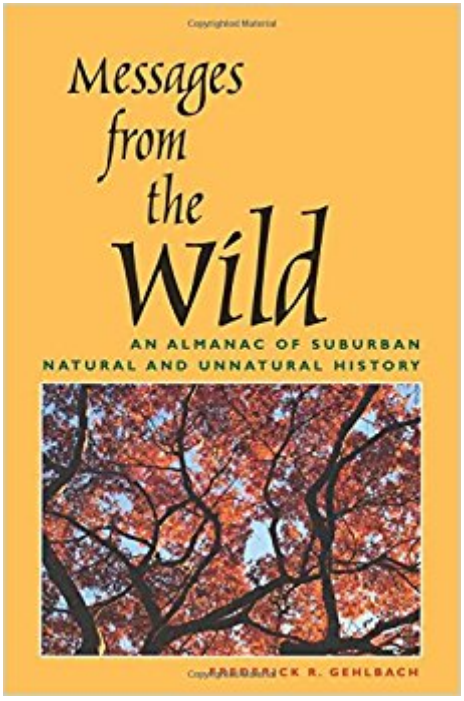
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Messages From The Wild: An Almanac Of Suburban Natural And Unnatural History



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Synopsis

Seeking a closer connection with nature than the manicured lawns of suburbia, naturalist Fred Gehlbach and his family built a house on the edge of a wooded ravine in Central Texas in the mid-1960s. On daily walks over the hills, creek hollows, and fields of the ravine, Gehlbach has observed the cycles of weather and seasons, the annual migrations of birds, and the life cycles of animals and plants that also live in the ravine. In this book, Gehlbach draws on thirty-five years of journal entries to present a composite, day-by-day almanac of the life cycles of this semiwild natural island in the midst of urban Texas. Recording such events as the hatching of Eastern screech owl chicks, the emergence of June bugs, and the first freeze of November, he reminds us of nature's daily, monthly, and annual cycles, from which humans are becoming ever more detached in our unnatural urban environments. The long span of the almanac also allows Gehlbach to track how local and even global developments have affected the ravine, from scars left by sewer construction to an increase in frost-free days probably linked to global warming. This long-term record of natural cycles provides one of only two such baseline data sets for North America. At the same time, the book is an eloquent account of one keen observer's daily interactions with his wild and human neighbors and of the lessons in connectedness and the "play of life" that they teach.

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Customer Reviews

Frederick R. Gehlbach is Professor Emeritus of Biology and Environmental Studies at Baylor University.

Published by University of Texas Press, this book received a book design award at The Rounce & Coffin Club Western Books Exhibition in 2002. Book designer: Heidi Haeuser.

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