



# The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World

*Michael Pollan*

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In 1637, one Dutchman paid as much for a single tulip bulb as the going price of a town house in Amsterdam. Three and a half centuries later, Amsterdam is once again the mecca for people who care passionately about one particular plant — thought this time the obsessions revolves around the intoxicating effects of marijuana rather than the visual beauty of the tulip. How could flowers, of all things, become such objects of desire that they can drive men to financial ruin?

In **The Botany of Desire**, Michael Pollan argues that the answer lies at the heart of the intimately reciprocal relationship between people and plants. In telling the stories of four familiar plant species that are deeply woven into the fabric of our lives, Pollan illustrates how they evolved to satisfy humankind's most basic yearnings — and by doing so made themselves indispensable. For, just as we've benefited from these plants, the plants, in the grand co-evolutionary scheme that Pollan evokes so brilliantly, have done well by us. The sweetness of apples, for example, induced the early Americans to spread the species, giving the tree a whole new continent in which to blossom. So who is really domesticating whom?

Weaving fascinating anecdotes and accessible science into gorgeous prose, Pollan takes us on an absorbing journey that will change the way we think about our place in nature.

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