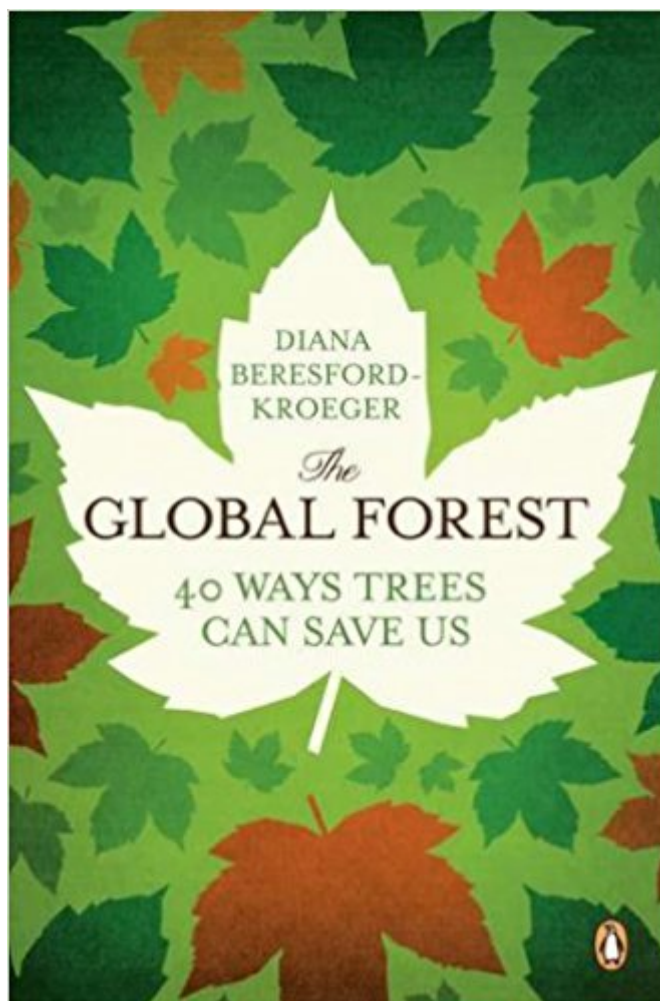


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The Global Forest: Forty Ways Trees Can Save Us



Synopsis

A lushly written, compelling tribute to trees-grounded in a wide range of scientific knowledge, and the inspiration for Diana Beresford-Kroeger's documentary, *A Call of the Forest: The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees*—Renowned scientist Diana Beresford-Kroeger presents an unforgettable and highly original work of natural history with *The Global Forest*. She explores the fascinating and largely untapped ecological and pharmaceutical properties of trees: leaves that can comb the air of particulate pollution, fatty acids in the nuts of hickory and walnut trees that promote brain development, the compound in the water ash that helps prevent cancer, aerosols in pine trees that calm nerves. In precise, imaginative, and poetic prose, she describes the complexity and beauty of forests, as well as the environmental dangers they face. The author's indisputable passion for her subject matter will inspire readers to look at trees, and at their own connection to the natural world, with newfound awe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I purchased this book based on a newspaper interview with author, a botanical scientist who promotes the potential for forests to fight pollution, climate change and even human illness through their natural processes and products. I expected it to be a somewhat dry but informative guide to the practical botany of trees. It is in fact something completely different. A slender volume (166 pages of text, including introduction), it is organized into forty "chapters" that are really 4-6-page essays on specific aspects of tree physiology or chemistry. But perhaps because of the Irish ancestry she references at the outset, with its tradition of storytelling, the form of the essays is far from scientific

but rather that of almost mystical, poetic appreciation. They even begin with a subtitle "refrain" that captures the essence of each piece. Yes, the book is full of the amazing facts I was hoping to find - such as the existence of warm-blooded plants and the complex chemistry that trees have evolved in order to survive. And there is a hopeful theme of the potential to reverse global ecologic devastation through reforestation. But most of all this is the sensually and lovingly written ode of a passionate scientist, harking back to writers of more enlightened ages when this would not have been considered an oxymoron. Read it for the information, enjoy it for the style.

This is a remarkable blending of art and science in forty gems of storytelling about trees. Each of the forty stories in this book are precious and inspiring and can easily stand on their own. To receive all of these stories in one delicious work is a wonderful gift that both enlightens you and burdens you with the incredible responsibility you have as a steward of the tree kingdom. The author's scientific background shines through while she delivers each story almost in poetic terms. This is a rare opportunity to read a book that will fire up all parts of your brain at once and leave your thinking about trees changed forever!

We heard an interview on NPR with the author and knew this was a book for our tree loving son. Here is his reply...Oh such a wonderful gift! I have just finished reading the prologue and first chapter. How delicious. The Author introduces herself with a bit of gaelic countryside history. Early in her life she saw the relationships between the steps of the food chain. How plants feed animals, and animal waste feeds plants. And... on to how the cycle, eventually, fed her. Wondrous. In the first chapter she breaks apart how nature divided hemoglobin and chlorophyll such that one supported animal life, and the latter rises to meet the need of our ancestral siblings, plants. The simile of Holly is perfect. Red berries representing 'blood', and glossy green leaves reflecting plant life. How the joy of Christmas was wrapped in the pagan festival of saturnalia which engaged in the sympathetic magic of carrying fir tree limbs in-doors for the long winter survival, and final re-birth in the spring. It harkens to our agricultural roots. I think of Uncle Arnold and Grandpa Speth. How rooted they were in mother earth. You have chosen a text dripping with lyrical prose, and the science of life. It does not just speak to me, it sings. Thank You, Trav

This intriguing and pertinent philosophical question, asked in a song by well-know Canadian singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn is being answered by a resounding "YES!" in Diana Beresford-Kroeger's highly edifying, detailed and accessible exploration on the life of trees, plants

and creatures in the global forests of planet Earth. The author's message in her work, and in this book, is that it is vital for nature's survival as a healthy environment for us and the following generations is to listen and learn. We are called to get engaged in the tasks to help preserve and restore the forests with all their diversity of plants and trees and cohabitating creatures, from insects to bees to birds, from fungi to lichens and more. In forty short chapters, the author takes us by the hand and guides us through different forests, highlighting and explaining what we should know about them, from a biological, ethno-cultural, medicinal and spiritual and any other possible perspective. Among the many "Wow"! moments when reading the book, I was particularly fascinated by everything to do with communication by trees and plants in the forest. It seems that human beings are at a great disadvantage, because most of us cannot hear these "infrasounds", sense the aerosols and understand the low waves of chemicals moving under the forest floor. Through these communication means, trees attract not only the necessary pollinators or emit medicinal aerosols necessary for their and the surrounding flora's health, they can create sound or chemical reactions that are warning signals if a predator is approaching that could endanger the tree's well-being. I had heard about the ability of certain acacia trees to suddenly change the "flavour" of their leaves so that animals would stop eating them. And, research has found, this flavour change happens not only in the affected tree but immediately in all close standing trees, suggesting some form of communication. Beresford-Kroeger explains these and other phenomena in very convincing ways. The author, a botanist and medical biochemist is a recognized expert on the medicinal, environmental and nutritional properties of trees, shares in this brief comprehensive book her knowledge and wisdom that encompasses all creatures in the forests and their interrelationships. She has studied traditional societies, from First Nations in Canada to many others around the world and recorded their, often oral, knowledge of the medicinal properties of trees and plants. It is a cross-genre kind of book, rich in scientific detail as well as filled with story telling and spiritual meaning. At times, the author resorts to anthromorphizing that I personally don't find totally convincing. Still, ideally, it is a book to be kept in a prominent place and consulted regularly rather than read in one go and filed away. It is a reference guide to the living world of the Global Forests. I would have preferred a comprehensive index and glossary to assist in a regular and on-going consulting of the incredible depth and diversity of information. The reference reading list is helpful but could also have been expanded. [Friederike Knabe]

It is finally possible to foresee how the planet and us are linked, solutions all included. Thanks to the very extended knowledge of Diana Beresford-Kroeger, we can understand the forest for what it

really is, a garden, a pharmacy, a place where prayers are answered, a solution to global warming, an environment to be respected and learned about, a well of resources and jobs. Thank you!

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