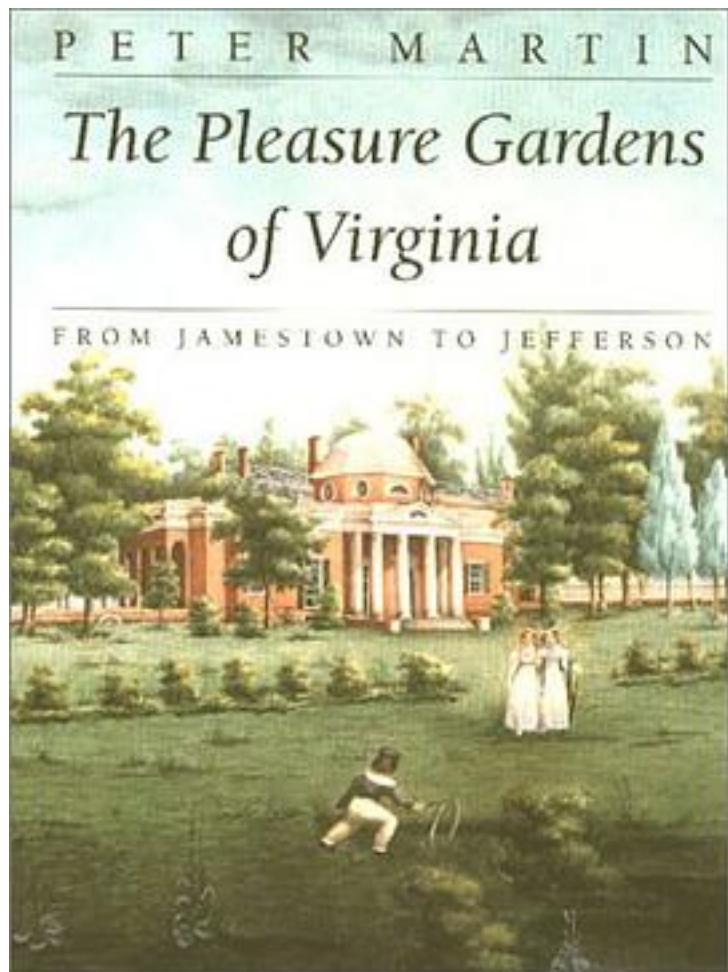


# The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia



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Using a rich assortment of illustrations and biographical sketches, Peter Martin relates the experiences of colonial gardeners who shaped the natural beauty of Virginia's

wilderness into varied displays of elegance. He shows that ornamental gardening was a scientific, aesthetic, and cultural enterprise that thoroughly engaged some of the leading figures of the period, including the British governors at Williamsburg and the great plantation owners George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, William Byrd, and John Custis. In presenting accounts of their gardening efforts, Martin reveals the intricacies of colonial garden design, plant searches, and experimentation, as well as the problems in adapting European landscaping ideas to local climate. The Pleasure Gardens of Virginia also brings to life the social and commercial interaction between Williamsburg and the plantations, and examines early American ideas about gracious living. While placing Virginia's garden tradition within the larger context of that of the colonial South, Martin tells a very human story of how this art both influenced and reflected the quality of colonial life. As Virginia grew economically and culturally, the garden became a projection of the gardener's personal identity, as exemplified by the endeavors of Washington at Mount Vernon and Jefferson at Monticello. Martin draws upon both pictorial representations and the findings of modern archaeological excavations in order to recapture the gardens as they existed in colonial times.

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