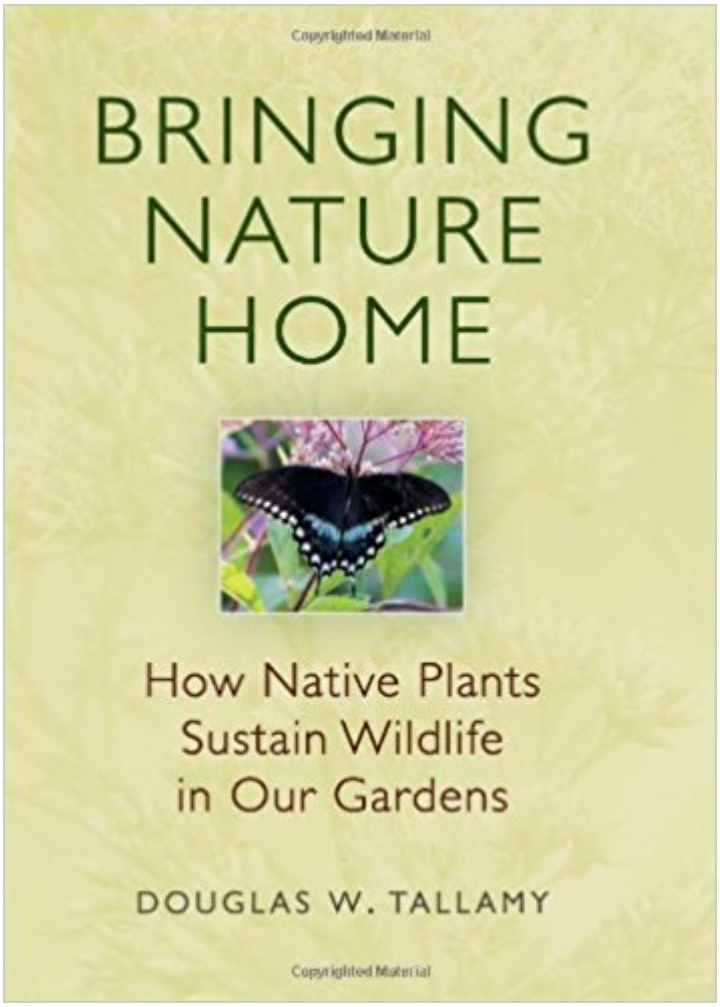
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Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife In Our Gardens



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Synopsis

As development and subsequent habitat destruction accelerate, there are increasing pressures on wildlife populations. But there is an important and simple step toward reversing this alarming trend: Everyone with access to a patch of earth can make a significant contribution toward sustaining biodiversity.There is an unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife Ã¢â ¬â • native insects cannot, or will not, eat alien plants. When native plants disappear, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. In many parts of the world, habitat destruction has been so extensive that local wildlife is in crisis and may be headed toward extinction.Bringing Nature Home has sparked a national conversation about the link between healthy local ecosystems and human well-being, and the new paperback edition Ã¢â ¬â • with an expanded resource section and updated photos Ã¢â ¬â • will help broaden the movement. By acting on Douglas Tallamy's practical recommendations, everyone can make a difference.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tallamy takes an obvious observation—wildlife is threatened when suburban development encroaches on once wild lands—and weds it to a novel one: that beneficial insects are being deprived of essential food resources when suburban gardeners exclusively utilize nonnative plant material. Such an imbalance, Tallamy declares, can lead to a weakened food chain that will no longer be able to support birds and other animal life. Once embraced only by members of the counterculture, the idea of gardening with native plants has been landscape design's poor stepchild,

thought to involve weeds and other plants too unattractive for pristine suburban enclaves. Not so, says Tallamy, who presents compelling arguments for aesthetically pleasing, ecologically healthy gardening. With nothing less than the future of North American biodiversity at stake, Tallamy imparts an encouraging message: it’s not too late to save the ecosystem-sustaining matrix of insects and animals, and the solution is as easy as replacing alien plants with natives. Haggas, Carol

"This book not only shows how important native plants are but also how easy they can be to incorporate into a landscape plan." (Ann Lovejoy Seattle Post-Intelligencer)"An informative and engaging account of the ecological interactions between plants and wildlife, this fascinating handbook explains why exotic plants can hinder and confuse native creatures, from birds and bees to larger fauna."Ã Â (Anne Raver USA Today)"This book aims to motivate parents and caregivers who are concerned about childrens’ lack of connection to the outdoors." (Anne Raver New York Times) "The book evolved out of a set of principles. So the message is loud and clear: gardeners could slow the rate of extinction by planting natives in their yards. This simple revelation about the food webÃ¢â ¬â •and it is an intricate web, not a chainÃ¢â ¬â •is the driving force in Bringing Nature Home." (Elizabeth Licata New York Times)"A fascinating study of the trees, shrubs, and vines that feed the insects, birds, and other animals in the suburban garden." (Judy Brinkerhoff Garden Rant)"We all know where resistance to natives, reliance on pesticides, and the cult of the lawn still reign supreme: suburban America. And suburban America is where Doug Tallamy aims the passionate arguments for natives and their accompanying wildlife."Ã Â (Sally Cunningham Petaluma Argus-Courier)Bringing Nature Home opens our eyes to an environmental problem of staggering proportions. Fortunately, it also shows us how we can help. (Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp Eco-Libris Blog) You can look at this book as a manifesto explaining why we should favor native plants, but itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s much more than that. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a plan to sustain the endangered biodiversity and even more, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a plan to transform suburbia from an environmental liability to an environmental asset. (Warwick Beacon) This updated and expanded edition Ã¢â ¬Â¦ is a delight to read and a most needed resource." (Cabin Life)"This book will not only foster a love of the outdoors in all who read it, but also create a deeper understanding and appreciation of the intricate web of wildlife outside your door." (The Recorder)"In an area that is as open and wooded as ours, we may not be aware that there is more to the need for natives than concern about invasive species that upset an ecosystem. According to Tallamy, a balanced ecosystem needs more insects.Ã Â It is when the balance of the system is disrupted that problems arise." (St. Petersburg

Times)"Tallamy's book is a call to arms.Ã Â There is not much ordinary citizens can do to create large new preserves.Ã Â But we can make better use of the small green spaces we have around our houses.Ã Â While the situation in the United States is quite serious, Tallamy offers options that anyone with a garden, even a postage-stamp-sized one like mine, can do to help." (Birding Business)"Tallamy makes such a compelling case for the importance of insects to birds that IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve completely changed the way I garden.Ã Â From now on, insect attractors are my first choices." (Winston-Salem Journal)"Tallamy illustrates well how gardeners have contributed greatly to tipping the environment off balance and how they are equally able to turn the trend Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Plants and insects are integrally intertwined.Ã Â Understanding the beauty of these relationships deepens our appreciation of our gardens and the important role we play." (Ants, Bees, Birds, Butterflies, Nature Blog)"[It] is the book that is going to change how gardening is conducted over the next century." (Plant Whatever Brings You Joy Blog)"Doug Tallamy's book is a gift. It's not the kind of gift wrapped with a pink ribbon and a tiny rose tucked into the bow. It's the kind of gift that shakes you to your core and sets you on the path of healing. Your garden. Your planet. One plant at a time. Open it." (Prairie Moon Nursery blog)"This book is not a rant on nature gardening, nor is it a typical garden design book, or a stuffy academic textbook. The author might be a professor Ã¢â ¬Â¦ but he has written a book which is readable, scientific, fascinating, and highly digestible." (Philadelphia Inquirer) "This is the 'it' book in certain gardening circles. It's really struck a nerve." (Buffalo News) "My book of choice of the year." (Indianapolis Star)He combines the passion which many of us have, with the science, and thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a winning combination.Ã¢â ¬Å“Tallamy explains in beautiful prose the importance of native plants to our wildlife.Ã¢â ¬Â•

Tallamy points out that almost all songbirds raise their young on a diet of insects, and if you want to help them live and reproduce in your yard you need to make these insects available. He goes on to show that most of the invasive alien plants which are coming to dominate our landscape are hosts to very few insects (that's something that helps them be so invasive), and if we want to help out the birds we need to promote the native plants which are hosts to more insects. He gives a very useful table of the different species of trees which are hosts to caterpillars that the birds can use. He also points out that many imported plants have brought with them (in spite of inspections) diseases to which our native plants have little resistance, and he concludes that we should be much more restrictive in importing plants.As an entomologist, Tallamy's attention focuses on the insects, and his book contains relatively little discussion of some of the other aspects of a bird-friendly yard: berries which the birds can use in winter, water, shelter, etc. Cats are not found in the index and it's

important that they not be found in the yard.

the book is good but there are few points that should’ve been covered:- the author talked mostly about ornamental trees, he did not discuss fruit trees.- the author talked about the pathogens that "alien" trees might bring with them, but he did not discuss starting those trees from seeds.- i believe in some places like deserts, the introduction of some "alien" tree species might do more good than harm if they will withstand the harsh environment.overall its an ok book. and i do agree that using native trees for landscaping is better.

Two features of the modern biosphere are driving us to a new Silent Spring. They are the invasive species that are consuming our forests, grasslands and waterways and the practice of most gardeners to plant non-native plants.If you are of a certain age, you have probably noticed that there are fewer insects in the yard, in the garden and plastered on our windshields than there used, and that there are fewer species of birds in the backyard. It differs from place to place, but in my own backyard, which offers almost perfect habitat, I do not see the red-headed woodpeckers, the rose breasted grosbeaks and the wood thrushes of my youth. There are fewer birds because there are fewer insects. Though many birds eat seeds in the summer, fall, and winter, almost all birds (the goldfinch is an exception, I believe) nourish their young with nothing but insects, often insect larvae. These bugs, for the most part, do not eat non-native plants. It turns out that in order to develop the digestive enzymes necessary to digest plant material, insects need to evolve over millenia with the plants. And insects will not eat just any old plant. They may only be able to subsist by eating one or two species within a family that may contain dozens of different species.Gardens full of japanese cherries, zelkovas, and the dreaded Bradford Pear are gardens devoid of insects and birds. Not only does nothing eat these non-native trees, hardly anything will nest in them, since birds need trees with a branch architecture that they are familiar with in order to be able to build a nest that will stick in the tree.This wonderful book explains all this, and gives examples of what eats what and encourages us all, the owners of suburban gardens and the owners of larger woodlots, to go native. If enough of us do that, we may begin to see the birds again and the price of this will be that we may have to put up with a few more bugs. It seems worth it to me.

The book club of the Southeast Gateway Group chose this book for our March meeting, and it was everything that I could have hoped for. Dr Tallamy presents the problem of non-native species in our yards and gardens in a new light -- that of feeding the insects that are necessary for feeding the

birds and other higher animals. I write an environmental stewardship column for a number of churches in our area, and I cited him in my latest. I think it is worth reprinting here: Several years ago two little girls with newly gifted butterfly nets came up to me while I was working in the yard and plaintively asked where had all the butterflies gone. I showed them the little signs in a neighbor's yard saying the lawn had been sprayed with herbicide and insecticide and then pointed to all the other little signs in the neighborhood. I then led them to our back yard and my wife's "natural area" where we saw a couple of butterflies that were too quick to be caught. My little "teaching moment" was mostly on insecticides. Butterflies and their wild looking, hairy or horned larva (caterpillars) are insects and were being killed by those sprays. If you were fortunate enough to attend Douglas Tallamy's program at the Golden Rondelle a few weeks ago or to read his book "Bringing Nature Home", then you know that herbicides, killing off most everything other than our alien ornamentals, alien grasses in our monoculture lawns and possibly our imported trees, are at least as much a danger to the natural ecosystem as insecticides. Modern commercial agriculture and suburban developments have combined to destroy most of the natural ecosystems that used to be here. These ecosystems supported the great diversity that the European explorers and immigrants found here. Agriculture is not going to resurrect this diversity or we won't be fed, so it is up to suburbanites and rural dwellers to do our best. A few simple reminders: All the energy for every animal (except a few species near the thermal vents on the bottom of the ocean) is captured from the sun by plants. All the oxygen we breathe is produced by plants. Thirty-five percent of all the energy going from plants to higher animals goes through insects. Many insects eat only one species or family of plants with which they co-evolved. That is why it is so important to have native plants in our yards and gardens. Without native plants those insects will die off and the birds and other animals depending upon them for food may also be extirpated (local) or become extinct (global and final). We are already losing too many species. We can resist this trend by greater use of native trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges and other herbaceous plants. It need not be a totally native garden, but give diversity a chance. Let's not lose the butterflies!

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