

## **Books, Authors Featured in El Jardín Botánico.**

Many of the world's most beautiful public gardens and our greatest works of literature are the products of Hispanic cultures. This garden seeks to illuminate how many of the great authors working in the Spanish language were influenced by their gardens and the natural world.

### **The House Of The Spirits**

by Isabel Allende

This stunning first novel of Isabel Allende tells the story of three generations of the Trueba Family. Esteban, the patriarch is a proud, volatile man in pursuit of political power, tempered only by his love of his wife, Clara, who has a mystical connection to the spirit world. When their daughter, Blanca strays into a forbidden love affair, it produces a grandchild, Alba, who becomes an unexpected gift to Esteban. Alba, a beautiful and strong-willed child leads her family and country into a revolutionary future.

**Isabel Allende** (August 2, 1942). Allende was born in Lima, Peru, daughter of the second secretary of the Chilean embassy, and second cousin of Salvador Allende, president of Chile. She became a popular TV personality, dramatist and journalist of a feminist magazine. She worked with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Santiago, Brussels and Europe. During the coup in Chile by General Pinochet, Isabel arranged safe passage for threatened nationals, eventually fleeing to Venezuela where she lived for 13 years and began writing novels, based on magical realism. She now resides in San Rafael, California. Her books have been translated into 40 languages and have sold 74 million.

### **How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents**

by Julia Alvarez

This book deals with the themes of acculturation and coming of age and the many hardships of immigration and the struggle to assimilate into a new culture. Uprooted from their native country, the Dominican Republic and forced to begin a new life in New York City, the text about the family consists of fifteen interconnected short stories through the narratives of the four daughters., Yolanda, Sofia, Carla and Sandra.

**Julia Alvarez (March 25, 1950).** Alvarez is considered a Dominican-American New Formalist poet, novelist and essayist. She rose to fame with the publication of *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. Born in New York City, the first ten years of her life were spent in the Dominican Republic. Being forced to flee a rebellion in the Dominican Republic influenced her writings on immigration, assimilation and identity and is known for

her work that examines cultural expectations of women. Published works include fiction, non-fiction and poetry. She is a winner of the National Medal of the Arts (2014)

## **Los Remedios de la Gente**

by Michael Moore

A compilation of traditional New Mexican herbal medicines, this book showcases 172 plants which are a collection of traditional remedies from the Southwest. Arranged in alphabetical order of regional names in Spanish with English translations, it lists their primary use, secondary use, toxicity, and dosage forms. It contains a cross index of the Spanish, scientific and primary names. The fact that the author gathered, prepared, tasted and tested all the plant materials, making note of their use in traditional cultures of the Southwest, sets this book apart from other ethnobotanical books. These are the plants that you would find in a *Curandera's* (Hispanic woman healer) garden, 40 pen and ink drawings by Mimi Kamp grace the pages.

**Michael Moore (January 09, 1941-February 20, 2009).** A medicinal herbalist and author on several reference works on botanical medicine, was the founder of the Southwest School of Botanical Medicine (SWSBM), which he operated as a residency program in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Bisbee, Arizona. Though not a Latino, his studies impacted practicing herbalists in the United States, putting previously unknown materia medica of the Southwest into mainstream botanical medicine. He was also a musician and composer.

## **Bless Me Ultima**

by Rudolfo Anaya

This is the story of a young boy, Antonio Marez, growing up in New Mexico during World War II. A mysterious *Curandera* (female healer) named Ultima comes to live with his family. She teaches him about the powers in the spiritual world and the goodness of plant medicine. As the relationship between Ultima and Antonio grows, he begins to question his strict Catholic upbringing causing him to question his own destiny and the relationship between good and evil and how to reconcile Ultima's powers with his traditional upbringing. This book was also made into a movie in 2013, and an opera. *La Llorona* (2016).

**Rudolfo Anaya (October 30, 1937-June 28, 2020).** An American author noted for his novel *Bless Me Ultima*. He is considered one of the founders of the canon of contemporary Chicano Literature. The themes and cultural references of the novel, uncommon at the time made a lasting impression on fellow Latino writers. Anaya was raised in Santa Rosa, New Mexico. The majesty of the desert lands of New Mexico had a profound influence on his early childhood. He was an accomplished author of fiction, children's books, non-fiction

anthologies, poetry and plays. He was the recipient of many literary awards, including the 2015 National Humanities Medal.

## **The House On Mango Street**

by Sandra Cisneros

This engaging book encompasses a year in the life of a young Latina girl, Esperanza Codero, living in a poor neighborhood of Chicago. It depicts Esperanza's budding maturity, developing her own perspective of the world around her. Surviving abuse at the hands of men, she meets the Three Sisters who tell her fortune helping her to realize that her experiences on Mango Street have helped to shape her identity. She vows that after she leaves Mango Street, she will return to help the people that she left behind.

**Sandra Cisneros December 20, 1954).** Born in Chicago, the only daughter in a family of six brothers, her family migrated between Mexico and the United States often, an experience she describes as "straddling two countries." She attended Loyola University and University of Iowa and has worked as a teacher, counselor, college recruiter, poet-in-the-schools and an arts administrator. She currently resides in San Miguel de Allende in central Mexico, but lived in San Antonio, Texas for many years. She has been instrumental in building a strong community of writers in San Antonio, the Macondo Foundation. She is acknowledged as perhaps the most famous Chicana writer, as a pioneer in her literary field as a Mexican-American writer. In 2015 she was awarded the National Medal of Arts.