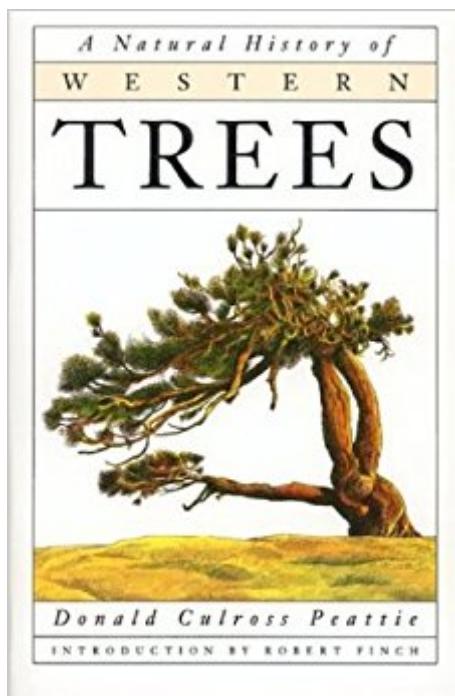


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A Natural History Of Western Trees



Synopsis

One of two genuine classics of American nature writing now in paperback; the other is *A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America*.

Book Information

Paperback: 768 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Reissue edition (June 29, 1991)

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"Both poetically evocative and deep with scholarly information . . . The descriptions amount to essays in human ecology." -- Thomas Lyon

No Bio Paul H. Landacre was a renowned print artist. Paul, a noted naturalist, spent much time in the secluded spot gardening and befriending local wildlife near his home in the Echo Park area of Los Angeles. He famously rehabilitated a wounded petrel, and the two became so attached that the bird would sit on his shoulder while he read the newspaper on the house's front porch. He later adopted the petrel as his monogram (perhaps his affinity for the bird was related to his own handicap, for Landacre, a former champion at track and field, had become disabled by a streptococcus infection while in college). Many of his engravings were in fact inspired by the landscape around the El Moran property, and virtually all of the works that he created during his and Margaret's time there were made on his own hand press: a fact which some have credited as a turning point in his career, for it enabled him to constantly check the progress of his work, as well as personally select with which paper and ink they would be printed. Paul Hambleton Landacre (1893-1963) and his wife Margaret moved to 2006 El Moran in March of 1932, having acquired the

deed for the Depression-era price of two thousand dollars. They moved to El Moran shortly after the artist published a book of his works, titled "California Hills." At the time, Landacre had already begun working exclusively in the art of printmaking with wood engravings, having studied at the Otis College of Art and Design (he would later teach there). Paul Landacre passed away in 1963, due to complications in the aftermath of a suicide attempt made soon after Margaret died. His work is considered by many to be the standard by which engraved wood printmaking is judged.

Peattie's writing style is everything that all the reviewers promised, and I went on to buy the Eastern book as well. I own and read many tree books, and this is one of only about three that I read for the quality of the prose. And it's good on trees! As Simon and Garfunkel might write, still inspiring, after all these years.

Donald Culross Peattie is a very observant and astute naturalist, who obviously loves each of the species of trees he writes about. The greatest strength of this wonderful book is Peattie's superb writing style itself. Highly recommended to every individual who wishes to understand all the nuances of trees.

Book was in topnotch shape

Good book

This has got to be one of the best books I have ever picked up. Informative as well as a good read.

This is a great read. Lyrical, full of fascinating anecdotes and history, here is prose by a great naturalist writing at the top of his craft. Written for the layman and accessible to everyone as a fascinating window into a world of nature's largest and most successful organisms, this work takes pride of place on my bookshelf and I'm in the tree business. Here's just a snippet of what he says about the Valley Oak: "One of the outstanding characteristics of the Valley Oak groves is their open spaciousness. The trees almost invariably stand well apart from each other - held off, no doubt, by competition of their root systems in a wide search for water. Yet they are gregarious trees, almost never found out of sight of many of their fellows unless the axe and plow have intervened" Isn't that evocative? And that small taste hardly does the sweep of the book due credit. When I need to breath forest air and can't get away I pick up this book and start to read. Anyone who respects

talented and passionate writing will cherish this book.

This book and its Eastern counterpart is lovely and devastating at the same time. The chapters are intimate biographies of trees - how they grow, their roles in ecosystems as well as in human commerce, and their natural history. Peattie seems to know each species personally. Too often the chapters must document the downfall to logging of what was once a dominant tree. The writing is gorgeous, perceptive, and scientifically accurate.

In the same grand style as in his "A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America" the writer continues with unsurpassed stories on trees, in this case the trees of Western North America, where the greatest living trees on the world can be found. What can I add to this? [see also my review on "Eastern Trees"] It is a great pity Donald Culross Peattie was unable to follow through on his plan for a volume on Southern Trees. [For a few brief notes on the life and the untimely death of the writer see the afterword by his son Noel in the 1991 Indiana University Press reprint of "Flowering Earth"]

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