

Amphibian

by Carla Gunn

When Carla Gunn's nine-year-old son jumped off his bike to pick up a plastic bag and yelled, "Don't people know sea tortoises choke on this?!" she began thinking of what it must be like growing up in a world where so many species are on the brink of extinction and ecosystems are being continually destroyed. When later she read that nearly one third of preteens think the earth will become uninhabitable during their lifetime, she knew she had to write *Amphibian*, the story of Phineas William

Walsh.

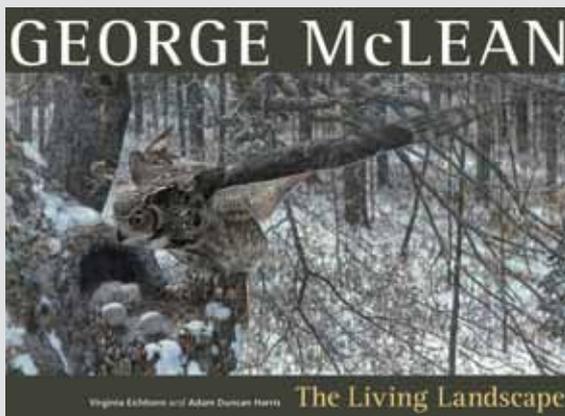
Phineas is a nine year old with encyclopedic knowledge of the natural world thanks largely to his devotion to the "Green Channel." He knows, for instance, that if you wet a dog's food with your saliva and he refuses to eat it, then *he's* top dog, and that dolphins can sleep half a brain at a time. Far from being just idle information, though, Phin draws parallels between the humans in his life and other animals and uses his vast knowledge to try and make sense of an often confusing world – where parents are divorced and

kids are bullied at school.

In a voice somewhere between Salinger's Holden Caulfield and Christopher Boone in Mark Haddon's *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*, Phin reflects on the complex and troubled relationship between humans, animals and the environment. Never a more timely book, it is at times laugh-out-loud funny while thought provoking and tender. Put it on your summer reading list and remember those sea turtles!

Coach House, 2009, \$19.95

Reviewed by Hazel Lyder of The Downtown Bookstore, Owen Sound



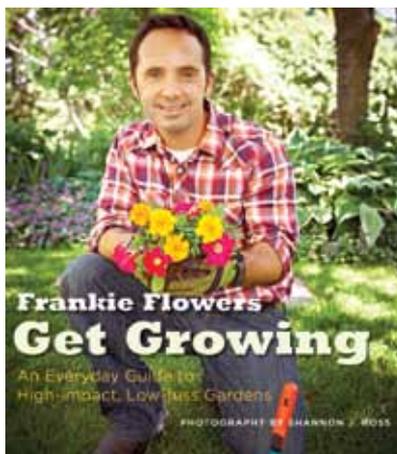
George McLean: The Living Landscape

by Virginia Eichhorn and Adam Duncan Harris

Artist George McLean has lived in a beautiful old stone house in Grey County for 40 years. His quiet walks in the forests and surrounding countryside inspired the breathtaking creative genius that would eventually turn up on canvas and which would in turn form the basis for this book. Illustrated with 92 full-colour reproductions, *George McLean: The Living Landscape* showcases McLean's work from 1965 to 2010 through a selection of his work from public and private collections. He has a profound respect for the natural world; his paintings emanate from his passionate interest and intense observation of wildlife. McLean paints animals and birds in their natural habitat paying attention to precise details such as tension, gestures, motion, details which imbue his paintings with energy, vibrancy and realism. While art critics can debate the use of light, tonalism and other artistic elements, this reviewer suggests that you find a copy of this book immediately; you'll discover such a sense of connection with the art that you will pick up the book again...and again!

Goose Lane Editions & Tom Thomson Art Gallery, 2010, \$60.00

Reviewed by Nancy Frater of BookLore, Orangeville



Get Growing: An Everyday Guide to High-impact, Low-fuss Gardens

by Frankie Flowers (aka Frank Ferragine)

If you only buy one gardening book this summer make it *Get Growing*. This is a beautiful book full of information on garden design, both formal, informal and vegetable, plant, shrub and tree suggestions and some of Frankie's favourites. Flowers, a well-known gardening expert, gives the reader lots of "how to" information from planting to pest and disease control, pruning and maintenance. I don't think there is anything you want

or need to know that he has not covered in the book. The book is organized by seasons which makes it very easy to use and the many colour photographs, by Shannon J.

Ross, are absolutely stunning. This book is a must for every gardener!

HarperCollins, 2011, \$26.99

Reviewed by Catherine Randall of Curiosity House Books & Gallery, Creemore