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Book Review: My Garden, the City and Me

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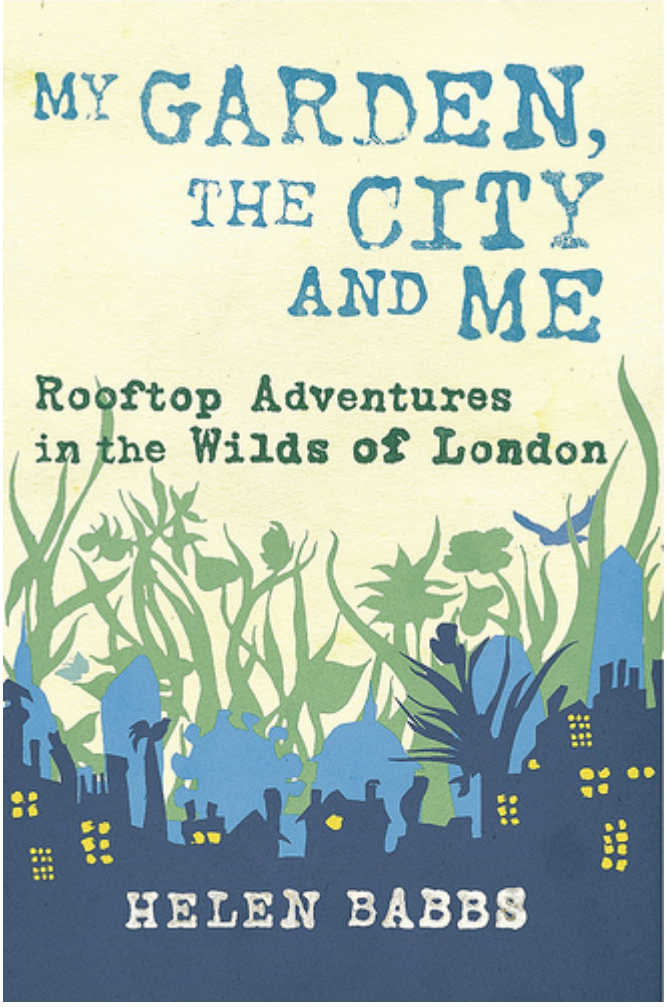
Subtitled Rooftop Adventures in the Wilds of London, My Garden, The City and Me [1] is a seasonal account of author Helen Babb?s maiden year of rooftop gardening, interspersed with tales of, as Winnie the Pooh might say, expeditions. These expeditions in search of city wildlife, are re-told with an engaging intimate warmth; the reader almost feels like piglet tagging along on her heels as she strides, ambles or cycles off on another quest.



[1]There are trips to city farms, muddy river shores, high rise flats, parks, wildlife centres, street gardens, markets: anywhere in fact where Helen has a chance to engage with nature. Here is a city dweller desperately trying to stay connected to the things that amaze, surprise and I suspect ground her. You don?t need to live in London, or in fact a city, to enjoy and appreciate the wonder and purpose of her year.

Helen describes her garden as ?balancing on a cloud of noise and dust, part of something bigger but also a

little bit removed?. I should think this an apt description even of many city dwellers. This book allows anyone feeling disengaged from their natural heritage to pick a pathway back in, and not be afraid to do so.

In a sense it is ridiculous that humans need books to tell them where to find nature but making a connection with nature requires such a leap of imagination these days guides such as Helen have become invaluable. Helen?s wilderness is in the detail she finds in her garden and on her various journeys: her first garden butterfly, the birds of prey she watches from tower blocks, the bark of the London plane tree, rooftop aviaries; so many small things to treasure. Just like this book. Pick up a copy and enjoy.

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[1] http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1604691670/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=kitchengarden-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399373&creativeASIN=1604691670