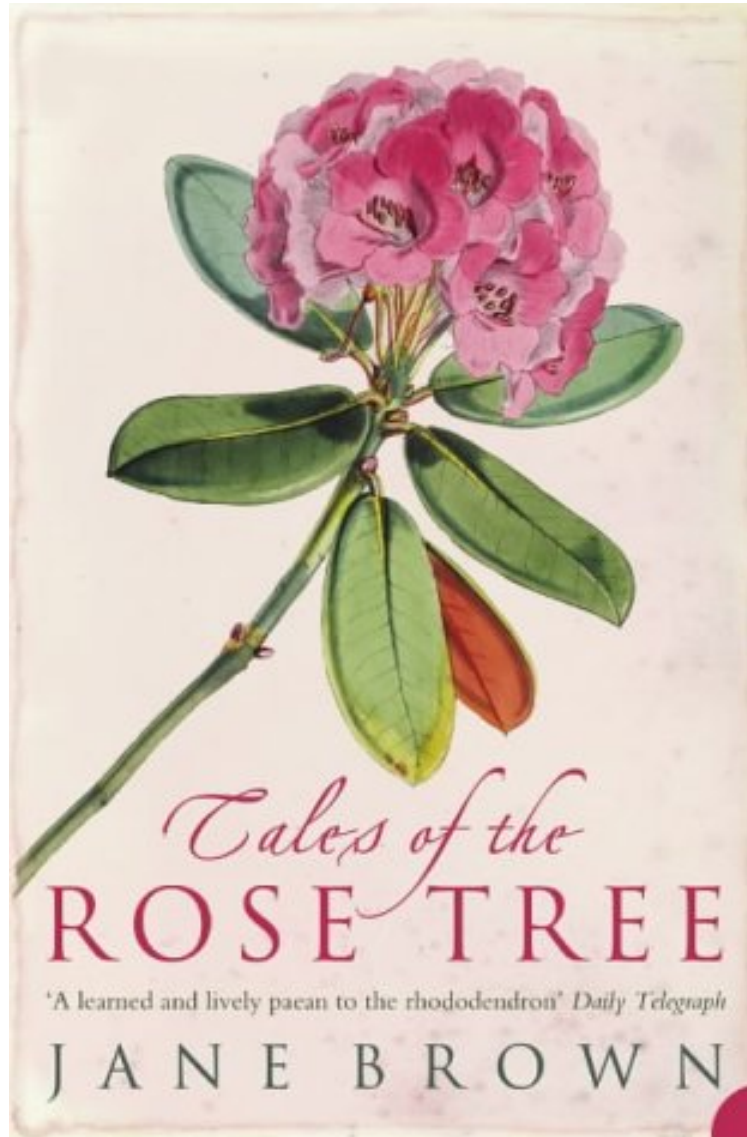


## Tales of the Rose Tree: Ravishing Rhododendrons and Their Travels Around the World

Jane Brown

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**Jane Brown : Tales of the Rose Tree: Ravishing Rhododendrons and Their Travels Around the World** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tales of the Rose Tree: Ravishing Rhododendrons and Their Travels Around the World:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. not quite By J. Barryok but not a home run. if you are really into rhodies this book is passable, however, it is in no way a page turner.

A wild and wonderful exploration of the history of the rhododendron, a plant coveted, traded and stolen for thousands of years. From the giant, long-lived rhododendron *falconeri*, with its peeling cinnamon bark on sculptured trunks to the delicate potted azalea on the garden patio, almost everyone has a rhododendron within reach of their daily lives. But who knows anything about this mysterious plant? Two hundred years ago the rhododendron was dragged to Britain from the dizzying heights of its natural habitat in the Sino-Himalayas by avaricious British collectors. Some of the species mutated; others proved hardy and easy to hybridise. Today the rhododendron has made a greater impact on the English landscape than any other plant. Jane Brown uncovers the rhododendron's story which reaches back hundreds, some say thousands, of years (the dove returning to Noah's ark was, apparently, carrying the leaf of a rhododendron). The Aztecs favoured it for their pleasure gardens (although the Jesuits believed they discovered it); the Chinese use it in medicines; mariners used it as ballast cargo; it has excited royal passions (Edward Prince of Wales surrounded himself with them at Virginia Water in the 1920s) and been the source of personal feuds (in the Rhododendron Society). After the First World War the government thought enough of the plant to fill Windsor Great Park with them in order to cheer up the nation. The epitome of bad taste, the scourge of conservationists or a majestic and ancient beauty forced to exist out of its natural habitat? Jane Brown ultimately asks: What is the rhododendron for?

'A stimulating counterblast to prevailing taste! An engaging social study -- even rather a funny one.' Independent on Sunday 'A learned and lively paean to the rhododendron.' Daily Telegraph 'An admirable book on several levels.' Spectator 'A superbly researched and narrated celebration! Jane Brown has done the species and her readers a service in reminding us of its fabulous history.' Literary Praise for *The Pursuit of Paradise*: 'A genuinely important contribution, not just to understanding gardens of the past, but to how we might get the most pleasure from the gardens of the future' Montagu Don, Observer 'If you want to be impressively well-informed about why every self-respecting home must have a patio, or why delphiniums, gladioli and larkspur are distinctly passe, then latch on to this illuminating book' Penelope Lively, Mail on Sunday 'Be warned. This is a rich brew, not to be taken in one gulp. Gardening in this book encompasses science and history, philosophy and art, literature and the military, politics and sex! it is all tremendous fun' Ruth Gorb, Guardian About the Author Jane Brown is the author of *The Pursuit of Paradise: A Social History of Gardens and Gardening* and *My Darling Heriott*, among many other books on gardens and gardening.