

Book Review

BRINGING NATURE HOME: HOW NATIVE PLANTS SUSTAIN WILDLIFE IN OUR GARDENS. Douglas W. Tallamy. 2007. Timber Press, Inc., Portland, OR. 288 pages, with illustrations. \$27.95, Hardcover. ISBN-13:978-0-88192-854-9.

Bringing Nature Home is the first book that this reviewer has found on the market to provide a discussion on how by using native plants in the home landscape, we can support the native fauna in the garden, landscape, and surrounding community. The book consists of 14 chapters with the first seven chapters providing arguments against non-native plants. Chapters 8 through 10 begin the discussion of biodiversity and approaches for using natives in the landscape. Chapters 11 through 13 provide insight into what native plants to use to attract native insects that feed upon those plants. The final chapter provides answers to common tough questions surrounding the debate about the use of native and non-native plants in the home landscape. The appendices consist of three sections with the first listing native plants classified by type (e.g., shade and specimen trees, shrub and understory trees, conifers, vines, grasses, herbaceous perennials) with wildlife value for general regions across the country (e.g., Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Southwest, and Pacific Northwest). Appendix two is a table of butterflies and moths and their hosts, and appendix three provides some unpublished data from the author's research on insect herbivory on woody native and alien species in his backyard and published work by his graduate student on early successional perennials.

The book appears to be targeted toward the homeowner rather than an academic or scientific-oriented audience and is very readable. The photo plates of insects are very nice and would be informative in identifying insects

on the landscape plants in the garden. As a gardener and horticulturist, I see that the book introduces and discusses ecological concepts in a clear and concise manner that I seldom have found discussed in other gardening books.

The strength of this book is the helpful information it provides about insects and the native plants on which they rely (found in Chapter 12: What should I plant? and Chapter 13: What does bird food look like?). These chapters provide the reader with a better understanding of plant-insect interactions that might be occurring in the landscape and help the reader to understand some of the many insects that may be attracted to native plants in their landscape.

The weakness of the book lies in the first several chapters, which present a negative tone toward non-native plants, a topic that is not alluded to in the title. In addition, these chapters elicit a sense of fear for the future due in part to the use of non-native plants and suggest that readers should proselytize against the use of non-native plants. Unfortunately, the broad stroke argument against non-native plants is based on limited scientific data to date, on edibility by native insects, and on predictions based on models (e.g., species-area relationships, phytophagous insect evolution theory). In addition, the author employs the most severe invasive non-native plant examples (e.g., *Melaleuca*, *Pueraria*) to paint all non-native plants in the marketplace as invasive and of limited ecological benefit. From this information, the reader is given the impression that every non-native plant has the same effect on the environment and should be replaced with a native plant.

For those who believe that the workings of nature and science consist of only good or bad outcomes or who want support for their beliefs that all non-native plants are bad, the first several chapters will be appreciated. For those who would like to learn more about the insects that support the wildlife in your community and how you can support the food web of your neighborhood, the last few chapters offer some good information on plants to add to your garden wish list and the insects that may be attracted to them. This information is supported in part by the author's strong expertise and experience with lepidopterans and a nice bibliographic search of native plants and the insect relationships that they support.

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