" but press her to slash back the sweetgums and swamp oaks that give her beloved garden its pristine air. Her grin-and-bear-it mood is lightened, however, by the arrival of an old flame. Twenty years ago, in the first bloom of youth, Louise fell heavily for Jay McCormick's crooked smile and crusading charm. Now, he's an investigative journalist looking worriedly over his shoulder. Jay confides that he's come on two distinct undercover missions. One is to ensure that his ex-wife, a high-powered political lawyer, doesn't cheat on the rules for custody of their young daughter. Around the other, he raises an impenetrable thicket of secrecy. But Jay's cover is blown when he surfaces, a nibbled corpse, in a neighbor's ornamental fishpond. Who put him there? And what was the mysterious story he was investigating? Only Louise can unearth the trail that leads from a missing computer to a pistol-packing intruder trampling her purple-spotted toad lilies to evidence hidden where only a hardcore gardener could find it. Soon she's digging up enough dirt--social, marital, and political--to uproot some of Washington's top players...if she doesn't get herself nipped in the bud first. Ripening suspense, a thorny plot, and plenty of gardening tips make *Death of a Political Plant* a perfect bouquet of murder, mystery, and mayhem.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Death of a Political Plant_ 下载链接1](#)

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评论

[Death of a Political Plant_下载链接1](#)

书评

[Death of a Political Plant_下载链接1](#)