

trees are included is not systematic enough for me to feel really comfortable with 'encyclopedia'. It is a more like a curated collection. Really, it is a huge arboretum tucked between covers as long and broad as a sheet of letter paper and as deep as, perhaps, an old-fashioned pencil eraser. It is not a field guide (it doesn't claim to be) where you know you are getting wild, native trees, at least for the most part. It is not a regional overview based on natural geography. It is certainly much more than your average guide to trees and shrubs in horticulture. It is nothing like the manual for growing woody plants in my library, either, for that book's purpose is 100 percent guidance and instruction. This book's purpose is ultimately, I believe, to stun one with the wonder of trees, which it does.

To give an idea of the details provided for each tree species, here is what is included in the account for Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga Canadensis*): its appearance including how it differs in the wild and in cultivation; its native range; where it is hardy, both latitude and altitude; the many cultivars developed from the species since 1736; its expected height in 10 years, 20 years and eventually; hardiness given as a percentage of tolerance to frost ranging from 0% at the freezing point to 100% at -40 degrees C or F (-40 being the point where Celsius and Fahrenheit are the same); a number code indicating choice considerations for gardens and where applicable a number code for the quality of the wood for use.

The illustrations are finer than any I've seen; certainly more realistic and precisely captured than in any of the tree books in my library. They are gorgeous and comprehensive, with lots of time given to small details,

cross-sections of conifer needles, summer and winter views, close ups of leaves, leaf scars and buds, twigs, cones, fruit, bark, flowers. This is unquestionable talent driven by passion.

The secretly charming little bit I didn't even notice until I'd looked through the book a few times is the use of life figures for scale. These range from birds (lots of magpies and hawks) to weasels, foxes, deer, pet dogs, cattle and people. For a few moments I forgot about the trees and flipped through looking for the tiny creatures. They're not on every page, and I admit to being disappointed when there isn't one.

Like in some arboreta, the species are arranged taxonomically. There are no keys, just titles and a table of contents filling the role of sign posts. To use this book for identification purposes you will first need some idea of what type of tree you are looking at, and then you will have to browse. The introduction makes a solid read on its own, with lots of interesting information about tree distribution, collection and growing.

I recommend this book for any tree lover, especially one who hankers to roam, tree by tree, across the northern temperate world. If you took the time to gaze each day at one of its pages, you would have a handy substitute for getting out of doors to look at live trees. If you are plotting your own arboretum, or just to plant a new tree in your yard or garden, this book will help you too. If you've got the cash, I suggest the hardcover version, because it's a big book. The Princeton University Press online catalogue only showed the cloth cover version when I checked today (October 2, 2013).

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OTHER

Walking Wild Shores: Portraits of the Natural World

By Kevin Winker. 2013. Two Harbors Press, 212 3rd Avenue N., Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN, USA, 55401. 353 pages, 16.95 USD, Paper.

This is a nicely-written collection of travel tales and adventures based on the author's experiences in mostly wild areas, both in the line of work and of living in Alaska. As Curator of Birds and a professor at the University of Alaska Museum of the North, Kevin Winker has had plenty of opportunities to find himself in out of the way places and on perilous edges. His recounting does a service to the armchair field researchers amongst us as well as those who might enjoy hearing of someone else trials and joys similar to their own. Many chapters evoke really wild, natural places complete with dramatic weather and physical conditions. It is the kind of book you might take one chapter at a time, when you want a change from your day-to-day, whatever it may be.

Most chapters are stories time spent in the field, from the Aleutian Islands to Mexico, Singapore and

Siberian Russia. Of course, as it's the reason behind most of his travels, Winker leads us into the objectives of his research, mainly studying patterns and processes of avian evolution. To that end, collecting sufficient samples of birds for study, mostly by shotgun, recurs often from beginning to end of the book. This includes an account of trying to collect an elusive Pacific Wren on the Aleutian island of Amlia. It reads like a true hunting pursuit, except the quarry is so tiny. Think of the wee, flitting wren, seemingly taunting from impossible cliffs and crevices, popping out and then disappearing, only to emerge for a split second somewhere else. It might be the most challenging chase in the book. Collecting animals that others seek for viewing pleasure does put one in a sort of unfriendly spotlight sometimes. Winker offers an explanation of the importance of maintaining and continuing bird collections

for ornithological study and conservation and at the end of the book offers a reading list on the topic.

Daily life chapters have us perching on ledges in roaring river canyons using dip nets to nab salmon speeding by, or driving a car in extremely cold weather when the doors don't want to close and really nothing wants to move at all. We took a tour through the frantic pace of summer work, both in the office and out, necessary and also made possible because of long summer days and long winter nights. We also glimpse some of the more unusual personalities populating Fairbanks.

Field work and travel headaches appear often; they're all part of the lifestyle. You might be surprised to learn that, although Alaska is very close to Siberia, someone wanting to travel from Fairbanks to Novosibirsk could more likely be routed through Minneapolis, Amsterdam and Frankfurt. Have you ever had to empty a cylinder of liquid nitrogen into a drainage ditch at 2:30 in the morning before travelling to the airport for your flight home from Singapore? Then, you have to worry about your specimens staying frozen

while you endure delays of many connecting flights and border officials who don't want simply to accept your many permits at face value. How about having to modify your collection plans because you couldn't get shotguns in Mexico on account of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas? And then there's all that proposal writing and applying for permits, permits, permits. And then, does anyone ever go for a road trip in Alaska without at least one spare tire? No. But what if your one spare is flat too? That stuff you buy in a spray can to stop the leak in a flat tire really works ... for a while.

If you enjoy reading about all the interesting things that can happen to someone else (and who doesn't enjoy that, really) and would like a dose of gorgeously-conveyed wildness, you might have a look for this book. It could be just the thing for a current or future ornithologist or, indeed, an armchair biologist, on your gift-buying list.

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The Efficiency Trap: Finding a Better Way to Achieve a Sustainable Energy Future

By Steve Hallett. 2013. Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, New York, NY, USA, 14228-2197. 337 pages, 19.00 USD, Paper.

"The world is teetering on the brink of disaster, the people with their grip on economic power are pushing us faster toward the edge of the cliff, and we are all being swept along," is a quote from the middle pages of the book and sums up Hallett's thesis. Like his first book (with John Wright), *Life Without Oil: Why We Must Shift to a New Energy Future* (2011), this book is a record of the research on global use of energy, a report of the diminishing supplies of oil, gas and coal and the evidence which we have for these conclusions. In addition Hallett examines the ideology of increasing production of all things as a way of measuring success. Increasing production in resources, food, gross domestic product and even population are measured to prove our society is doing well or not keeping up with its goals. It is true that we have gotten better at what we do in business, medicine, agriculture and high-tech manufacturing as time has passed. Engines have become more efficient using less fuel, houses use less energy to heat and cool, and appliances use less energy to accomplish their task faster. The increase in efficiency has regrettably been accompanied by millions of more cars on the road, each with better energy consumption, more and bigger houses using more heat and cool, and many more refrigerators, washing machines and dishwashers providing more convenience as we get busier with the same homes, travel and consumption. The bank of energy is steadily depleting as we plunge on with expectations of ever-increasing production.

Hallett tries to show how progress in human history has always had a growth imperative. Growth and in-

creased efficiency are never the means to use less of a resource, but instead increases the use of the same resource because it can be used more widely to do more things. A steam engine which was invented to pump water from coal mines became the steam-powered paradigm of industry, transportation and more efficient extraction of coal to fuel it all. The modest increase in coal production envisaged in a better pumping system gave rise to an exponential demand for coal as the engine became the source of power for so many functions. The conventional wisdom telling us fossil fuels can be saved if we consume them more efficiently is similarly ill-conceived as we increase production of more efficient vehicles with more transportation costs for assembly and distribution, and more people using them to drive further.

In a dooms-day prediction Hallett predicts that the economic collapse, the final drain of the oil fields and the after-peak time of natural gas will all come together in the 2030's. As warning signs we should look at our personal debts, housing, employment, food, water, physical security, and transportation. Each of these has increased in its own way but the capacity of each to collapse in the current pattern of resource use has also grown. Most parts of nature exist in equilibrium but not in sustainability. Things grow and die, and continents and their ecosystems change but not with unaltered life to all of their members. Organisms which are best adapted to their environment are able to exist for the longest time in that same environment. Different sustainable agricultural practises like the Amish refusal



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