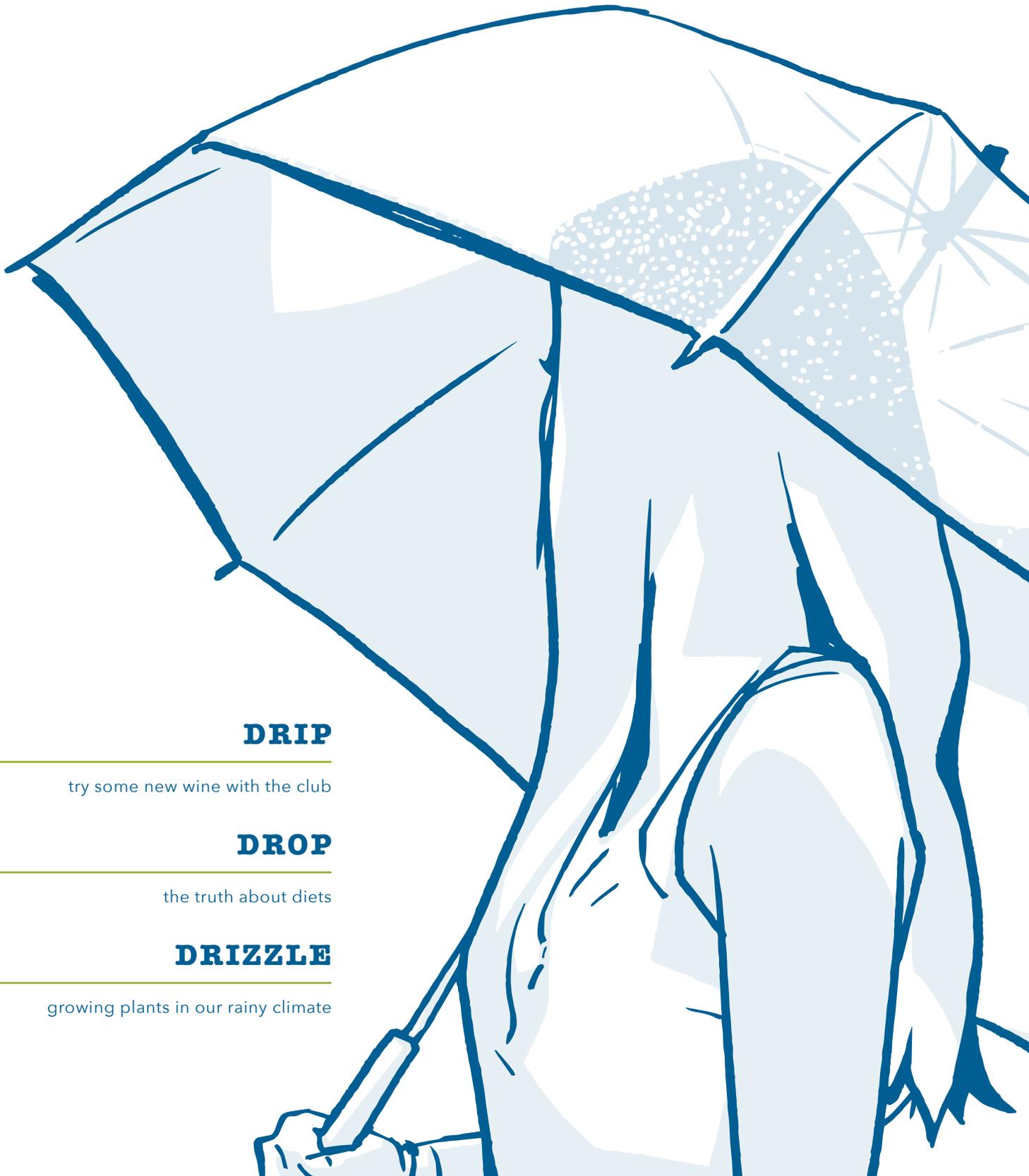


# the Radschlixger

an international woman's life in düsseldorf

AWCD

spring 2019



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## **DRIP**

try some new wine with the club

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## **DROP**

the truth about diets

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## **DRIZZLE**

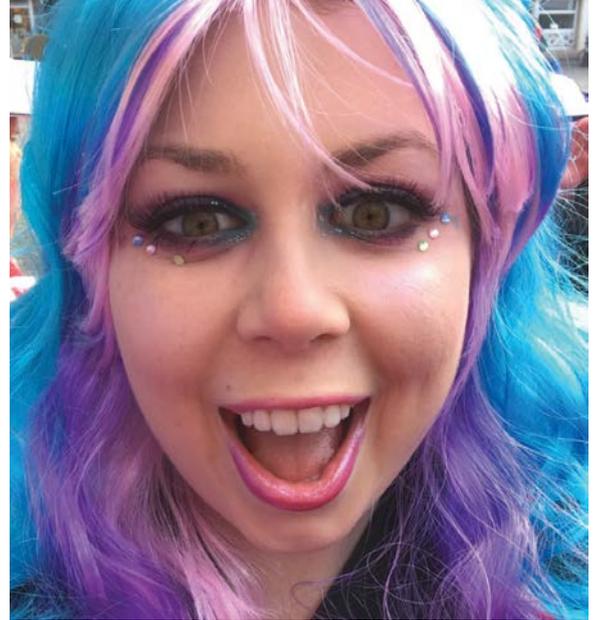
growing plants in our rainy climate

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As I slowly begin to open my windows to let the fresh spring air in, I feel (as I do every year) that this past winter was worse than the last. Being a sunshine/blue skies type of person, I am more than happy to bid farewell to winter and hello to spring. I love the way that Düsseldorf seems to come to life with that first hint of warmth, and there is much to look forward to in the coming season! A few highlights within our club are the cooking classes, lunches and dinners and of course, the Tanz in den Mai! In this edition of our magazine, you can learn some gardening tips, familiarize yourself with our budget goals for the coming year, and learn a bit more about our members- both those new to the club and those who are veterans.

I hope that you are looking forward to getting out and enjoying our beautiful city with the wonderful members of our club. Spring is a special time, so make sure to soak it in with good AIWCD friends by your side!

Happy spring, everyone!



*Megan Morris*  
**MEGAN MORRIS**  
 co-editor

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Our official Facebook page is a closed group with more information, updates, and answers to your questions. All members are welcome!

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## BE RAD!

### are you interested in writing, editing, or graphic design?

If so, please come to our Radschläger Writer's Circle meetings. We would love to hear your ideas and input on our magazine. If you have a story to tell, please come and see us – we would love to meet you!

**QUESTIONS?** Contact us at [radschlaeger@awcduesseldorf.org](mailto:radschlaeger@awcduesseldorf.org).

Don't forget – all content for the next issue must be submitted by **MAY 5**.

Any content received after this date may not be included in the magazine, at the discretion of the editing team. It takes time to organize and edit the articles, and to design the magazine. We appreciate your understanding!

## WE GOT THE BEET

### gardening tips for the ruhrgebiet

**MICHAELE FITZPATRICK** – After a long, wet Düsseldorf winter, it is finally time to start thinking about spring! Although it will be some months still before anyone is harvesting tomatoes or picking dahlias, now is the time to start planning and preparing your garden for the summer months ahead.

Thomas Jefferson once said “tho’ an old man, I am but a young gardener.” Even though I had been digging in the dirt for many years when we moved to this area, I still considered myself an inexperienced gardener. I did, however, feel confident in knowing what to plant and when, how long something would take to grow, how often to water, what addendums my soil would need, etc. After landing in Düsseldorf with its new climate, language, and varieties of plants, I felt like a complete novice. Four years later, I am still learning, but my confidence is growing and I have picked up a few tips that I am happy to pass along.

Flower boxes are where it's at here in Germany. If you have a balcony, stoop or windowsill, you can grow something to brighten the landscape. Even though cold weather can still occur for a few more months, hardy perennials such as snowdrops and crocuses will be popping up in the next few weeks, and annuals such as primroses and pansies are available in garden centers, or even grocery stores, now. Many of my neighbors will wait until March to put out these annual flowers, but I tend to jump the gun and often will buy one or two for a splash of color as soon as they appear in stores. I have found that if I tuck my planters next to a stone wall or in a sheltered area with southern exposure, and they typically do OK, even if I am a few weeks early putting them out. If we get an extended cold snap of minus 5 or greater, or for multiple days, you can cover them at night with a pillowcase or grocery bag, and they will probably be fine.

#### where to buy plants + seeds

##### ONLINE

MAGIC GARDEN [www.magicgardenseeds.de](http://www.magicgardenseeds.de)

AIKO SAMEN [www.aiko-samen.de](http://www.aiko-samen.de)

HOF JEEBEL [www.biogartenversand.de](http://www.biogartenversand.de)

##### SEED + PLANT SHOWS SAATGUTS + PFLANZENBÖRSEN

SAATGUT DÜSSELDORF Mar 9  
[www.saatgutfestival.de](http://www.saatgutfestival.de)

PFLANZENBÖRSE GRUGAPARK Apr 27/28  
[www.grugapark.de/pflanzenmarkt](http://www.grugapark.de/pflanzenmarkt)

VEN CALENDAR OF SHOWS  
[www.nutzpflanzenvielfalt.de/termine](http://www.nutzpflanzenvielfalt.de/termine)



Herbs are also easy to grow in pots, and can be visually interesting, as well as helpful to have around when you need a pinch of rosemary or bit of thyme. Woody plants such as these will often grow all winter in a protected area, and parsley, savory, and chives can often be added to your garden or pots by mid to late March. Be careful with Basil – I saw it in the garden center by the end of last March, and of course it is always in the grocery, but it will not do well outside until at least May when the soil has warmed.

Garden centers in general can be good sources of information and supplies, but I was often disappointed in the variety of flowers and vegetables that they offered. Where was I going to find heirloom tomato seeds or purple potatoes? I could always order online, and I did find some good sites but I slowly learned that many interesting plants in German gardens are either shared from other gardening friends, or obtained at a Saatgut or Pflanzenbörse.

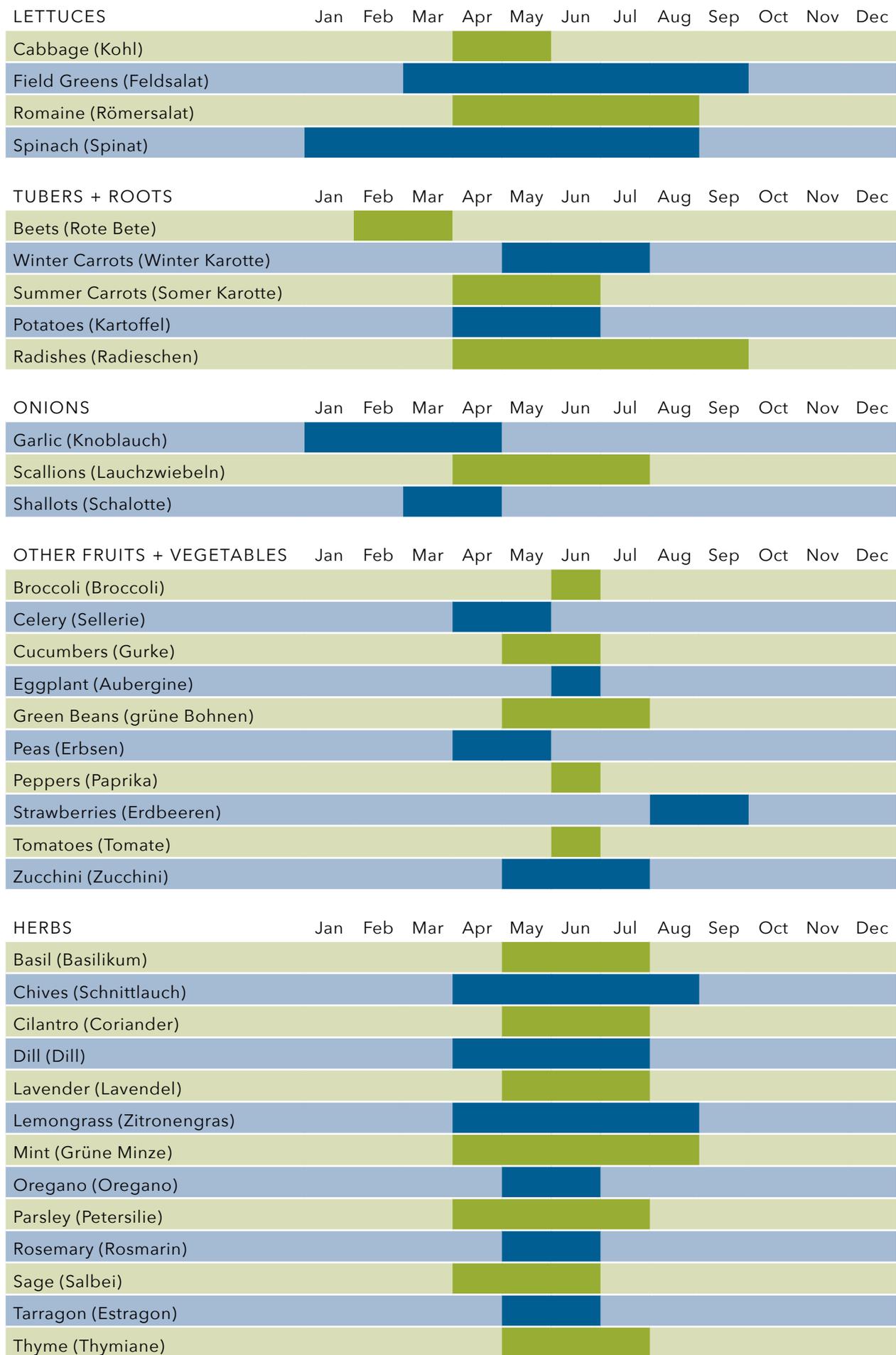
The Saatguts and Pflanzenbörsen are seed and plant fairs that start in February and go through the end of April or beginning of May. Often they feature hard to find or heirloom varieties of vegetables and flowers, as well as being great places to be inspired, have your questions answered, and gather information on all things related to gardening in Germany. Düsseldorf hosts a large Saatgut every year in early March. Grugapark in Essen also holds a large plant market featuring rare flowers and shrubs in the spring and fall. You can find others in the area on the Verein zur Erhaltung der Nutzpflanzenvielfalt (VEN), or "Association for the Conservation of Crop Diversity," calendar.

If you want something specific that you can't find as a starter plant, growing your own plants from seed is fairly easy to do, and can be a lot cheaper than buying seedlings. I save my egg cartons and use them instead of buying the small peat cups. I start many of my seeds in March or April so they are ready for transplanting outside in May or June. I fill the egg cartons with a planting mix, and add a few seeds to each cell. I place the cartons on a sunny windowsill, water well, and cover with a piece of plastic wrap to warm the soil and help keep it moist. When seedlings are ready to plant in the ground, just rip the egg carton into separate cells and plant directly in the earth so as not to disturb the roots. See the chart to help determine when to plant in our area.

Here's hoping for a successful growing season full of sunshine filled days and overnight rains! Have fun, enjoy and hope to see you outside!

# what to plant when

This chart shows when to plant seedlings and plants outdoors in the Düsseldorf area – Hardiness Zone (Klimazone) 8. For a more extensive and detailed list, visit [www.when2plant.com](http://www.when2plant.com).



## SUGGESTIONS FROM A BIBLIOPHILE

### what to read this year

**MEGAN MORRIS** – I love reading. I read anything I can get my hands on, whether that be lengthy novels, nonfiction educational books, magazines, children's books, or young adult books, and I love it all. Below you can find some suggestions for some of the best books I have read during the past year (as well as some that qualify as the best books I have ever read). I hope that you find a book that you can fall in love with during the upcoming months. Books are my passion and I am glad to share my favorite with others. And, if in doubt, Harry Potter and Hogwarts are always waiting on your shelf for another visit. Happy reading, my friends!

### timeless fiction – adult

#### **THE JOY LUCK CLUB** AMY TAN

If you have never read an Amy Tan novel, stop what you are doing and find one to read. Tan has a magical way with words, and her ability to weave stories combining ancient Chinese culture with modern day is astounding. I love every one of her novels, but this one might be my favorite. It tells the story of the Joy Luck Club, a club that began with four Chinese women who had immigrated to America and got together to play Mahjong. The women all have daughters, and the novel weaves the stories of the mother's experiences leaving China with those of their Chinese-American children. It is enlightening and heart-breaking and full of love. It is a classic.

#### **THE ALCHEMIST** PAULO COELHO

I love this book and I have loved it since I first read it when I was 14. It follows the story of a young shepherd who meets a fortune teller who tells him that he will find treasure in the pyramids of Egypt. He sets out on a long journey to seek his treasure and learns about love and loss along the way. This is one that I always go back to and a book that many people tell me they want to read, so don't waste any more time.

#### **LITTLE WOMEN** LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

I hope that most of you have read Little Women, but even if you have you should read it again. This book speaks to my heart with each read, reminding me of the bond of family and of how important it is to live your life boldly and courageously. It's a book that I like to turn to anytime I don't know what to read next, and I am never disappointed to meet the March sisters again.

#### **THE HANDMAID'S TALE** MARGARET ATWOOD

Did you know that this blockbuster Hulu series is based on a classic dystopian novel? And it's a good one. This book tells the story of Offred, a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead – a land where women have been stripped of their rights, and where most women are barren. The few fertile women, known as Handmaids, are assigned to powerful men with the singular purpose of bearing children for them, and their childless wives.



### fiction – young adult

#### **WALK TWO MOONS** SHARON CREECH

My copy of this book is old and ragged at this point from use, but I will still return back to it. This novel is heavy. It explores love, life, and loss as Sal, a teenage girl, travels the across country in the back of her grandparents car. It switches between the present day car conversation, and Sal's retelling of stories about her best friend Phoebe. This book proves that young adult novels can be read and enjoyed by all, and I would highly recommend it if you are looking for a quick but powerful read.

#### **WHERE THE MOUNTAIN MEETS THE MOON** GRACE LIN

This folktale novel is written masterfully by Lin, who weaves ancient Chinese folklore into the pages. The story is beautiful, following the adventures of Minli, a girl who leaves her poor village in search of riches to help out her family. Her journey is perilous, and her family fears for her safety. The novel emphasizes the importance of family, and has some of the most beautiful illustrations you will find in any book. The book sweeps you off your feet and straight into its journey. I promise you won't want to put it down.

#### **ELEANOR & PARK** RAINBOW ROWELL

This coming-of-age tale focuses on two teens, Eleanor and Park, and their struggles to fit in at school and within their own families. It is a tale of love and friendship and just how far the two are willing to go for one another. It is raw and emotional, a true gem of a story.

## newer fiction – adult

## AN AMERICAN MARRIAGE TAYARI JONES

An American Marriage is a painful journey following the union of two souls, Celeste and Roy, as they encounter the unthinkable after only a year and a half of marriage. Roy is accused and found guilty of a crime of which he is innocent, but he is sent away to prison as his wife tries to carry on on the outside and make sense of all that has happened. This book is emotional and Jones lays out their story so beautifully that you will feel every pain in their complicated romance. I finished this book in one day because I could not bear to put it down.

## THE GREAT ALONE KRISTEN HANNAH

I hope that many of you are already fans of Hannah, as her books are all wonderful. Her latest book, The Great Alone was heart-wrenching and powerful and unforgettable. It follows the story of a family who tries to move to the Alaskan Bush to escape their problems, only to find out that the move only exacerbates everything. It is a story of true love and sacrifice- this book will stick with you long after you have finished reading it.

## PACHINKO MIN JIN LEE

Pachinko follows the history of a Korean family over generations, beginning in the late 1800's during the Japanese annexation of Korea. The family faces hardships when attempting to climb the social ladder. Always considered lesser-than by the Japanese, the family must work hard and cling to one another in order to be successful as the generations go on. This book is a tale of grit, stamina, and love for your family.

## EROTIC STORIES FOR PUNJABI WOMEN BALLI KAUR JASWAL

Though the title seems a bit strange, it tells you exactly what the story is about. Nikki is the child of Punjabi parents who immigrated to London, and she has no desire to follow their "old-fashioned" ideologies. She takes a job at community center in the center of London's Punjabi community to teach widows how to read and write. However, her classes soon turn into erotic story writing sessions at the request of her students, and she encounters issues when the conservative community finds out what her classes really involve. This story is one of friendship and the blending of cultures, and was delightful to read.

## THE MARTIAN ANDY WEIR

This is a science-fiction novel, and it is fantastic. It follows the misadventures of the astronaut Mark Watney who has crash-landed on Mars alone and utterly ill-equipped for the harsh environment of the red planet. Through sheer resourcefulness along with a wide-range of expletives, Watney fights to survive in the harsh desert he finds himself in. And if you have already seen the movie – read the book, they're always better!

## non-fiction

## BECOMING MICHELLE OBAMA

To say that this book is inspirational might be a bit of an understatement. In her autobiography, Michelle Obama paints a picture of herself on her own terms. She highlights the grit and determination of a young girl from the southside of Chicago who would one day become a First Lady in the White House. Her book is tenacious and full of the lively spirit of it's author, and it is a must-read.

SAPIENS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANKIND  
HOMO DEUS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOMORROW  
YUVAL NOAH HARARI

If you have not read these books yet, it is time to jump on the train. In Sapiens, Harari takes you on an adventure through the history of mankind in just a few hundred pages. Then in his follow-up novel Homo Deus, Harari explores what our world will likely look like in the future. These books are addictive in the best possible way, especially if you are someone who loves learning interesting facts and tidbits. They make you think about the world in a different way while also opening your mind to the possibilities of the future.

KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON:  
THE OSAGE MURDERS +  
THE BIRTH OF THE FBI DAVID GRANN

If you like readable history books, this one's for you. This book plays out like a drama, an investigation into who or what is responsible for the deaths of wealthy Osage people. The Osage came into their wealth when oil deposits were found on their land, and not long after they begin dying from various mysterious causes. The book focuses on the investigation and what became of it, and it was sooo good!

THIS IS THE STORY OF  
A HAPPY MARRIAGE ANN PATCHETT

Patchett is well-known for her works of fiction, however this collection of short stories that blended together into a memoir of Patchett's life was especially memorable for me. She delves into to stories from her childhood to present day, and she tells them with such truth in her voice that you cannot help but be sucked into her writing. As she recalled memories, I found myself turning page after page, unable to find a place where I felt like stopping.

MODERN ROMANCE: AN INVESTIGATION  
AZIZ ANSARI + ERIC KLINENBERG

I know that Aziz Ansari had a bit of a rough patch last year, but I would be remiss if I did not mention his book, Modern Romance. Aziz is a comedian, and he co-wrote this book as a funny but serious attempt to understand dating and romance in our modern times. He delves into the complexities of dating in the age of social media and Tinder, comparing them to the simpler times of a few decades back. This book is raunchy, but absolutely hilarious and definitely worth a read.