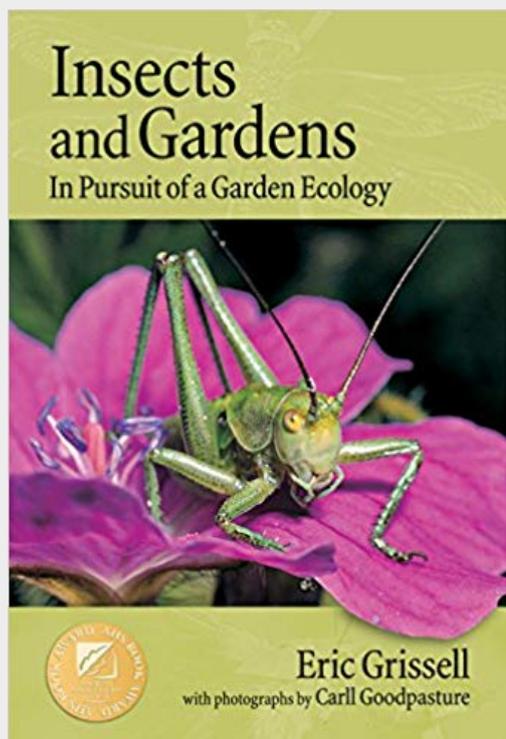


Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology by Carll Goodpasture, Eric Grissell



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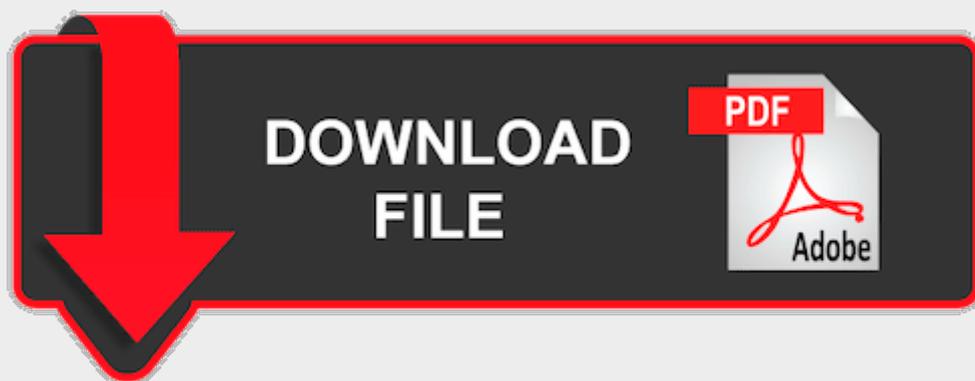
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In this intriguing book, professional entomologist and amateur gardener Grissell suggests that it might be time to declare a truce with the insects in our lives. With a sound basis in science and a practical grounding in gardening experience, Grissell seeks to introduce the reader to insect biology and the role of insects in garden ecology. He describes the various orders of insects the gardener is likely to encounter, and writes knowledgeably about how insects grow, feed, and reproduce. Unlike other insect-related books for gardeners, this is not a handbook on how to recognize and eliminate "pests." Instead, *Insects and Gardens* casts a more appreciative eye on the doings of the class Insecta and seeks to find a middle ground in which both human-kind and insect-kind can share the garden to mutual benefit. Carll Goodpasture's remarkable color photographs reveal the captivating beauty and vital energy that insects bring to the garden. Even the most "bug-hating" gardener cannot fail to be moved by a gulf-fritillary sipping nectar on a passion flower or a colorful scorpionfly camouflaged on a leaf.



Reviews of the **Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology** by Carll Goodpasture, Eric Grissell

1. GEL

i was hoping for informative points on how to begin and maintain a balanced garden that was welcoming to a variety of insects. however, the book seems mainly to be a long winded complaint about nameless books and gardeners who supposedly make no consideration of garden ecology beyond wanting to attract adult butterflies. this book does contain some good information, but much of the content is an uncomfortable mix of too studious or too basic. a sizeable portion of the information either seems to be stating the obvious, or just isn't very usable. humour was probably intended, but i found the writing to be a little crotchety and condescending. it has its merits, and aspects of it are interesting, but overall i found it tedious and unconstructive.

2. Tiv

Insects and Gardens by Eric Grissell is a solid primer on how to help your garden grow the natural way. It helps you keep track of which insects assist your plants, and which ones are going to cause trouble.

The book starts with the basics - just what is an insect? What are the different types, and how do you tell them apart? There are gorgeous photos here, which help you really understand what is being explained.

Then we get on into the garden-care section. the book provides great advice. For example buying ladybugs in a box, as fun as it might seem, is apparently not very helpful - they tend to all just try to "fly home" and leave your garden the way it was.

We learn about habitat diversity - by planning out the garden so that we have a natural habitat that encourages "good" bugs, we let the local, natural beneficial bugs take care of any problems they find. By removing stagnant water, we help to minimize the problem of mosquitoes.

There is a lot of practical advice. For example, sure you want to plant

flowers that butterflies love to eat. However, if you really want butterflies around, you need to plant flowers that their LARVAE will eat so the butterflies stay and lay their eggs here.

There's even a section about stings and bites, to help you manage any accidental encounters.

Well recommended!

3. Siatanni

This book is written from a gardener's perspective. However, it might be valuable reading for the entomologist, the ecologist, the environmentalist and the botanist. Insects are considered the most dominant animal in terms of biomass, outweighing and outnumbering humans by 600% and more than 600%, respectively. Some of the primary functions performed in the garden by insects include pollination (vital to the production of the majority of plants of importance to man, which keep us alive), herbivory (eating plants; and plant and animal decomposition), and balancing garden ecology. In the section on interactions between insects and plants, we learn how roots (and tubers, corms, bulbs and rhizomes), crowns, stems, branches, shoots, trunks, leaves, flowers and buds, and seed, pod and fruits can be attacked by insects. Lastly, the author introduces us to a garden in balance where the beneficial insects (pollinators and predators) keep the herbivores in balance. To create this balance, one needs to create diversity in the garden--diversity of plants and of animals, including insects, keeping in mind that some insects can have both beneficial and detrimental activities in our gardens. And, when the gardener intervenes to prevent insect destruction of a plant or plants, it is essential that the treatment be the least toxic substance that works, that it is applied at the best time in the life cycle of the insect, that it is applied in the best fashion to achieve the greatest success and that it does not harm other insects (especially beneficials) or the environment.

4. Quashant

This is a wonderfully, informative book on insects (and non insects) written with depth and detail in language that a lay person can understand-the writer has a delightful sense of humor that adds to the enjoyment of the book.

5. Zahisan

Nice book, lots of info. still can't find the bug I want to identify but it isn't the books fault.

6. Todal

Experienced gardeners are used to the idea that it's impossible (and not the least bit desirable) to have an insect-free garden. The main message of Eric Grissell's book is that a good garden teams with insect life, and that's how it should be.

This is decidedly not a book about how to deal with insect pests. In fact, the author urges us to stop thinking of insects only as enemies to be battled. "Plants and insects have interacted for hundreds of millions of years. Why should we gardeners feel compelled to change this situation in an hour or an afternoon?" he asks.

Grissell's aim is to show gardeners another way. Create a garden filled with variety, he urges. As you might guess, the ordinary yard with its swath of lawn, sprinkling of annuals, evergreen foundation shrubs and tree or two doesn't cut it when it comes to diversity. Instead, he suggests planting as many different plants as you can, and creating a variety of habitats; for example, adding water to the garden creates a new habitat that almost instantly attracts all sorts of life from frogs, toads to dragonflies and birds. If we gardeners achieve diversity, Grissell concludes, "We will have so many plants to think about that no plant will become sacred. And then we will be free of the garden and free to garden."

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